

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**



**ASSESSMENT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTED IN PARTNERSHIP BY NGOS IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF
HOPE FOR CHILDREN ORGANIZATION & ITS PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS.**

**By: Beminet Merihatibab
Advisor: Bahren Asrat (PhD)**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PROJECT
MANAGEMENT (MAPM)**

April, 2021

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By: Beminet Merihatibab

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DECLARATION

I declare that the research project work entitled “**Assessment of Conflict Management Practices in Projects Implemented in Partnership by NGOs in Ethiopia: The Case of Hope for Children Organization & Its Partner Organizations**” is my research work. Materials and sources used have been properly acknowledged. The work had not been submitted to any educational institutions for the requirement of any award.

Beminet Merihatibab

Date

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the above declaration made on the research project work titled **“Assessment of Conflict Management Practices in Projects Implemented in Partnership by NGOs in Ethiopia: The Case of Hope for Children Organization & Its Partner Organizations”** under my guidance and supervision. Accordingly, I assure you that this research work is appropriate and standard enough to be submitted for the award of Master of Arts in Project Management.

Research Advisor

Signature

Date

Bahren Asrat (PhD)

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Acronyms /Abbreviations

DRA- Development & Relief Association

ESAP3 -- Ethiopian Social Accountability Program Three

EDI -- Eastern Development initiative

HFC-- Hope for Children

NGO – Non Governmental Organizations

PSDP-- Promotional Service for Developmental progress

PBS -- Protection of Basic Services

SA-- Social Accountability

SDGs -- Sustainable Development Goals

Abstract

The project world is growing big but resources are limited as a result individual organizations encounter difficulty to carry out big projects independently. The partnership is a very crucial step the organizations have taken to cope with this situation. Despite the advantage, conflict is an inevitable challenge in implementing the project in partnership. So the purpose of this study is to assess the conflict management practice in the project implemented in partnership by NGOs in Ethiopia: the case of HFC and its partner organizations.

The study uses a descriptive design and mixed approach. Both primary and secondary data sources were used, the primary data of the study collected through questioner and key informant interviews. The quantitative part of the study took 20 employees, from four organizations and purposive sampling was used for the interview. The data analyzed by using SPSS version 25 software and the result was presented in a way to respond research question. The study found out the most frequent source of conflict in the partnership were failure to respond to issues on time, poor communications and not having clearly defined authority consecutively. The partner organizations have formal conflict management preparation but all project team members are not familiarized and used at all level. The study also found compromise was the most commonly used conflict management style and followed by Accommodating and Confrontation. Finally the study recommends all partner organizations to consider and incorporate conflict management as the main part of the project management job in addition the study recommended other researcher to conduct further study on the area for supporting the existing practice with scientific evidence.

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter deals with the basic information and questions of the overall study. The chapter clearly shows the background and the main driving factors of the study. The gap observed in the previous works and the importance of further studies also discussed in the problem statement part. Generally, the chapter has the basic elements including objective, significance, scope, and limitation of the study.

1.1. Research Background

Institutions currently form partnerships, joint ventures, strategic alliances, and networks, faster than ever in what organization theorists call an organization revolution (Hyväri, 2002). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also promote partnerships, work together in a partnership is creating an opportunity for the organization to achieve more than what each partner might accomplish on its own (Carter, 2017). So, implementing the project in partnership is practiced as a project management approach to implement large or big projects by the capacity of the small and medium organization.

Lu and Yan (2007) defined partnering as a working relationship between stakeholders through, trust, teamwork, respect, commitment, and joint goals. Project management in partnership is also understood as a general management term to bring project goals into improving relationships among contracting parties and enhancing long-term alliances. It has to deal with human interactions and their balance of interests and powers (Wong and Cheung 2004).

Partnership formation between two or more organizations for building the capacity of the organizations to carry out projects (Lu and Yan 2007), there are also unintended outcomes like conflict. Conflict is an inevitable reality that happens in the project process as the fact that diversified skills for project work came from individuals and groups with different personalities, beliefs, interests, etc that may fail to coincide and makes conflict an avoidable reality of project management (Salleh & Adulpakdee, 2012).

The inevitability of conflict leads the project managers into a serious need of conflict management skill to perform well in the project (Olu & Abosedo, 2003). The Project Management Institute, Inc., (2008) advises conflict should be addressed early and usually in private, by using a direct collaborative approach. As some researches showed if the managers fail to respond to conflict early they will be forced to spend 42% of their time managing conflict and reaching an agreement with others (Ohlendorf, 2001). So the result shows the

importance of conflict management, which may become the main point to the success or the failure of a project.

The study investigated the benefit of the partnership, preparations for handling potential conflict between partners, and the practical experience of organizations to manage conflicts that happen. It employed a descriptive research design to study the conflict management practice of hope for children and its partners.

1.2. Background of Study Organizations

Hope for Children Organization (HFC) is an indigenous, non-political, non-faith-based local NGO, established in November 2000 G.C with the key objectives of sustainable and comprehensive community-based care and support for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. HFC is re-registered as an Ethiopian resident charity with registration No. 0016 in 2009. The organization has been successfully undertaking programs since its establishment through raising funds from multiple sources, international and local.

The organization carries out different projects by being a partner with international and local NGOs. Ethiopian Social Accountability Program 3 (ESAP3) is one of the projects HFC implement through a partnership with other three local NGOs in 13 woredas.

HFC implementing this project since 2016 through partnership, as a lead organization, it has been facilitating the Eastern part of 13 targeted woredas by forming a partnership with other three local NGOs, Development & Relief Association (DRA), Eastern Development Initiative (EDI), Promotional Service for Developmental progress (PSDP).

The Ethiopia Social Accountability Program 3 (ESAP3) is part of PBS (protection of basic services) and seeks to improve basic public service delivery by local governments. The overall objective of ESAP3 was to strengthen the use of Social Accountability (SA) tools, approaches, and mechanisms by citizens and citizen groups, as well as civil society organizations.

In partnership, four organizations including the lead organization, Hope for children, Development & Relief Association (DRA), Eastern Development Initiative (EDI), Promotional Service for Developmental progress (PSDP) carry out the Ethiopian Social Accountability Project (ESAP3) in different woreda of the country as they have the capacity and necessary resource including the office in particular woreda. Therefore, this study took the partnership build by Hope for Children organization and the other three partners' organizations to see partner NGOs' in Ethiopia practices of managing conflict in implementing a project in the partnership through descriptive study.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

For the last three decades, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an irreplaceable role in improving the life of a citizen in Ethiopia through direct support of the poor as well as by supporting the government for improving services provided for citizens. However, most of the organization doesn't have capacity to carry out big projects that produce a wide impact in the life of a citizen, so the partnership is one of the mechanisms organizations use to build their organizational capacity to carry out projects in large scale.

In the NGO world, a partnership is commonly understood as a code word that causes social changes through reflecting humanitarian, moral, political, ideological, or spiritual solidarity between non-government development organizations (Catherine, 2012). Working or implementing projects in partnership is one of the major solutions to form a competent team that has built the capacity of handling more complex and large projects (Lu and Yan 2007).

Despite the mentioned benefit implementing project in partnership has for organizations, there are also challenges or gaps related to a partnership management including unequal power among partners, poor communication, and focusing too much on protecting own territory than working together (Agranoff, 2012). All mentioned challenges have high potential to lead partner organizations into conflict.

Regardless of conflict is a common issue in the management of the project in partnership, there is a lack of tools and skills to manage emerging conflict and disputes within the partners constructively and productively among project teams of partner organization (Catherine, 2012). In the same time there is a shortage of study in the area of conflict management in the projects in general and conflict management in projects implemented in partnership in particular.

The study took two researches conducted on conflict management in projects in general as PM is a new discipline to address all important issues including conflict managements in projects implemented in partnership. Goparaju,(2015), is one of researcher studied the most common source of conflict and frequently used resolution style used for conflict management through secondary data analysis. Then he found the top ten sources of conflict from one hundred and five lists of conflict sources based on the frequency. The other important finding of this study was a list of five most frequently used conflict management styles Avoiding/Withdrawal, Compromising, Confronting/Problem Solving, Accommodating and Smoothing.

The other researchers also attempted to study conflict management in the projects and found out a list of the most frequent source of conflict that include Shared/Common Resources, Differences in Project Goal/Objective, Cultural Differences, Values Differences, Personality Issues, Differences in Technical, Opinions/Approaches, Schedules, Costs, Administrative procedures, and Different Perceptions. This study also assesses the most common conflict management styles and found out five most frequently used style, and cooperation was the first most common style Integration, Compromise, Avoidance, and Dominance ((Davor, et al, 2015). The two study found different results regards to source of conflicts and used mechanism to solve conflict that showed the importance of further study in the area by considering each project unique nature.

Reviewing of conducted studies in the area showed there are no enough studies conducted on conflicts with in partner organizations implementing projects in partnership despite the increasing global interest to implement projects in partnership. On the other hand studies showed limited knowledge of professionals in the area of conflict management in projects implementing in partnership (Catherine, 2012). Therefore, for narrowing the above mentioned gaps this study assess the conflict management practice in the project implemented in partnership by NGOs in Ethiopia.

The study intended to put its own contribution on conflict management in projects implemented in partnership by addressing four main research questions through assessing the conflict management practice of hope for children and its partners while they implement ESAP3 projects in partnership.

Research questions

- What are the main benefits partner organization experiences by carrying out projects in a partnership?
- What are the main points that lead partner organizations into conflict/source of conflict during implementing projects in partnership?
- What is the level of preparation of partner organizations to manage conflict it happens?
- What are practical conflict management mechanisms the partner organizations use in managing projects in partnership?

1.4. Research Objectives (General and Specific)

General objective

- To assess the practice of conflict management in projects that is carried out in partnership.

