



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE**

**STUDIES**

**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

**SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Ethiopian  
Non-Governmental Projects: The Case of Selected NGOs in  
Addis Ababa**

**By Biniam Teshome**

**December 31, 2018**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Ethiopian  
Non-Governmental Projects: The Case of Selected NGOs in  
Addis Ababa**

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**Advisor: Adane Atera (Dr.)**

**A Research Project Work Submitted to Addis Ababa University School of  
Commerce in Partial Fulfillment of the Award of Master's Degree in Project  
Management**

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## DECLARATION

I, Biniam Teshome hereby declare that the work entitled "Project Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Ethiopian Non-Governmental Projects: The Case of Selected NGOs in Addis Ababa" is the outcome of my own effort. The information presented in this project work is true and original to the best of my knowledge and understanding. Materials and Sources used have been acknowledged. I declare that the research had not been submitted to any educational institutions as per the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Biniam Teshome

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Date

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work, "Project Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Ethiopian Non-Governmental Projects: The Case of Selected NGOs in Addis Ababa" undertaken by Biniam Teshome for the partial fulfillment of the award of Master's degree in Project Management at Addis Ababa University School of Commerce, is an original work and not submitted earlier for any degree either at this University or any other University.

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Adane Atera (Dr.)

Research Project Advisor

## DEDICATION

I dedicated this project work to all those who struggle through the storm of life and come out of it in one pieces, and to those who swim and never sink in the sea of misery of despair.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First is to thank the almighty God for his Grace all the way through my life. I wish to appreciate my supervisor, Dr. Adane Atera, for his direction, huge support, and professional guidance in writing this research project. I have huge thanks to my wife and kids who were beside me all the time. I would also want to acknowledge all experts surveyed; my classmates and lecturers in School of Commerce, Addis Ababa University, for their invaluable contribution in realization of this project.

## Table of Contents

|  |      |
|--|------|
| DECLARATION .....  | i    |
| CERTIFICATION .....  | ii   |
| DEDICATION .....   | iii  |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....  | iv   |
| Table of Contents .....  | v    |
| List of Tables and Figure .....  | vii  |
| List of Acronyms .....   | viii |
| ABSTRACT .....   | ix   |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....   | 1    |
| 1.1 Background of the Study.....   | 1    |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem .....                                       | 3    |
| 1.3 Research Question.....   | 4    |
| 1.4 Objectives of the Study .....  | 4    |
| 1.5 Scope of the Study.....  | 5    |
| 1.6 Study Limitations .....  | 5    |
| 1.7 Significance of the Study .....                                      | 6    |
| 1.8 Organization of the Paper.....                                       | 6    |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITRATURE REVIEW .....                                      | 8    |
| 2.1 Theoretical Review .....   | 8    |
| 2.1.1 Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation.....                         | 8    |
| 2.1.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices .....                          | 10   |
| 2.1.3 Monitoring & Evaluation for Accountability .....                   | 12   |
| 2.1.4 Monitoring & Evaluation for Learning & Knowledge Acquisition ..... | 14   |
| 2.1.5 Features of Best M&E Practices of NGOs .....                       | 15   |
| 2.1.6 Overview of Non-Governmental Organization in Ethiopia .....        | 19   |
| 2.2 Empirical Review .....   | 21   |
| 2.3 Conceptual Framework .....   | 22   |
| CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....                                | 23   |
| 3.1 Research Design.....   | 23   |
| 3.2 Research Approach .....  | 23   |
| 3.3 Sampling Method and Sampling Size .....                              | 23   |