Specific Objective

- To identify the main purpose of the organization for working or implementing projects in partnership
- To identify the main points that lead partner organizations into conflict.
- To assess the conflict management preparations of the organization before it happens.
- To assess conflict management practical experience of partner organizations

1.5. Research Significance

The study aims to assess the existing system and experience of conflict management mechanism of hope for children and its three partner organizations during project implementation. The study aimed to display the practice of conflict management in partnership and its result on partnership and project performance. The study contributes to the project management practice by helping project managers to share experience and give a base for developing their conflict management system or plan as the partnership is becoming a common way of carrying out big projects by small organizations capacity.

The other significance of this study is to encourage other researchers to do further studies by showing the gap observed in the practice and the importance of further study as the issue is not covered regardless of the practice of implementing project in partnership becoming popular phenomena in project management.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is on conflict management systems and practices in the management of projects implemented through NGO partnerships. This study is specific to the partnership of hope for children and three other organizations that have contractual agreements to carry out ESAP3 (Ethiopian social accountability program three). Therefore, the finding of the study shows only the system and practice of conflict management of organizations in the particular partnership and does not show the other part of the organizations' practice or partnership in general. It took a single partnership experience of organizations, therefore; the finding of the study is not being generalized so it shows the specific experience of the organizations.

1.7. Limitation of the study

The study has some limitations regards to information as project management is a new discipline there are not enough materials or studies on the area of project management in partnership and conflict management. The scope of the study limited only the partnership of the organizations with other NGOs to implement specific projects, ESAP3, despite multiple partnerships the organizations might have to handle the projects. Therefore, the study may not give a full picture of organizations' partnership and conflict management practice in all areas of partnership the organizations have.

1.8. Organization of the research Report

The study report was organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study. Chapter two presents the review and summary of books and studies on the subject of partnership and conflict management in partnership. In the third chapter, the research methodology is discussed in detail. Chapter four presents the main research findings and discussion. The final chapter, chapter five, covered the research conclusion and recommendation.

1.9. Definition of Key Terms

Conflict- is a process that begins where one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affects something that the first party cares about (Krazer's, 2009)

Conflict management - is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflict in a sensible, fair, and efficient manner (Cook and Philip; 2001).

Partnership - is when two or more organizations work together towards a common aim (Catherine, 2012).

Partnership management - is the process of following up on and maintaining effective, productive, and harmonious relationships with partners (WWF, 2007).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is to review the work of different writers on the area of partnership and conflict management in partnership. An attempt has been made to review and summarize related works in line with the purpose of this particular study. The information obtained from the literature was also used to serve as a guide in designing the questionnaire for the research project.

2.1. Project management in partnership

2.1.1. Partnership

Project management in partnership is implementing the specific project within the partnership. A partnership is when two or more organizations work together towards a common goal. In the NGO world, the partnership is frequently understood as a code word to reflect humanitarian, moral, political, ideological, or spiritual solidarity between non-government development organizations joined together to pursue a common cause of social change (Catherine,2012). Partnerships are in the international development (ID) domain and became a central point for addressing the world's complex problems, such as hunger, poverty, and inequality (Alessia & Emanuela, 2014). In general, partnering is mainly a working relationship between stakeholders through respect, trust, cooperation, commitment, and shared goals (Lu and Yan 2007).

Lu and Yan give an overview of the concepts of partnering by summarizing some common features as follow mutually agreed goals, inter-organizational trust, problem resolution mechanism, and continuous improvement related to benchmarking process (Lu and Yan 2007).

Working with partners offer projects greater credibility and broadens the scope of the project what the projects can achieve. In good and effective partnerships the effectiveness and the working partnership is more than the sum of the individual partners (WWF,2007). The other Author saw the benefit of partnership in terms of improving local ownership, sustainability, and poverty touch, as well as the mutual exchange of resources and ideas (Brehm, 2001).

Catherine (2012), briefly discuss the Partnerships benefit as follow increasing outreach by working with new networks, allow more use of local knowledge by creating local ownership, it also increases the effectiveness of partners by sharing good practice and give power for

influencing donors, Governments and other stakeholders. The other writer also mentions the overarching benefit of partnering summarized as cost reduction and increased satisfaction of project participants (Akhibi, 2010).

2.1.2. Managing a partnership

Partnership management is the process of following up on and maintaining effective, productive, and harmonious relationships with partners (WWF, 2007). The effectiveness of partnerships within the NGOs depends on three principles that tend to be part of organizational culture and values. These principles are based on the effectiveness of the work on both sides; the quality of the relationship; clarity about the purpose of the relationship (Brehm, 2001).

In the management of the partnership, two important areas should be focused the first on is focusing on making sure achieving your aims and the second one is on nurturing the relationship between partnerships, for example, a partnership that is achieving a lot will tend to generate good feeling, confidence, and trust between partners (WWF,2007). The other writers also mention management of partnership has two-step of management the first one is to establish a clear foundation in the time of forming a partnership. The second step of managing partnership is for maintaining and making partnership through a different mechanism including connect socially, keep everyone in the pool, recognize each other's capability culture and motivation, and invest in tools, process & persons that have a good effect on management of partnership (Ruth and Eileen,2019). Whereas, Catherine presents the partnership process as it has four stages and managing partner as the third stage of the partnership process. Partnership, in general, has four stages that include preparing for partnership, setting up a partnership managing a partnership, and exiting or closing down a partnership. The management of a partnership has two key components the first one is making sure the partnership achieving the objective and the second component is about nurturing the relationship between partners. So, good management of partnership aims to keep these two components of management in balance (Catherine, 2012).

The managing partners have its challenges including poor or infective communication, disagreements on the crucial objectives for the relationship, and inability to identify and quickly make the changes in challenging time for partnership success (Ruth and Eileen, 2019). Catherine (2012) also add points regards to challenges faced by small organizations for managing their partnerships embrace balancing values of solidarity with the need for

accountability to donors, ensuring acceptable and timely monitoring and reporting, different agendas and project vision of partners, balancing unequal power relationships, communication and project management at a distance, partners striving for satisfying the donor and different working culture.

2.2. Conflict in project management

Conflict is a disagreement between two or more people, groups, departments, organizations, and countries and like who perceive that they have a mismatched concern, desires, and interests. Conflict exists when one party sees or perceives the action of another party as stopping or interfering with their goal or action (Cook and Philip; 2001). Conflict is the result of a difference of perception, opinion, or beliefs among people (PMI, 2010).

The most obvious cause of conflict at the workplace is what can reasonably be termed competition over scarce resources as most workplaces have limited resources and unlimited demands. Besides, conflict is inevitable among human beings as it is a natural outcome of human interactions that begins when two or more social entities engage one another while striving to attain their purposes (Oladimeji et al, 2019).

When we come to partnership in any definition there are different types of partnership, each with different levels of commitment, resourcing, and power relations lead to differences that result in misunderstandings and conflict in the partnership (Catherine, 2012). Conflict in project management is inevitable, this is a fact which we have to admit and face (Wael,2018).

2.2.1. Source of conflict in project management

If conflicts are not well managed, they are quickly turned into disputes. Disputes are one of the main factors which prevent the successful completion of the project. Be aware of the causes or source of disputes is one of the important conflict-handling management (Anita, 2016).

For this study, the three writers, Anita (2016), Goparaju (2015), & Tomas et al (2015) source of conflict list took and costumed based on the need of the study. The study organized and categorized conflict sources into individual and organizational sources.

Table 1.1 Source of conflict

S.No	Group of conflict	Source of conflict	Authors or Source
1	Individual source	Cultural difference	Goparaju (2015),
2		Value difference	Goparaju (2015), & Tomas et.al (2015)
3		Personality issues	Goparaju (2015), & Tomas et.al (2015)
4		The difference in technical opinions/approach	Goparaju (2015),& Anita,(2016).
5		Different perceptions	Goparaju (2015)&
6	Organizational source	Diverging goals and priorities	Anita,(2016), Goparaju (2015), & Tomas et al (2015)
7		Task interdependency Dependency between others to complete one's work	Anita, (2016).
8		Unresolved Prior conflict /	Goparaju (2015), & Tomas et al (2015)
9		Failure to respond to issues in a timely	Anita, (2016).
10		Not clear authority define	Goparaju (2015), & Tomas et al (2015)
11		Communication and information deficiencies (Poor and ineffective communication)	Anita (2016).
12		Poor management, control, and coordination	Anita (2016).

Katz (1964) also categorize the source of conflicts into three major sources of conflict the first one is structural conflict, that is the conflict arising out of the need to manage the interdependence between the different department in the organization. The second category is role conflict, a conflict that originates from sets of prescribed behavior and the final one is resources conflict, conflict arises from interest groups competition for organizational resources.

2.2.2. Types of conflict

As the study review literature on the area of types of conflict, there are different types of conflict but for the study purpose, the two categories that are functional or dysfunctional of the conflict took. The scholars' view of conflict changed across the time, the scholars of the '30s and '40s century see conflict as something bad, that it is destructive for the organization and that it should be avoided that is the traditional view (Davo et al, 2015). Through time this traditional way of seeing conflict as one type which is destructive/ dysfunctional and has only treat to the success of the project faded and new thinking established (Omayo & Mbatha,2018). The new view of seeing the conflict began in the period the '40s to the '70s of the last century and viewing conflict as something natural which occurs within every organization. So they come to the idea of conflict should be accepted as it can have the potential to lead an organization into better work performance (Davor et al, 2015). As the result, the conflicts in the workplace can either be functional or dysfunctional based on the management if it is managed properly the result will be constructive, especially in the workplace (Omayo & Mbatha,2018).

Holahan and Mooney (2004) also identify conflicts in two types' the first one is a constructive conflict as the manager manages the conflict properly and enables teams to generate higher quality decisions. In the same way, if the management is failing to manage and team members engage in debates that are emotional and personal the second type of conflict, destructive conflict, emerges. However, identifying or separating constructive/functional conflict from destructive /dysfunctional might be challenging as the studies show teams who experience high levels of constructive conflict consistently also tend to report high levels of destructive conflict (Holahan and Mooney, 2004).

Not all problems and differences can be resolved but proper and on-time management can reduce its negative consequences arising and improve their positive functions by promoting efficacy in organizations (Tabitha & Florence, 2019). So if the management is not aware of the importance of conflict management and identifying the source and work on it, the constructive conflict may change into destructive (Holahan & Mooney, 2004).

2.2.3. Approaches to Conflict Management

The Project Management Institute, Inc., (2008) advises that conflict should be addressed early and usually in private by using a direct collaborative approach. To manage the conflict, Weal (2018) suggests three fundamental steps the project managers follow for managing conflicts as the first step is defining the problem, ground and finally select the possible solution that fit the defined problem. The management of conflicts places the project manager in a position to select a conflict resolution approach by considering three important situations including the type of conflict, source conflict, and who are involved in the conflict. As the result mentioned factors help to build an atmosphere of trust which will be the base to keep the constructive conflict (Kerzner, 2009). There are five commonly used approaches of conflict management the project managers can use to manage conflicts.

Confronting (collaborating): use of this conflict management approach/ style in project management creates a situation that allows conflict to be resolved between two parties as a result of a win-win situation (Tomas et al, 2015). This style involves clear and straight communication where both parties meet and discuss their disagreement and more tend to resolve their conflict (Kerzner, 2009).

Compromising: this approach is to bargain or to search for solutions so both parties leave with some degree of satisfaction that is often the result of the confrontation. The approach follows the role of give and takes (Oachesu, 2015). So that each party involved in conflict gives up part of its value for reaching the solution (Davor et al, 2015).

Smoothing (or Accommodating): This approach is an attempt to reduce the emotions that exist in a conflict by emphasizing areas of agreement and de-emphasizing areas of disagreement (Oachesu, 2015 & Kerzener, 2009).

Forcing (Competing, Being Assertive): this approach creates a kind of win-loss situation that makes one party unsatisfied or satisfied with one party on the fever of the other. The approach is commonly used when one party has power over the other for imposing some solution (Weal, 2018 & Kerzener, 2009).

Avoiding (or Withdrawing): Avoidance is often regarded as a temporary solution to a problem to gain sometimes, delaying an argument for the decision which may lead to a win without argument when the problem and the resulting conflict repeatedly (Weal, 2018).

CONFLICT HANDLING INTENTIONS

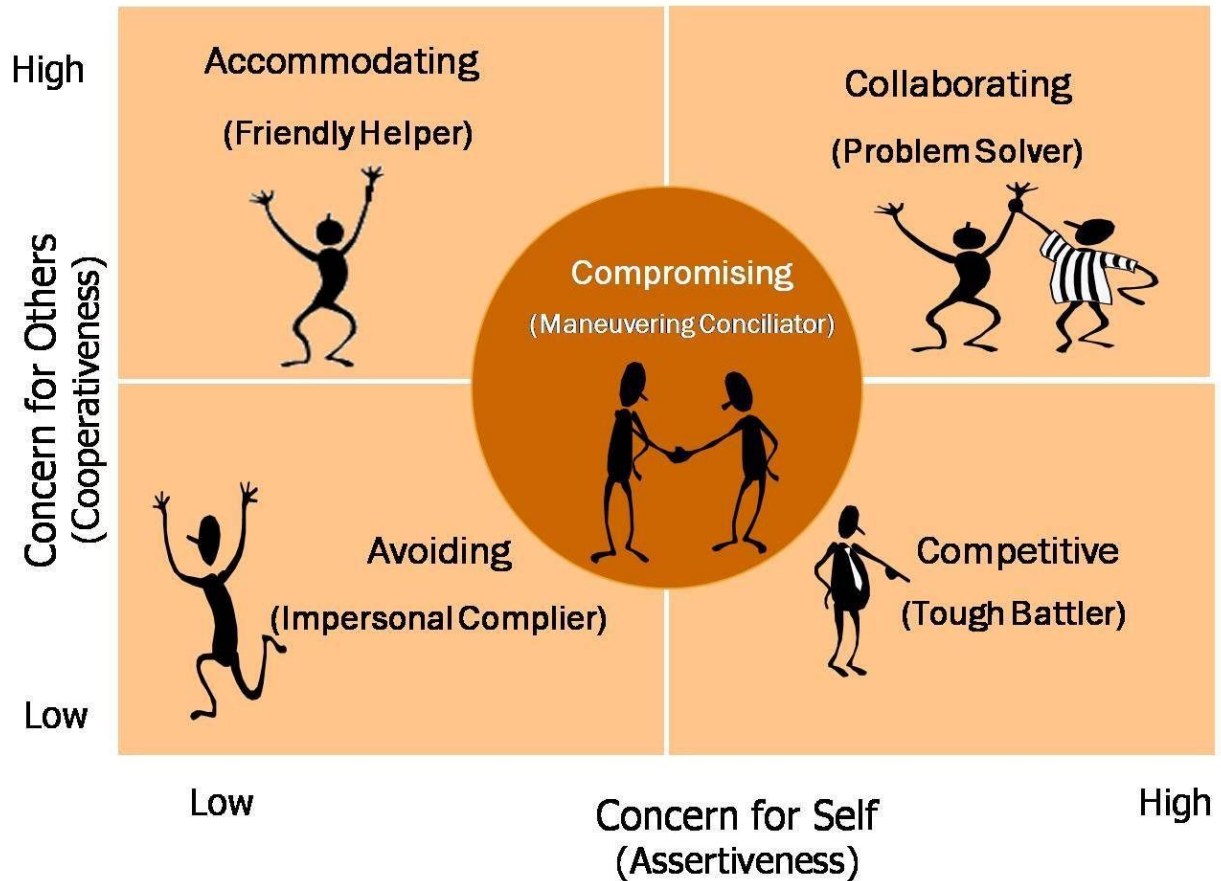


Fig 2.1: Conflict resolution approach by comparing the degree of cooperativeness with assertiveness. The figure directly took from Krazer's (2009) book.

Writers in different books and Articles explain the above five mentioned conflict resolution approach by comparing their degree of cooperativeness with assertiveness even by using figures as presented in figure 2.1. The first approach which is confronting is the problem-solving approach that has high cooperativeness and assertiveness that means an individual, as well as team interest, entertain equally. The second approach is compromising as the name indicates its friendly helper approach that focuses on cooperativeness and low assertiveness. In this approach, the conflicting parties go for maintaining a working relationship than satisfying their own need. The other approach forcing is high in assertiveness and low in cooperativeness, the approach focuses on self-interest by ignoring others. The fourth one is avoiding this approach is low in cooperativeness as well as assertiveness. The final one is

compromising this approach is balancing both cooperativeness and assertiveness in a good way that can satisfy conflicting parties (Weal, 2018 & Kerzner, 2009).

2.3. Empirical review

There is a limited number of studies conducted in the area of conflict management on project implementation in general and conflict management in managing projects in partnership in particular. So for this empirical review, the study took the studies that focus on conflict management in general and assembled the review into two subtopics, source of conflict and strategies used to manage conflict.

2.3.1. Source of Conflict

Goparaju, (2015) study the most frequent source of conflict in the management of projects through analysing secondary sources. He took a total of a hundred five reasons for conflicts in projects were identified from secondary research then select top-10 common source conflict in projects based on a number of references in the literature. The study conducted in school identifies the limited resource and poor communication between staff and management group as the most common source of conflict (Nnior et al,2011). The other writer also tries to identify the most frequent source of conflict in project management listed as Shared/Common Resources, Differences in Project Goal/Objective, Cultural Differences, Values Differences, Personality Issues, Differences in Technical Opinions/Approaches, Schedules, Costs, Administrative procedures, and Different Perceptions ((Davor et al, 2015). The other study on the construction project also found out the main source of conflict in the project management power, personality, group dynamics, and organization culture.

2.3.2. Strategies of Conflict management

The study took a total of forty conflict resolution techniques in projects through literature review then select five most frequently used conflict management techniques in projects in the order of preference are Avoiding/Withdrawal, Compromising, Confronting/Problem Solving, Accommodating and Smoothing (Goparaju, 2015). The other study aiming to view the most frequently used conflict management strategy used in project management and found out cooperation as conflict management was the most frequently used style by mean of 4.35 and followed by Integration (4.28), Compromise (3.53), Avoidance (3.42) and Dominance (2.72) ((Davor, et al, 2015). The study conducted in the school community found out the dominating

strategies they mostly use are accommodating, avoidance, competing, and compromising consecutively (Nnior et al,2011)

Innocent & Tope (2020).conducted a study on conflict management strategies for conflict that happen between stakeholders of the project then the top five strategies of conflict management as ranked by the respondents from the list of twenty conflict management strategies. “Be aware of causes and result”, "negotiation", "take steps to deal with the causes”, “establish cooperative goals" and "mediation" with their mean scores 4.82, 4.71, 4.70, 4.62, and 4.60 respectively. The study shows the list of frequently used conflict management strategies with their mean value as is Avoiding (2.35), Interdependence (2.35), and Hybrid processes (2.14).

The other study conducted (Nicola et al,2016) studied the conflict management of contraction projects in New Zealand by using a semi-structured question and found out most of the respondents confirmed their personal use of collaboration and negotiation for resolving conflict scenarios in their engineering project environment.

CHAPTER THREEE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The third chapter presents research methods and procedures employed in the overall attempt to address the basic research questions. The chapter consists of research design and approach, sampling techniques, methods of data collection and analysis, eligibility criteria, and ethical consideration.

3.1. Research Design

The study used descriptive research design as the design allows the study to identify and obtained information on the characteristic of a particular issue like community, group, or people (Inaam, 2016). The main purpose of descriptive research is an explanation of the set of circumstances as it is present as such and scientists do not have direct control over the variables (Shashi & Shanti, 2019).