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 3.4   | Data Collection Method .....  | 24 |
| 3.5   | Data Analysis .....   | 24 |
| 3.6   | Ethical Considerations.....   | 25 |
| 3.7   | Validity and Reliability .....  | 25 |
| 3.7.1   | Reliability.....  | 25 |
| 3.7.2   | Validity .....  | 26 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....        |   | 27 |
| 4.1   | Findings .....  | 27 |
| 4.1.1   | Profile of the Respondents.....   | 27 |
| 4.1.2   | M&E Practices.....  | 28 |
| 4.1.2.1   | Availability of M&E Unit or staff .....   | 28 |
| 4.1.2.2   | Internal or External M&E.....   | 29 |
| 4.1.2.3   | M&E Plan and Presence of Logical Framework .....  | 29 |
| 4.1.2.4   | Individuals' Capacity in Charge of M&E.....   | 31 |
| 4.1.2.5   | Information Dissemination .....   | 31 |
| 4.1.2.6   | Use of Information and Communication Technology Enabled Tools to Collect,<br>Manage and Analyze Data for M&E Purposes ..... | 32 |
| 4.1.2.7   | Documentation of Lesson Learnt .....  | 32 |
| 4.1.2.8   | Fund Allocation for M&E .....   | 33 |
| 4.1.2.9   | Level of M&E.....   | 34 |
| 4.1.3   | Drivers of M&E.....   | 36 |
| 4.1.4   | Challenges and Obstacles of M&E.....  | 38 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION ..... |   | 40 |
| 5.1   | Conclusion.....   | 40 |
| 5.2   | Recommendation.....   | 41 |
| 5.3   | Further Study Recommendation.....   | 42 |
| References.....                                   |   | 43 |
| Appendix 1 Questioner for Survey .....            |   | 47 |
| Appendix 2 Interview Guide.....                   |   | 52 |
| Annex 1 .....                                     |   | 53 |

## List of Tables and Figure

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Experience with the current organization                  | 27 |
| Table 2: Experience with M&E practices                             | 27 |
| Table 3: Availability of M&E practices                             | 28 |
| Table 4: Information Dissemination                                 | 32 |
| Table 5: Percentage of M&E budget to Overall budget of the project | 33 |
| Table 6: Level of M&E  | 34 |
| Figure 1: The Ripple Model   | 35 |
| Table 7: Drivers of practicing M&E                                 | 36 |
| Table 8: M&E Obstacles and Challenges                              | 38 |

## **List of Acronyms**

|       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| HFC   | Hope for Children Australia Ltd      |
| LFA   | Logical Framework Approach           |
| M&E   | Monitoring and Evaluation            |
| NCA   | Norwegian Church Aid                 |
| NGO   | Non-Governmental Organizations       |
| RBM&E | Result based Monitoring & Evaluation |

## ABSTRACT

*A good monitoring and evaluation system is a key ingredient to good performance of a project. It is a way of being answerable and signifying transparency to the stakeholders as it provides for accountability and transparency. It also assists learning of an organization by documenting lessons gained during the execution of the projects and using the same in the ensuing project planning and implementation or by sharing with other implementers the experience earned. The objective of this research is to assess the practice of M&E in 10 Ethiopian NGOs, the main reason why they adopt it, and the challenges they experienced while practicing. To achieve the study objective an exploratory design with a qualitative approach has been employed. The primary data were collected through survey questionnaire and making interview of M&E expertise in the 10 NGOs. The findings of the study shows that the M&E practice of the NGOs under study is hindered by inadequate fund allocated to M&E, absence of sufficient M&E expertise, non-involvement of stakeholders specifically beneficiaries in M&E process, not documenting lessons learned, and selective dissemination of M&E findings. The main driver of the M&E practice is to be accountable and transparent to the donors. Generally the research recommends the allocation of enough fund and resources, amendment of proclamation number 621/2009 and introduction of participatory approach.*

**Key Word: Monitoring & Evaluation, Non-Governmental Organizations & Accountability**

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

It is widely recognized that civil societies have played and continue to play an important role in development, good governance and democratization in developing and transitional societies (Heinrich, 2004). They invest considerable effort and resources in poverty reduction, protection of vulnerable population groups, promotion of gender equality, and enabling citizen participation in the political process.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a periodic review of interventions, which include policy, programs and projects. It is conducted for the purpose of improving performance in terms of formulating, designing and implementing policy, programs and projects, and enhancing transparency and accountability of the agencies which implement the interventions to the stakeholders/investors, donors, and intended target groups.

Currently, there is a significant emphasis on achieving results (outcomes) and on the need to demonstrate performance. The questions that are being asked by stakeholders have become: Are development initiatives making a difference in people's livelihoods? How will governments know whether they have made progress in bringing changes in people's livelihoods? Have projects/programs/policies led to the desired results (outcomes)? How can we tell success from failure? Do we know our starting points (baselines) in relation to how far we want to go? These are the kinds of concerns and questions being raised by development practitioners, other internal and external stakeholders, and governments across the globe are struggling with ways of addressing and answering those (Gebremedhin et al, 2010).