The study is a cross-sectional study as it was conducted in a specific period. The study was using a mixed research approach for addressing the basic research questions. A mixed approach helps the researcher to collects, analyzes, and mixes or integrates both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study and providing a better understanding of the study problem than either type by itself. The authors suggest a research approach selected based on the nature of the research problem, the purpose of the project, the researcher's personal experiences, skills, attitudes, and resources at disposal (Vijar, 2015). So a mixed approach was selected for the study by considering the mentioned criteria.

3.2. Description of Study variables

Considered variables in this study are including the benefit of partnership, source of conflict in partnership (Cultural difference, value difference, personality issue, the difference in technical opinions/approach, diverging goal & priorities, task interdependence, unresolved prior conflict, filer to respond issues on time, not clear authority define, poor infective communication and poor coordination or project management), the partner organizations level of preparation for handling conflict, and conflict management practice of the organization (Confronting, Compromising, Accommodating, Forcing, and Avoiding).

3.3. Study Area and Target Population

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa head offices of HFC and three partner organizations as well as the eastern part of Harrerge field offices through using communication technology. The total number of works who are involved in the implementation of projects in this partnership, ESAP3, is 20 individuals from the four partner organizations. The target group includes project coordinators, financial officers, and executive directors of each organization, HFC, DRA, EDI, and PSDP.

3.4. Data Source and Types

Both secondary and primary data sources were used as a source of information. For Primary data, the study was using both interviews and questioner with project team members of partner organizations and high-level workers, Executives directors, of the organizations. For secondary data sources, documents and guidelines of organizations on related conflict management and related issues reviewed.

3.5. Data Collection Tools

Both interview and questioners were used for data collection since multiple forms of data collecting tools are recommended and the choice of data collection tools are influenced by the context, structure, and timing of research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). So the key informant interview and questioner help the study to collect data through email and phone call as the study conducted within a short time and under an epidemic of COVID that limit individual interaction.

3.6. Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling techniques were used for selecting 5 respondents of Key informant interview as it is the best technique for selecting respondents for qualitative research (Kreuger and Neuman, 2006). The other reason the purposive sampling technique has chosen, the quality of enabling the study to pick the sample units that have particular features or characteristics for detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and question which the study aims to find out (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006). For the quantitative part, the total population size involved in the study based on their willingness as the population number is only 20 workers, and research books recommended to take the total numbers of population or no need of sampling as the main purpose of sampling is to save money and time

for studying the whole population size so if the population is small do not consume much money and time it is preferred to involve the total population (Shashi & Shanti, 2019).

3.7. Eligibility Criteria

The study participants selected by using inclusive criteria and the criteria include the following:

- 1) Willingness to participate in the study.
- 2) Currently working in hope for children or one of the three partner organization
- 3) Working or having close contact with the project that carries out in study partnership, ESAP3.

3.8. Data Analyses

The data analyzed through the descriptive statistical method of research and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25 software was applied to interpret and analyze the data. The response from the questioner was analysed by using mean standard division and percentages and presented in tabulation and graphic way. The qualitative responses and open-ended questioner responses were also analysed and presented by incorporating with the questioner findings as the study uses a mixed approach.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

Social scientists have a greater ethical obligation than the average citizen for their study population, and the larger society. Research ethics is about how the relationships between researchers and respondents are to be handled during the research process by using binding and consensual ethical principles and rules (Flick et.al, 2004). So, to governing my interaction with both questioner and key interview respondents by

- Giving proper explanation about the purpose of the study, the kind of participation required, how the collected information will be utilized with confidentiality and an approximation of time will require for the interview.
- The degree of confidentiality is maintained by presenting cases in the study without mentioning their real identity for guarding their privacy as it is an important part of protecting research subjects' privacy (Marvasit, 2004).

- Ensure confidentiality of the information through handling audio records with the utmost care and the participants will also tell this. Each respondent will be assured about the record; it will be destroyed after completion of the study and defended.
- The researcher will be conscious of the presentation of data and finding it transparently by avoiding biasedness and being honest and professional.
- The Acknowledging sources of information will be used in the research strictly follow.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This key chapter presents the research data gathered through a questionnaire and key informant interview from HFC and its three partner organization employees who are involved in the ESAP3 project that implement in a partnership by focusing on conflict management system and practice in partnership project management. Based on the methodologies, research design, and tools of this project; data were collected from 20 respondents. Questionnaires are distributed and returned from 20 employees as the size of the population is small researchers work hard to avoid incompleteness of questioner. Therefore 20 were effectively used for analysis that shows a response rate of 100 percent.

Data analysis, discussion, and interpretation of the results are presented in the way of hitting the objective of the study. The chapter sectioned under the title of demographic information of respondents, benefits of forming a partnership, source of conflict in partnership, partner organization conflict management preparation for conflict before it happens, and practical experience of conflict management.

4.2. Demographic Information

In the attempt to have a general view of the respondents, the study respondents provide information about their age group, gender, duration of stay in a specific project, responsibility, or position in the project.

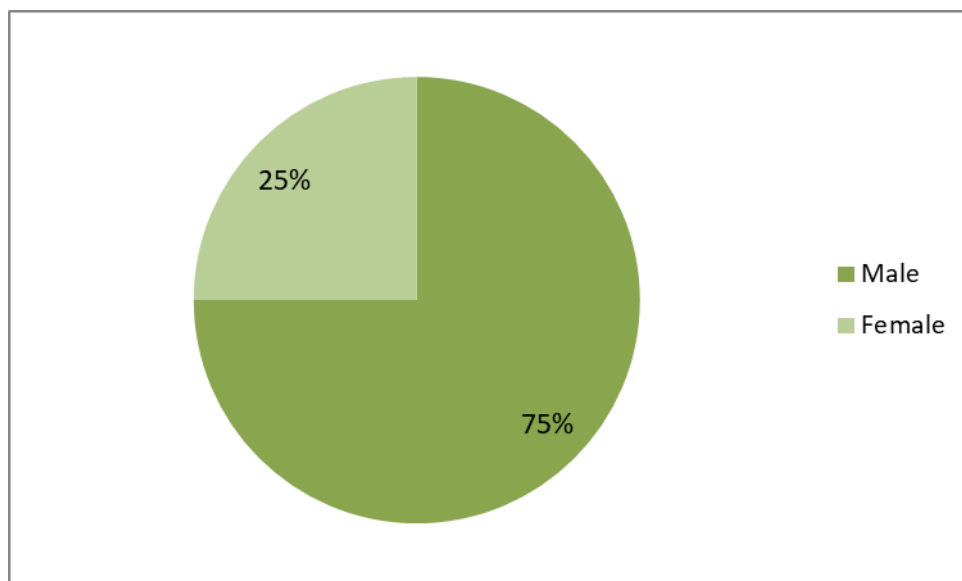
Table 4.1 Demographic data of the respondent

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age group	20-30	8	40%
	30-40	8	40%
	40-50	1	5%
	50 and above	3	15%
Sex	Male	15	75%
	Female	5	25%
Educational status	Degree	17	85%
	Diploma	2	10%
	Master's degree	1	5%
Position in the organization	Executive directors	4	20%
	Project team	12	60%
	Finance	4	20%
Duration of stay in the specific project	Less than 1 years	2	10%
	1-2 years	7	35%
	2 years and above	11	55%

Of the total population, 80 % of them are between the ages 20 - 40 and only 20% are above 40 years old. So, the result show majority of workers in the partner organizations are young. In this study, the age of individuals much related to the position or responsibilities like 20 % of respondents are executive directors and all of them are above age 40. While 60% of respondents are project team members from four partner organizations and the rest 20% of respondents are from finance that are responsible for handling the project finance. The finding shows the older or more mature individuals are holding the position of leading the organizations.

Regards, to the responsibility or the position of respondents' executive directors, project team members, and finance officers of each partner organization included based on their direct involvement in the ESAP3 project that implement in the study partnership. So the compositions have given the full picture of conflict management practice and system in partnership from different department views, like from the finance and top management.

Fig: 4.1 Pie chart of respondent sex composition



From the total respondents, only 25% of them are females as the total population that means the majority of workers in the project are males; it covers 75% of the total worker. But the population census of Ethiopia conducted in 2007 shows females are 49.5 % of the total population, so the project composition of females is much lower than the census result of the country that shows the poor participation of females in the project.

Educational background of respondent showed, 85 % of them have a first degree; two workers have a diploma that is 10%, and one individual has a master's degree. The result assured the study educational qualification of respondents makes them understand and manage the self-administrative questioner easily.

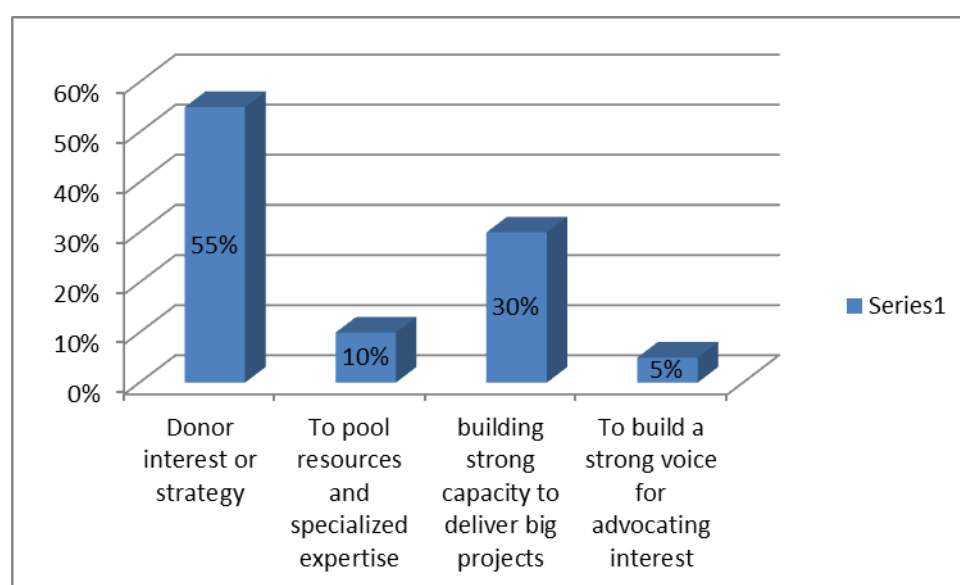
The project is a five-year project and now it's on the fourth year and 55% of workers stay in the project for more than 2 years and 35 % stay 1 to 2 years and only 10 % of the project worker stays in the project for less than one year. Around half of the respondents have stayed in the partnership for less than two years that is a half time of the project lifetime. One of the interviewees mentions the project staff turnover is one of the challenges the project faced unexpectedly. Hiring and familiarizing new staff needed extra effort for the partnership and it was potential source of risk especially if new employee didn't have experience of projects implemented in the partnership.