The increased level of emphasis given to results (outcomes), as opposed to activities and output, has also brought some major changes in the focus, approach and application of M&E systems whereby as focus of management changes from activities to results, focus of M&E also changes from the traditional M&E system, which focuses on assessing inputs and implementation process (progress monitoring) to results-based M&E system, which emphasizes assessment of the contributions of interventions to development outcomes (Gebremedhin et al, 2010). Building and sustaining a result based monitoring and evaluation (RBM&E) system is admittedly not an easy task for it requires continuous commitment, champions, time, effort, and resources. In addition, it may take several attempts before the system can be tailored to suit a given governmental or organizational policy, program, or project; but it is doable (Kusek&Rist, 2004).

Among other things, the accountability and learning functions of RBM&E contribute to the increasing emphasis in developing strong RBM&E systems. First, RBM&E helps to build greater transparency and accountability with regard to the use of organizational resources. Stakeholders are no more interested only in resource use, organizational activities and outputs; they are now more interested in achieving results (outcomes) in terms of better access to services and improved livelihoods of beneficiaries(Gebremedhin et al, 2010). Budget shortages and growing expectations from clients' force organizations to provide more services with higher standards of quality and most cost effective ways.

Secondly, learning is also facilitated by RBM&E. Information generated through RBM&E provides managers/staff with a clearer basis for decision-making. Future planning and implementation of projects/programs/policies is improved when guided by lessons learned from past experiences. RBM&E can help organizations to extract relevant information that can subsequently be used as the basis for planning, projects/programs/policies fine-tuning and

reorientation. Without an effective RBM&E, it would be difficult to determine if an organization's work is going in the right direction or not, whether progress and success are being achieved or how future efforts might be improved (Gebremedhin et al, 2010).

Therefore, here the researcher will explore the project monitoring and evaluation practices in non-governmental organizations.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The theory of project management provides for the different stages of a given project including needs assessment and baseline, project design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and learning. Even if all the project management cycle stages are equally necessary, the M&E stage has been identified as critical stage to ensure the quality of a given project. These are important stages in project management which ensure the quality of development intervention, and to measure achievements and challenges.

They also help to ensure that development activities are technically and institutionally feasible, prioritize development intervention, ensure sustainable outputs, and encourage and improve the process of learning (Gebre et al., 2014). M&E can also help an organization extract relevant information from past and ongoing activities that can be used as the basis for programmatic fine-tuning, reorientation and future planning (UNDP, 2009).

NGOs need to prove that they can use the resources effectively and efficiently to have more sustainable funds. In order to achieve this, they should prove transparency and accountability through adopting M&E policies (Ibid). According to the World Bank (2010) having M&E policies provide an environment in which aid is highly effective and produce high results. Generally, not only does best practices require that projects are monitored for control but also

project stakeholders require transparency, accountability for resource use and impact, good project performance and organizational learning to benefit future projects.

Without an appropriate follow up mechanism it is difficult to take appropriate measures, and approve the project is on the right track and it meets its' target. M&E plays a vital role to effectively and efficiently use of resources, to create transparency and accountability, to attain the necessary project goals, and for future lesson learned. Therefore, assessing the M&E practices in NGOs will be necessary.

Reviewing M&E literatures worldwide, the researcher found rich literatures regarding the features of best M&E practices, the drivers of and purposes of conducting M&E in NGOs, and the challenges of practicing M&E in NGOs worldwide whether in developing and developed countries as illustrated in section 2.1 below. There are also a few studies conducting regarding the situation of M&E in Ethiopian NGOs such as Asnat(2017). However, the researcher discovered clear gap in literature regarding the effectiveness of M&E practices, the main drivers to adopt it and the challenges they face while they practice within their project cycle. Hence, this research is an attempt to bridge this gap in literature.

### **1.3 Research Question**

- A. How effective is the M&E practice in Ethiopian NGOs?
- B. What are the main drivers to practice M&E?
- C. What are the challenges faced in M&E practices?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General objectives**

The general objective of the study is to assess the practices of project M&E in selected NGOs in Addis Ababa, the main drivers of the practice, and to identify the challenges they faced while practicing M&E.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

Specific objectives of the study include the following points:

- A. Assess how M&E practices of Ethiopian NGOs compared with the best practices.
- B. Identify the drivers of M&E practices in Ethiopian NGOs.
- C. Identify the challenges faced by NGOs in M&E practices.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on assessment of the M&E practices in 10 NGOs found in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia only. It describes how the M&E is structured within the NGOs and their practices towards accountability and learning.