4.3. Benefit of Implementing the Project in Partnership

The organization engages in different partnerships for getting specific benefits from the partnership as the literature review displayed. So, the study evaluates whether the studied partners achieves planed benefit or not through asking directly involved staffs' different questions that evaluate which benefit with what degree of satisfaction organization gain through implementing the project in partnership in this section.

Respondents' previous experience of working in projects implemented in the partnership showed 75% of workers have previous experience of implementing projects in partnership. From those having experience more than half of them prefer or consider the implementation of the project in partnership has more advantage than implementing projects independently like built the capacity of the organization to run projects effectively, increase the reachability of the project in a different geographical area, and population. Whereas a few respondents didn't support the practice of partnership at all at it has frequent conflict and it has the challenge to monitor, especially in financial areas than implementing projects independently. All interview respondents also have a strong belief in the benefit of implementing projects in partnership for their small organizations by securing budget for some time, building the organizations capacity so on. But one of the interviewee has some hesitation as project implementations has challenges related to managing partnership that need more effort than implementing project independently.

Fig 4.2: Partnership triggering factors



Respondents asked the triggering factors that lead an organization to form partnership, the first two main factors mentioned by respondents were donor interest or strategy with a score of 55% as first factor and the second factor that mentioned more frequently was building strong capacity to run project with score of 30%. The interview respondents also mentioned the donors' interest was the main triggering factor that leads organizations to form a partnership for implementing projects.

Different articles written on partnership mentioned organizations might have a different objective to form a partnership and they strive to achieve the objective throughout the partnership. The study respondents requested to assess whether their organizations hit their initial objective that motivate to form a partnership or not and the result showed 85% of them believe that the organization achieves its objective while the 15% believe that the organizations were not achieving the objective that expected to achieve through partnership. The interviewee also mentioned the project achieve the objectives they aim but the degree of satisfaction is different like a secure budget by satisfying the donors' interest through forming partnership don't satisfy as expected.

The study participants rated the organization's level of satisfaction on the benefit by using five important benefits values that the organization plan to achieve through partnership. For measuring the satisfaction of the organization five scale measurements used including strongly satisfied represent 1, Satisfied 2, Neutral 3, Unsatisfied 4, and strongly unsatisfied is 5.

Table 4.2: The degree of organization satisfaction on partnership benefit

S. No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Secure donor or budget	20	1.95	.759
2	Build project implementing capacity	20	1.45	.510
3	Build strong voice for advocating their interests	20	1.95	.605
4	Pool their resource & Specialized expertise	20	2.00	.649
5	Contribute to overall organization goal	20	1.50	.513

Table 4.2 shows all variables mean value is less than 2.5 that is the average mean value of the scale as the strongly satisfied and satisfied is represented by 1 and 2 the result indicates that all evaluated organizational need is satisfied. The first benefit the organization satisfied most according to the respondent response is building project implementing capacity with the mean value ($M=1.45$, $SD= 0.51$). The second higher score is ($M=1.5$, $SD=0.513$) that partnership contribution for all over goal of organizations. Securing donor or budget ($M=1.95$, $SD= .759$) and building a strong voice for advocating their interest ($M=1.95$, $SD=.605$) score equal mean value with different standard deviation. The list of satisfied benefits of the organization according to the score is pool resource and specialized expertise with the mean value ($M=2$, $SD=.649$). Whereas the interview finding show different result in the area of pooling resources and experts, especially sharing expertise within partner organizations are very satisfactory as the partners are very small to hire experts like M&E officer and Gender officer so one organization who leads the partnership hire these experts and share among partner organizations as the project is implementing a single project but implemented across the partnership. The other subjects they discuss in the interview is about securing donor or budget, all respondents agree the partnership project secured five years fund for the project but they complained on the level of satisfaction or on the amount of budget.

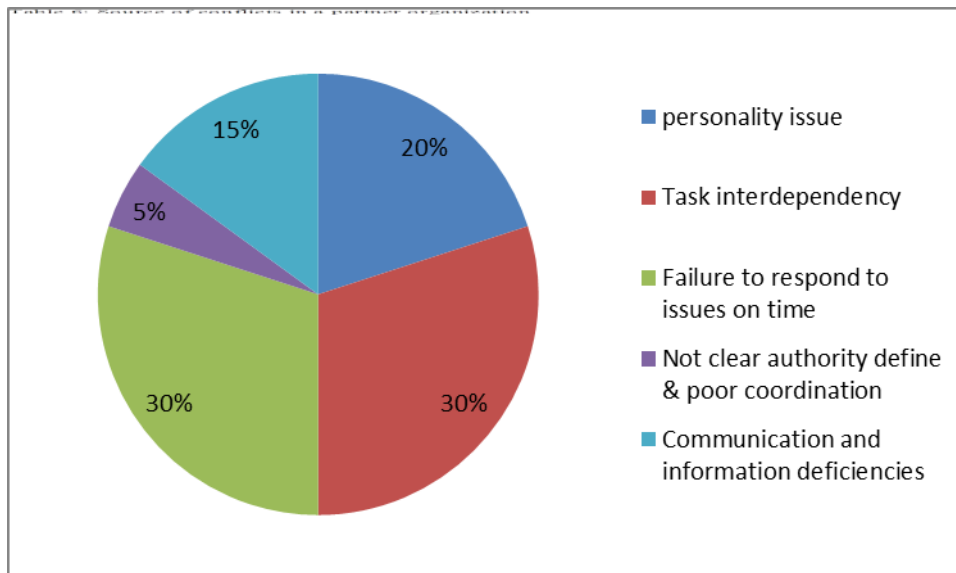
Despite the satisfying need of the partnership, all respondent agrees there are challenges in the process of managing projects in partnership. They prioritize their main challenges faced in the partnership, and communication gap mentioned as the most common challenges by scoring 40% and the second-mentioned challenge is a conflict of interest by 30%. Power difference among partner organizations also mentioned by respondents as the third most common challenge by score 15%. The three mentioned challenges' identified by respondents were also mentioned in the literature review of the study as the main challenges of implementing the project in partnership,

Respondents of interviewee have similarly believed that implementing projects in partnership has challenges despite the benefit each organization achieves through partnership. Some of the challenges are unexpected when the partnership established like high turnover of project staff of the organizations that is not affecting only one organization that have high turnover but all partner organizations affected as they implementing the project in partnership.

4.4. Source of conflict in implementing projects in partnership

Different researchers point out a different source of conflict based on the studying situation, as the situation of this study is different from reviewed researches the respondents asked to point out the major source of conflicts between partner organizations while implementing projects through questioner and interview. Failure to respond to issues on time, diverging goals and priorities, personality issues, communication problem, task interdependence is most frequently mentioned reason as a source of conflicts in implementing the project in partnership.

Fig 4.3: Source of conflicts in a partner organization



To understand the most frequent source of conflict in the study partnership, respondents were asked to rank the most frequent source of conflict that happened in the partnership. Five scales of Likert measurements are used to evaluate the frequencies of source of conflict, Always represent by 1, Often 2, some times 3, Rarely 4, and Never 5.

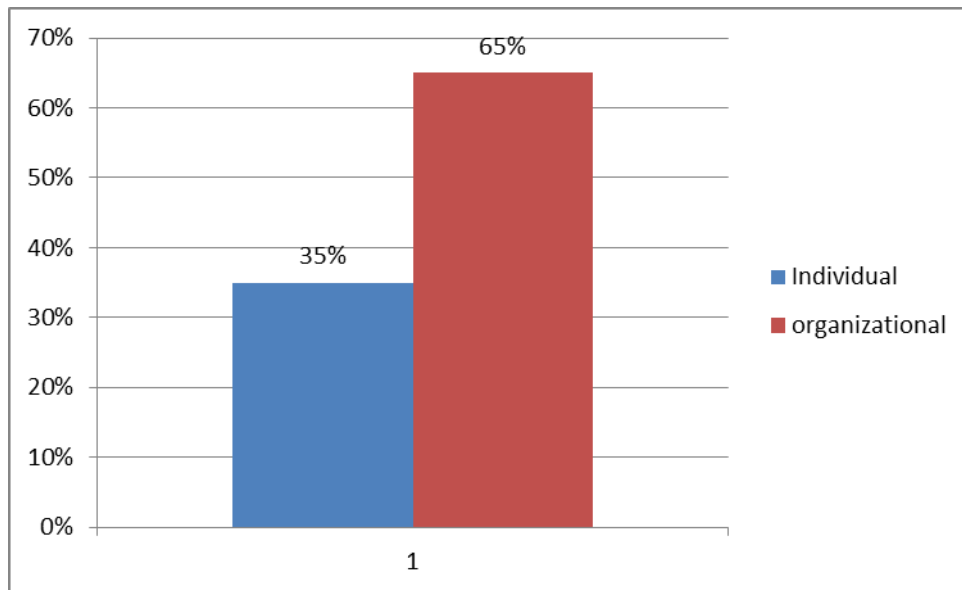
Table 4.3: The source of conflict rank

S. No	Source of conflict	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Cultural difference	20	4.75	.444
2	Value difference	20	3.75	1.164
3	Personality issues	20	2.00	.973
4	The difference in technical opinions/approach	20	2.70	.923
5	Diverging goals & priorities	20	2.50	.688
6	Task interdependence/dependence of one project task on another.	20	2.05	.510
7	Unresolved prior conflict	20	2.50	.761
8	Failure to respond to issues on time	20	1.30	.470
9	Not clear defined authority	20	1.90	.553
10	Poor or infective communication/information deficiencies	20	1.70	.571
11	Poor management and coordination	20	2.00	.459