### **1.6 Study Limitations**

There were key limitations associated with this research. Firstly, it is difficult to generalize from this case study to all NGOs found in Addis Ababa. Simon (2009) indicated that each case study is different from other cases and the manner the research approached also differs. Secondly, data collection through questionnaire and interview is used to collect primary data. While conducting interview note taking approach is used. It is preferred audio recorder approach since it avoids researcher selectivity of responses.

This research study is exploratory limited to have a general idea of M&E practices compared with the best practices. It also determined the drivers to adopt M&E, and identify the challenges

the NGOs faced in practicing M&E. Due to time constraint only ten (10) NGOs were included in this study, for further studies and to gain extensive understanding it will be better to add more NGOs.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the study will be of significance to organizations by contributing to a better understanding and knowledge of strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems. This study aimed to contribute to the current knowledge base regarding M&E and its role in the NGO environment and identify the specific challenges NGOs face with regards to monitoring and evaluation of their projects. It will examine the existing practice of NGOs monitoring and evaluation system donor satisfaction using M&E as a tool. In addition, the study will make specific contributions to the domain of knowledge, policy and implementation of M&E with an aim to enhance NGOs accountability, transparency and sustainability.

The study is also hoped will benefit researchers and scholars who may use its' findings as a reference and to enrich M&E literature.

## **1.8 Organization of the Paper**

This research project consists of five chapters which are organized in the following manner. The first chapter deals with the introduction part reflecting on the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitations. The second chapter presents the review of the related literature, discusses existing basic concepts and frameworks and synthesizes the findings under various related headings. The third chapter discusses the research methodology and procedures, including the design chosen in tandem with

the research goal and research question. The chapter will also present the study population and sampling design and procedures as well as data collection instruments. The fourth Chapter presents analysis and its finding. Finally, based on the finding of the study, vital conclusion and recommendation are drawn in the last chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITRATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1 Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is crucial for NGOs to be credible entities that are both accountable to the citizens that they represent and serve, and to their funders and supporters. And also M&E can contribute to learning and the improvement of work to bring about social change.

Building an M&E system essentially adds the fourth leg to the project management chair. Typically, and traditionally, the managements have built budget systems, human resource systems, and operation management systems. But what has been missing has been the controlling and feedback system on the outcomes and consequences of their actions. This is what building an M&E system.

The OECD/DAC (2002a) defined Monitoring and evaluation as follows:

*Monitoring is a continuous function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indicators of the extent of progress and the achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds(P.27).*

*Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program, or policy, including its design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is*

*credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned in to the decision making process of both recipients and donors(P. 21).*

In contrasting these two definitions, it is immediately evident that they are distinct yet complementary. Monitoring gives information on where a policy, program, or project is at any given time (and over time) relative to respective targets and outcomes. Evaluation gives evidence of why targets and outcomes are or not being achieved. It seeks to address issues of causality (Jody & Ray, 2004).

Looking at the importance of M&E, Akroyd (1995) asserts that monitoring and evaluation are particularly important practices to any project since they allow an ongoing review of project effectiveness. A key ingredient is to monitor the various factors and to establish checkpoints at appropriate intervals during and after project implementation. The processes or activities of M&E require high levels of skills and competencies from both the project staff and the implementers. The focus on capacity building of the project staff guarantees a labor force with appropriate technical skills to enhance participation and sustainability in implementation of the project. This indirectly empowers the community to be more analytical about their situations, resources and advance suitable interventions, in addressing their challenges (Eggers, 1998).

M&E provides crucial tactical information that policy makers, government bodies, development managers, programmers and donors employ in order to improve project design, planning, program performance, the delivery of services, resource allocation and to enhance accountability. To constantly improve M&E systems performance, it is important to document M&E practices, recognize best practices and scale them up and ensure learning is promoted across diverse programs and projects. Its efforts assist in determining whether a program has achieved its

intended outcomes; so that we can be accountable for the money we spend and make the most effective use of our resources. Although evaluations have traditionally been required by funders to ensure that money is well spent, the challenge remains to ensure that both project staff and the supporting population recognize the value of ongoing M&E and use it to improve the effectiveness and quality of their programs (UNESCO 2009). M&E system is essential to organizational planning, informed decision making and management support.

### **2.1.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices**

Organizations lately use three various kinds of M&E approaches. The approaches broadly categorized as participatory M&E, predominantly executed by individuals directly concerned with implementation of the projects; non-participatory M&E, where evaluation is carried out by external experts; and joint evaluation whereby the evaluation is executed by a team that includes people from within and without the program (Mebratu, 2002).

M&E Planning is considered by many as very vital to the success of establishing the M&E process. This is when the various stakeholders join to bring out their specific apprehensions and needs and deliberate opposing interests. Participants categorically work to determine their monitoring goals, and classify what information or project aspects need monitoring, involvement, responsibility and methods of data collection and information dissemination. Early design, development and authorization of a strategy and results framework in the planning stage contributes to robust M&E. Project staff frequently view M&E as cumbersome; donor fronted or imposed commitment unconnected to project interventions. Field partners and staff often fail to properly assess the time taken by M&E planning and usually do not have solid incentives to commit time for planning. This results to inadequate resource allocation for M&E in the project

design and development (White, 2013). This consequently affects how M&E is implemented throughout the life of the project. It is given inadequate time and is sometimes implemented as an afterthought thus the M&E practice may be considered inconsequential.

Good M&E practice means collecting the right data and understanding how it is to be applied to ongoing processes. It means: regularly reviewing engagement; revising assumptions in the light of new data being collected; adapting approaches to an ever-changing context; ensuring broad participation and consultation within the implementation process as well as the monitoring of the activities; and revising activities based on whether or not they are having the intended impact. Ricafort (1996) points out that the procedure requires cautious investigation.

Information needs and implementation of feedback mechanisms in M&E is also a vital M&E practice. The value of efficient feedback mechanisms cannot be underscored and this is a vital activity in monitoring and evaluation. Organizations need to put in place feedback mechanisms to share information with different stakeholders to build their knowledge base and for learning and reflection. There is widespread consensus on the insufficiency of current feedback platforms (Mebrahtu, 2002). Feedback mechanisms are usually considered as an afterthought and upward movement of information is more calculated or planned and there may even be repercussions to delays or non-transmission while little effort is placed on downward transmission. One key issue at this stage revolves around ownership and information use. Conventionally, information has often been detached from their original source and moved elsewhere, to meet information needs and requirements of funding bodies, government agencies and other outside institutions. This restricts indigenous stakeholders from holding information ownership and creating and building up their own knowledge base, (Estrella, 2000). Information needs to be shared with those who work tirelessly for it to be generated for them to appreciate it and utilize it.

M&E is particularly important to sustainability since it allows an ongoing review of project effectiveness (Espinosa, 2000). M&E should be carried out with the participation of the beneficiaries, giving them the opportunity to decide on the criteria of success. Evaluations should be used as a management tool to identify any deficiencies and to establish a course of action to remedy problems. Ultimately, they steer the project toward the goal of sustainability (Plastow & Pantuliano, 2001). According to Vernooy (1999) the direct involvement of the local people and organizations in monitoring and evaluating their development is a step in increasing their self-help capacity, like in meeting the project purpose. However many sponsoring organizations do not develop a monitoring system with functions that build the capacity of project partners and intermediaries from the local population to reflect, analyze and take action; to increase accountability to partners, beneficiaries, managers and donors (Chamoun, 2006).

According to Bennett and Gilson (2001) M&E of Projects are usually constrained by limited resources, stakeholder's participation and the cost of undertaking the M&E process. However, the situation can be mitigated by strong and effective capacities at the national level to manage and coordinate project financing which adequately cover M&E up to the community level to identify, prioritize, successfully implement and sustain projects (Raark, 1990). M&E should be carried out with the participation of the beneficiaries, giving them the opportunity to decide on the criteria of success (Allen, 2004).