As the table of descriptive analysis shows, respondents rank the most frequent source of conflict in the partnership relationship and Failure to respond issues on time, with the mean value of ($M=1.30$, $SD = 0.470$) select as the first most common source of conflict. The second most common source of conflict is Poor or infective communication/ information deficiencies with mean value ($M=1.7$, $SD=0.571$) and Not clearly defined authority ($M= 1.9$, $SD= 0.553$), personality issue ($M=2$, $SD=0.973$), poor management and coordination ($M=2$, $SD=0.459$) followed as the most common source conflict in the partnership project implementation. When compared to the other source of conflicts the most uncommon source of conflicts are value difference ($M=3.75$, $SD =1.164$), and Cultural difference ($M=4.75$, $SD =.444$).

To finalize the question related to the source of conflict, respondent asked to identify which category of source of conflict that emanates from an individual employee or organizational source that originates from the organization structure mostly happened. Then 65% of respondents believe that organization-related source of conflicts as a major category of source of conflict in partnership whereas 35% source of conflict categorized as individual-related.

Fig 4.4: Category of conflict resource



The finding of the interview also shows that organizational source of conflict is the very leading source of conflict compared to the individuals' source that originates from the personality of an individual member of a project. All the partner organization in this partnership is small thus they don't have strong organizational structure or standard practice of managing the project. Therefore the overall result of lack of well-organized structure and standard of practice lead the organization into conflict with the other partners. The interviewees agree with questioner result that organizational source of conflict as main source of conflict in their partnership. In addition the interviewee mentioned the interference of individual interest or personality as the cause of conflict is not deniable, in some cases one of the partner organizations' projects team can initiate the conflict due to his/her interest or behavior. However, one of the interviewees says "if the organization has the strong structure it can control the individual source of conflicts easily".

4.5. Level of Partner Organizations Conflict Management Preparation

As per the literature review of the study presents conflict is an unavoidable fact of the work environment. Thus organizations should prepare themselves for this unavoidable reality of work environment so the studies assess partner organizations preparation for handling this work reality through interview, questioner and document review. The following table presents the finding of the questioner on the level of the partner organizations preparedness for conflict management before the conflict happens.

Table 4.4: Conflict management preparation

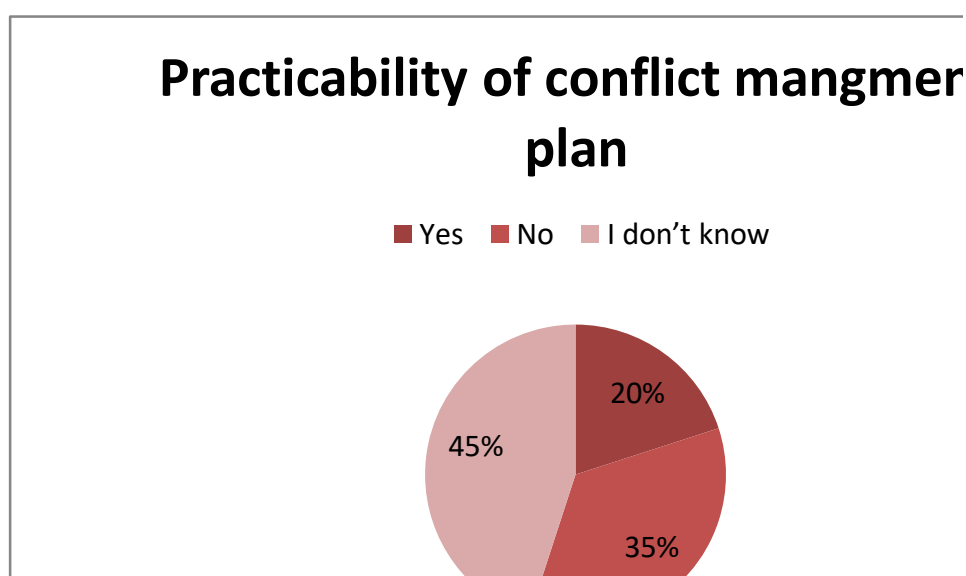
Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Org. has prepared document or conflict management plan	Yes	7	35%
	No	1	5%
	I don't know	12	60%
Familiarity with the document or plan	Yes	6	30%
	No	14	70%
When the preparation is done.	Planning	7	35%
	Implementing	0	0%
	M& E	0	0%
	I don't know	13	65%
An ideal time for preparation of conflict management	Planning	15	75%
	Implementing	1	5%
	M&E	1	5%
	Initiation	3	15%
Do you think the preparation is practical/usefulness	Yes	4	20%
	No	7	35%
	I don't know	9	45%

As the table show, only 35 % of respondents say yes to the question on the availability conflict management plan while the majority of respondents around 60%, do not have clue whether the partner organizations have a conflict management plan or not. Plus only 30% of workers including executive directors are familiarized with the document through just having the hard copy of the plan.

A limited number of respondents that is 30 % of employees know when the project conflict management plan prepared and they say in the time of project planning while 65 % say they don't know when exactly the plan develops. But the majority of respondents it is 75% believe that the ideal time to prepare or preparing a conflict management plan is project planning time whereas 15 % of respondents believe initiation time is the ideal time for developing a project conflict management plan.

Then the respondents give their view on the practicability of the document or preparation as the significant number of respondents, 45% say they can't say anything about the practicability of conflict plan and 35 % respondent believe the plan is not practical so only 20% of participant say the plan is practical. The result show how poor the practicability of plan for solving conflict or poor familiarity of project staff for the plan.

Fig 4.5: Practicability conflict management plan



For more understanding of the quality and level of preparation of organization to manage conflict respondents asked to rank the quality of conflict management plan or preparation through five values. The question uses a Likert scale with five scales, excellent is 1, Good is 2, Fair 3, Poor 4, and very poor 5.

Table 4.5: Quality of preparation

S. No		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Timing of preparation	20	2.15	.745
2	Is the document Compressive	20	3.15	.745
3	Practical applicability/usability in a practical situation	20	3.10	.852
4	Project staff familiarity about preparation/	20	4.55	.510
5	Participation of partner organization in preparation	20	4.65	.489

The quality of preparation of an organization for conflict management is evaluated by respondents by using a five scale Likert scale. The mean value of this scale is 2.5 and only one value, time of preparation score (M= 2.15, SD=.745). whereas the other four indicators' mean value is more than 2.5 which means the quality of preparation considered by the respondents as poor especially the project staff familiarity and participation of partners in the preparation by score (M=4.55, SD=.510) and (M=4.65, SD=.489) respectively.

The interview respondents mention the preparation of the document didn't include any of the project staff; it was developed by the consultant and included in the partners' agreement document. So only those who have access agreement document have a chance to see and use the plan in the time of conflict. One of the interviews says only higher officials of partner organizations have document and the document has solution only for big conflicts that threaten the survival of partnership or have a high negative impact on the project implementation.

To finalize the assessment of conflict management preparation of partner organization, respondents asked to evaluate the general conflict management preparation of partner organizations and only 25% of respondent consider the preparation as good whereas 40% of them consider as fair while 35% consider it as weak.

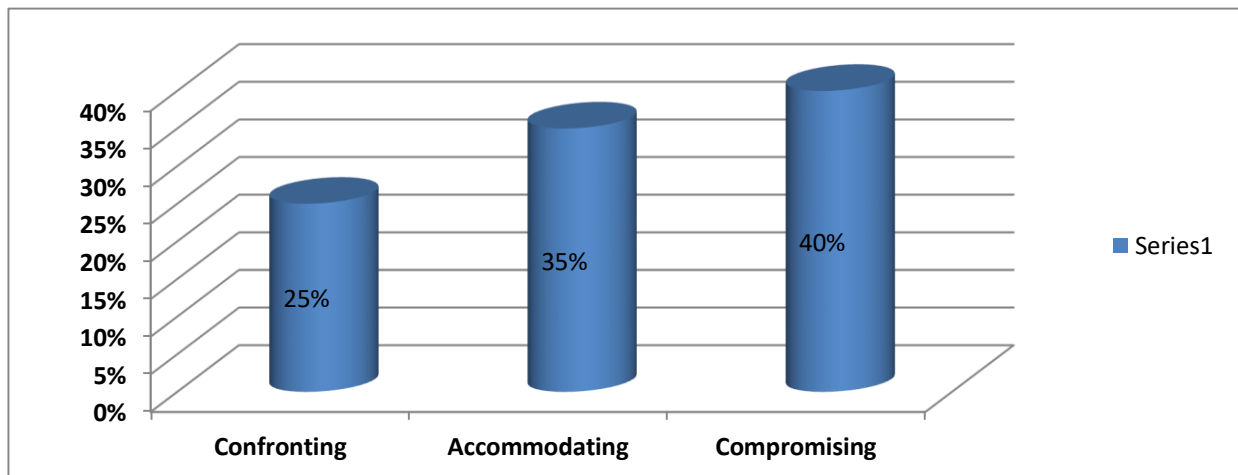
4.6. Conflict Management Practice

In this subsection, the respondents asked a different question in regards to the existing practice of conflict management in partner organizations that implementing one project in partnership. The first question is about their experience whether the organization uses the conflict management plan/ document in the time of conflicts and 30% say the plan is used in the time of conflict management and 25% say the plan is not used. However, 45% of them don't have any idea whether the plan is applied in the practice of conflict management or not.

Table 4.6: Use of prepared plan for conflict management

Plan use in conflict	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
No	5	25.0	25.0	55.0
I don't know	9	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

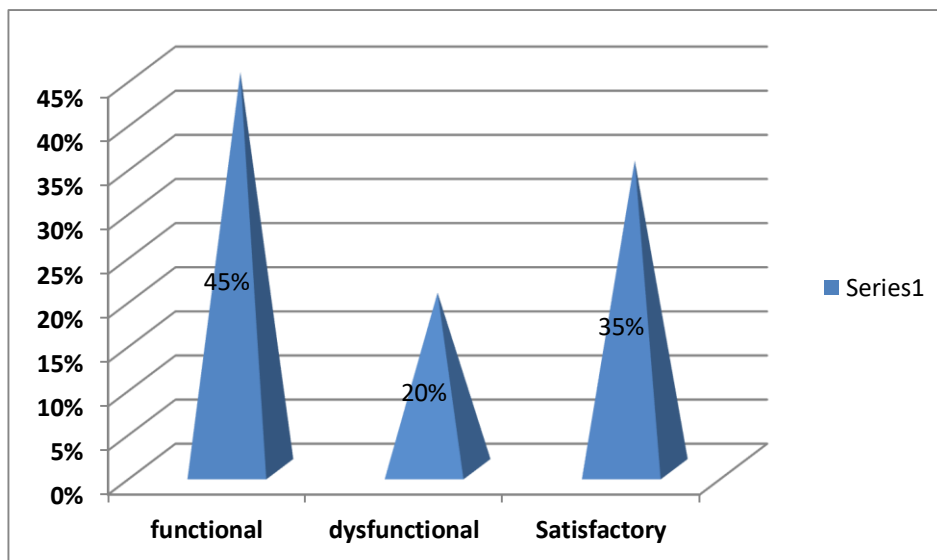
Fig 4.6: Conflict management style



The literature review part presents five different approaches or styles that can be used for handling or managing conflicts. The respondents were asked to share the most popular conflict management style used by partner organizations and 40% of respondents say the most commonly used conflict handling approach is Compromise style while 35% is Accommodating /Smoothing and 25% Confrontation strategies as the most common project management strategy used by partner organizations. The interviewee also agrees with the idea

of compromising style as the most commonly used style took for managing conflict that happened between partner organizations due to all partner organizations focusing on maintaining the partner relationship at any cost.

Fig 4.7: Type of Conflict



The literature review part of the study shows two types of conflict based on the conflict management output. If the project manager is properly handled the conflict and on time the project may have a positive impact on the project or could be functional. On the other hand, if the project management team couldn't handle the conflict properly or delayed in response might have a dysfunctional or destructive effect on the project's success. Finally, the workers were asked to evaluate the output or impact of conflict management practice on the performance of a project and the overall partnership. Then 45 % of respondent believe that the conflict is handled properly and the outcome is constrictive or functional in the interview the respondent also say they use the conflict as means to reship and the clear relationship of partner organizations that might cause conflict for the second time and 35% respondent say the satisfactory it is just solving the problem and 20% respondent believes the conflict management outcome is dysfunctional as it takes more time to reach on the solution. in this classification, respondents create a third option for conflict type that is not functional or dysfunctional but the result of managing the conflicting issue is just solving the immediate problem without having a long effect on the function of the project.

The interviewee mentioned the only big issue that gets attention for conflict management but there are small issues that don't get the proper attention of partner organizations and manage properly. These issues get bigger and complicated over time and so its result has a negative impact on the performance of the project as well as the partnership relationship.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDING, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter, a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations is presented based on the previous chapter.

5.1. Summary of Finding

The study involves all project staff from four partner organizations, executive directors, project staff, and finance officers of the projects to accommodate the view of all professionals involved in the project management. The sex composition of the study show limited participation of female as it covers only 25% of the total staff regardless of females are around half of the community as Ethiopia census of 2007 showed.

The organizations have triggering factors that lead them to form partnerships including donor interest, building project implementing capacity, build strong voice, and pool resources and expertise. All mentioned triggering factors of the partnership satisfied with different degrees like building the capacity of the organization strongly satisfied than securing donor or budget which was the main triggering factor of establishing partnership.

However the respondents didn't mention only benefits of partnership they also mentioned challenges that affect the project performance and the partnership relationship itself including communication gap, power difference on decision making, conflict of interest and mismanagement of found.

The study aimed to assess the source of conflict with its degree of frequency in the partnership relationship as different studies presents different source of conflicts with a different situation. In the study around 11 source of conflict ranked and Failure to respond to issues on time, Poor or infective communication and Not having clear Authority were rank 1to 3 consecutively as the most frequent source of conflict in implementing projects in partnership. Conflicts that arise from organizational structure or culture are more common sources than the individual.

The study assessment of conflict management includes the preparation of the organization for managing conflict before it happens and the result displayed the presence of a formal conflict management plan that have been attached with the project agreement document. Despite the plan was attached with the project document majority of the project staff is not familiarized

with and access the document. The document was prepared by the consultant and the staff has not participated in the process and they evaluated the quality of preparation as poor.

The last issue covered in the study was a real experience of conflict management and its outcome on the partnership and project implementation. The conflict management plan was used only at a higher level conflict so all employees didn't know whether the conflict management plan is used or not. Despite lack of knowledge of whether the conflict management plan is used or not the respondents assess the conflict management style partners mostly used and compromise conflict management styles is mostly used for managing conflict in the partnership and followed by accommodation and confrontation/collaboration. And 45% of respondents believe that conflict has a functional/constrictive effect despite the energy and time spend to manage the problem by making decision-makers to be conscious of the next conflict and focus on more prevention.

5.2. Conclusion

This descriptive study was conducted on the assessment of conflict management practices in projects implemented in partnership by NGOs in Ethiopia: the case of hope for children organization & its partner organizations. The study applied a mixed approach to assessing the existing conflict management practice system of the partnership organizations. The method allowed assessing and describing conflict management practice and answering research questions. Both questioner and interview used as the primary source of information and finally the finding analyzed through descriptive statics, by using SPSS version 25 software, the interviewed data presented and analyzed by incorporating with the quantitative data findings.

Organizations form a partnership with the other organizations by aiming to achieve some objectives or benefits including donors and budget security, pool resources and expertise, building a strong capacity to run big projects, and building a strong voice for advocating. The satisfaction of their need or expectation from the partnership helps the organizations to stay longer in the partnership and solve the conflict by giving priority to their partnership relation shape in the extent to compromise some of their interests for maintaining the partnership.

The partner organizations have different sources of conflict that originate from individual personality as well as the structural problem of the specific partner organizations. The partner organizations implement one specific project in a partnership that means they work as a single project team so the weakness of one organization directly affect all partners performance as

the result source of conflict originate from the organizations', weakness related with organization culture or structure, have been the most frequent source of conflict in the partnership than personal issues.

Well documented conflict management plan has been attached with contractual agreement as it is the criteria of donors but the document is developed by consultants or experts who are outside of project team in partner organization. As the result the study showed poor familiarity of the document by the project team and weak use of documents for managing conflicts faced in the project day to day work.

The conflict management experience of partner organizations has an effect on the performance of the project as well as the smooth relationship of partner organizations. The main conflict management style used in this partnership is compromising, the style encourage the partner organizations leave some of their interests for reaching an agreement and continue the partnership. As the compromise commonly used for solving the conflicts among partners, it might lead the partner organization in to dissatisfaction and negative effect in the long run relationship of partnership despite significant percentage of conflicts managed in the partnership produce constructive or functional outcome.

5.3. Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study some recommendations provided as follow.

The implementation of the project in partnership has a benefit for small organizations like study organizations that have limited resources to achieve their goal, so the partnership is ideal for organizations to build their capacity of implementing projects and go with the increased global interest in the partnership. These partner organizations should evaluate the benefit they got from implementing projects in partnership and challenges they face continuously and cascaded the practices in the other projects as the study result show the partnership strengthens the capacity of the partner organization and fulfill other important need/benefit.

Despite the benefits get from partnership there are always challenges that lead the organization into conflict. In the partner formation time, all organization should clear with the possible source of challenge and develops their mechanism to minimize the intensity of challenges and manage on time and properly before it affects the performance of the project.

The study recommended the organizations to produce good quality and comprehensive conflict management document in the planning stage of project, before conflicts happen by go through potential sources of conflict. The document should have detailed steps of management and clearly stated responsibilities each conflicting party will follow in the conflict resolution. Besides, the availability of good quality conflict management document or plan all project team should be involved in the process of document development and encouraged to use in all level of conflicts. The organizations should vitalize the participation of all workers in the process of conflict management preparation.

In the study the three most common sources of conflict identified as Failure to respond to issues on time, Poor or infective communication and Not having clear Authority were rank 1up to 3. The partner organizations recommended using this information and focusing on the prevention of conflict before it happens as solving conflict costs the project much more than preventing it. Conflict is an unavoidable reality of life so the project managers can't prevent it fully but it can be minimized its frequency and intensity as well as make the output of conflict functional through proper handling, and assessing and working on the source of conflict frequently throughout the project cycle.

Finally, the study recommends all partner organizations to consider and incorporate conflict management as the main part of the project management job.

5.3.1. Suggestion for other researchers

Implementing projects in partnership is becoming a popular part of project management over time but there is no enough researches conduct in the area regardless of it is a growing phenomenon in project management. Despite the advantage gain through partnership, there is a frequent conflict between partner organizations so studying and providing research-based recommendation on the management of conflict in a functional way is an untouched area that needs more research.

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

PROJECT MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Questionnaire to be filled by employees of HFC and partner organizations

Dear Participants,

My name is Beminet Merihatibab. I am currently doing academic research work on the subject Assessment of Conflict Managements Systems and Practices in Projects Implemented in Partnership by NGOs in Ethiopia: The Case of Hope for Children Organization & Its Partner Organizations for my postgraduate study in Project Management at Addis Ababa University. The study follows case study approach, the project implement in partnership. The project you have been working from 2016 to now is among the partnership projects selected for the study. For this purpose, I am interviewing project staffs appropriate for the study. The information obtained from this questioner will only be used for this academic research work. All the information I get from you will remain strictly confidential and will never be shared to anyone. In addition the response provided here will only represent your personal opinion, not that of your organization.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your time and cooperation in filling this questionnaire and return back timely.

Instruction to fill the questionnaire: Answer close-ended question by clicking the small boxes (☐) and/or putting check mark (x). Follow additional instruction in each question, if any. For open-ended questions put your brief answer on the space provided

Part I: Respondent's Background Information

1. Age:

☐ 20-30 ☐ 30- 40 ☐ 40-50 ☐ 50 and above

2. Sex:

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. What is your highest level of Education?

☐ a) Bachelor's Degree ☐ c) Certificate
☐ b) Master's Degree ☐ d) Other Specify-----

4. The organization you belong to

5. Please mention your position and major responsibilities
.....

6. For how long have you worked in ESAP3 project?

☐ a) less than 1 year ☐ b) 1- 2 years ☐ c) 2 years and above

7. Are you still work in the project ESAP 3,that is implemented by partnering with organization or not?

☐ a) Yes, I am still working ☐ b) No, I left the project or organization

8. General Work Experience in projects

☐ a) less than 2 years ☐ b) 2-5 years ☐ c) 5-10 years ☐ d) 10+ years

PART II. Question related to partnership

9. Have you ever worked in projects implemented in Partnership?

- ☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

10. If you say yes, do you think the implementation of projects in partnership is better way compared to independent implementation of project? Please state your reason why say no/yes

☐ a) Yes, why -----

☐ b) No, why -----

11. What factors do you think mostly initiate (trigger) international & local NGOs to form partnership to implement projects? (More than one answer is possible)

- ☐ a) Donors' interest & strategy
- ☐ b) To pool their resources & specialized expertise
- ☐ c) Building strong capacity to deliver big projects/programs and implementation at scale
- ☐ d) To build strong voice for advocating their interests
- ☐ e) [Others specify] -----

12. In your experience do your organization fulfill its objective that lead/push to form partnership?

- ☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

13. What are the main benefits your organization has got in this partnership? (More than one answer is possible).

- ☐ a) Donor or Budget ☐ b) Experience sharing
- ☐ c) Build project implementing capacity
- ☐ d) Ability to produce large effect or contribute to big goal

☐ e) others Specify-----

14. How do you rate your organization level of satisfaction on obtaining benefit that aim to get through implementing this project in partnership?

S.No	List of benefit	Strongly satisfied	satisfied	Neutral	unsatisfied	Strongly unsatisfied
1	Secure donor or Budget					
2	Build project implementing capacity					
3	build strong voice for advocating their interests					
4	pool their resources & specialized expertise					
5	Contribute to overall organization goal					

15. Do you face challenges while implementing projects in partnership?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

16. If you say yes, what are the main challenges you face? (More than one answer is possible)

☐ a) Communication gap ☐ b) Power difference on decision making

☐ c) Mismanagement of found or not implement project as plan

☐ d) conflict of interest

☐ e) [Others specify].....

Part III: Question related to Points lead partner organizations in to conflict or source of conflict.

17. Could you please mention major source of conflicts in implementing of project in partnership? (More than one answer is possible)

- ☐a) Personality issues ☐b) Difference in technical approach
- ☐c) Diverging goals and priorities ☐d) Task interdependency
- ☐e) Failure to respond issues on time
- ☐f) Not clear authority define & poor coordination
- ☐g) Communication and information deficiencies (Poor and ineffective communication)
- ☐h) others specify -----

18. Could you please rate the most common source of conflict in your partnership?

S.No	Source of conflict	Always	Often	Some time	Rarely	Never
1	Cultural difference					
2	Value difference					
3	Personality issues					
4	Difference in technical opinions/approach					
5	Diverging goals and priorities					
6	Task interdependence, dependency on specific activity.					
7	Unresolved Prior conflict/					
8	Failure of respond to issues on time					
9	Not clear authority define					
10	Poor or infective communication and information deficiencies					
11	Poor management and coordination					

19. From your experience of this partnership what are the main category of conflict as source compare to individual Vs organization related?

- ☐a) Individual ☐b) Organizations

Part IV Question related to level of conflict management preparation

20. Do partner organizations have any prepared conflict management document or plan for handling conflict?

- ☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐c) I don't know

21. Are you familiar with conflict management document or plan of partners?

- ☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

22. If say yes in what way you become familiar?

- ☐ a) through having hard copy ☐b) through having soft copy ☐c) through orientation or training on it

23) How do you evaluate the degree of conflict management preparation among partners before it happens?

- ☐a) Very strong ☐b) Strong ☐c) Fair ☐d) weak

24. When or at what steps of project cycle partner organizations prepare conflict management document/plan for managing conflict?

- ☐a) plan ☐b) implementation ☐c) Monitoring & Evolution ☐d) I don't know

25. In your view when is ideal time or project cycle step for preparing conflict management documents or plan?

- ☐a) plan ☐b) implementation ☐c) Monitoring & Evolution ☐d) project initiation

26. Do you think that preparation is practical or help full?

☐a) yes, it is practical ☐b, it is not practical and develop for formality

27. Please rank the quality of partner organization conflict management preparation for

S. No		excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
1	Timing of preparation on conflict management					
2	Quality or comprehensiveness of document/					
3	Practical applicability/ usability in real situation					
4	Project staff familiarity with conflict management document					
5	Participation of partner organization in preprtion					

Part V Question related to Conflict Management practice.

28. Is prepared conflict management document/ plan used for managing conflict?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

29. If you say no, why it is not used for guiding conflict management process?

☐ a) as the document is not practical ☐ c) high emotionality of conflicting party

☐ b) lack of familiarity with document ☐ d) [Others specify] -----

30. Would you please share your observation and experience about how your supervisor and other high officials usually approach a conflict that happens in the partnership? (More than one answer is possible)

☐ a) I usually observe conflicts resolved by agreeing to work together to come up with a better resolution “Win,Win” style (Collaborate/Confrontation)

☐ b) I usually observe conflicts resolved in a way that both parties agree to accept each other's resolution. (Accommodating/Smoothing)

☐ c) I usually observe conflicts resolved by giving weight to maintaining relationships. It ended up in 'losing own' ground (Compromise).

☐ d) I usually observe conflicts resolved by being quiet and not reacting. Mostly ended up in a sense "I lose, you lose" style. (Avoidance/Withdraw)

☐ d) I usually observe conflicts resolved by giving firm value on own point than relationships. "I win, you lose" style. (Forcing)

☐ f) Other. Please explain.....

31. How do you evaluate the impact of the conflict management styles practiced on the overall performance of the project?

☐ a) Enable to exploit the best of the available skills and perform well in the project (constrictive)

☐ b) It is satisfactory enough

☐ c) Discourage the partners to use full potential and lagging the performance of the project (destructive).

Thank You for your time!



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Appendix C: Informed consent for Key informant

My name is Beminet Merihatibab and I am student of Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce. I would like to ask your participation in the study will be conducted on the assessment of conflict management systems and practice in projects implementing in partnership. Your contribution on sharing your experience is very important for carrying out the study. The study is conducted for the purpose of graduate study in Addis Ababa University School of Commerce. The study will assess systems and practices of partners to manage conflict. The interview will be tape recorded for further analysis, the information obtained is confidential and your name will not be mentioned in the written report of the study. The audio taped interview is not going to be heard except the interviewer and the supervisor. If you do not want to be audio taped or answer some questions you have the right not to answer the question or tape recorded. Your participation is voluntary, have the right to terminate the interview at any time and if anything is not clear you can ask questions at any time. If you have any question or concerns, you may contact the researcher by the following telephone number 091114 9089.

By signing below you have read and understand the above information, and would be interested in participating in the study.

Signature of the interviewee

Signature of the interviewer

Name (Study code) -----

Organization you work in-----

Position in the organization -----

Work experience in specific project, ESAP3 -----

1. Main benefits the organization experience by carry out of projects in partnership.

- Could you please tell why you /your organizations interested in implementing projects in partnership?
- How do you explain the process of forming partnership?
- Could you please mention specific objective you/organizations have in establishing this partnership?
- Do you fulfill your objective from partnership?
- What are the main benefits your organization has got in this partnership?
- Please mention what challenges you expect before forming partnership and what you experience?

2. Points lead partner organizations in to conflict or source of conflict.

- Could you please mention major source of conflicts in implementing of project in partnership?
- From your experience of this partnership what is the main source of conflicts compare to individual Vs organization related conflict sources?

- In your partnership experience what are the tree common conflicting issue/source that provoke conflict with in partner organization?
 - Is your predication of conflict reason or source before engaged in to partnership work or most conflicts come out of prediction?
3. Level of Conflict Management preparation of partner organizations before conflict happen.
- Do you have any preparation for handling conflict, like develop conflict management document or Plan, how do you prepare? Please explain in detail it.
 - When you evaluate your preparation for conflict management is it strong enough to handle the issue?
 - What gap you identify in your readiness to handle the conflict that can happen between partners?
4. Conflict management mechanisms the partner organizations use in project management.
- How frequent your partnership experience conflict?
 - How do you mange conflict and what approach do you use?
 - As you represent one of partner organization do you satisfied on conflict managements? If say no why not?
 - What are the challenges you face in the process of managing conflict among partners?
 - In your view what are the factors that help to manage conflict well ?