### **2.1.3 Monitoring & Evaluation for Accountability**

According to Edwards & Hulme (1995), accountability is the mechanism by which individuals and organizations are responsible in front of a recognized authority and accordingly, are held responsible for their acts. OECD (2010) defines accountability, in development terms, as the

obligations of partners to act according to clearly defined responsibilities and roles with an efficient and effective use of the resources. For evaluators, it implies the responsibility of providing accurate, objective and credible monitoring reports and performance assessment. Ebrahim & Weisband (2007) further identifies four core components of accountability, which are: transparency, answerability or justification, compliance, and enforcement.

Most accountability literature presents an argument that can be broken down into four questions. If NGOs are accountable, so who is accountable? To whom? For what? And How? (e.g.: Kearns, 1996; United Nations, 2006). If we look at these questions, we find them answered in different ways by different individuals and organizations (United Nations, 2006).

Lee (2004) suggested that NGO can be held accountable for the impact it has. Determining what an organization is accountable for is the first step in conceptualizing an NGO's accountability. Usually these are actions, results or intentions, all of which need to be defined. Actions and results are usually closely tied to how an organization goes about its programming, and to the effects the programming has. Actions, however, may also refer to internal processes, such as the appointment of staff. Identifying an NGO's intentions is particularly important to accountability as one benchmark, and requires a clear policy on the part of the organization, usually in the form of a mission statement.

As for the question "Who is accountable?", M&E must be used to support accountability at different management levels within the organization, i.e., the accountability of representatives, Senior Management at headquarters, the Administrator and the Executive Board.

In regards to "Accountability to whom?", NGOs are regularly answerable to at least four different authorities: to their boards of governors or executive committees, and then to the

general members (if they are membership organizations); to governments in countries where they operate; to the people (both recipients and non-recipients of the benefits and services provided); and to the donors that provide resources.

For the last question how? Accountability is a process. A crucial part of identifying the right kind of accountability is recognizing the operating context of an organization. At its best, modern NGO accountability embraces failures for future learning, and celebrates success (Slim 2004). Importantly, it “involves the provision of clear, timely information about what the organization has been doing and what it plans to do, and crucially, it requires real engagement with the organization’s stakeholders.” (CIPFA 2004) In addition to annual reports with audited financial statements, modern accountability may include the publication of evaluation results.

#### **2.1.4 Monitoring & Evaluation for Learning & Knowledge Acquisition**

Each M&E activity has a purpose. When done and used correctly, they strengthen the basis for managing for results, foster learning and knowledge generation in the organization as well as the broader development and evaluation community, and support the public accountability of the organization (UNDP, 2009).

M&E provide information and facts that, when accepted and internalized, become knowledge that promotes learning. During many years, scholars have highlighted the importance of M&E systems as a learning tool; not only for project designs but also to improve the organizational performance (Bedi et al., 2006; Kusek, 2004; Simister and Smith, 2010). Learning from M&E applies to improve the overall performance and quality of results of ongoing and future projects, programs and strategies. Generally speaking, M&E subsystems are focused on tracking project activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. At the initial stages, M&E are often oriented towards

stakeholder reporting and financial control. However, a good M&E should be more comprehensive than this, and should facilitate learning while monitoring and evaluating projects (Kusek, 2004).

The Inter-American Development Bank (1997) stated lessons generated from M&E findings are transformed into knowledge when they are analyzed, systematized, disseminated and internalized within an organization. However, before transforming the lessons to knowledge, lesson learnt should meet certain criteria in order to have effective results. According to NASA (2001:7) “Lesson learnt is knowledge or understanding gained by experience. The experience may be positive, as in as successful test or mission, or negative, such as failure. A lesson must be significant in that it has a real impact on operations and valid that is factually and technically correct. It should be applicable in that it identifies a specific design or process that reduces or eliminates the potential failures and reinforce a positive result.”

### **2.1.5 Features of Best M&E Practices of NGOs**

The contextual use of the term “Best practices” in M&E is meant to refer to those practices that have been found to be effective and hence recommended by authorities in this field of M&E. Through research and practice these practices have come to be known as effective in achieving M&E objectives. In the absence of effective M&E, it would be difficult to know whether the intended results are being achieved as planned, what corrective action may be needed to ensure delivery of the intended results, and whether initiatives are making positive contributions towards human development (UNDP, 2009). Features of the best practices associated with M&E are described below:

- **M&E plan**

The project should have M&E plan. The plan should be prepared as an integral part of project plan and design (PASSIA, 2004: and McCoy et al., 2005). Planning for M&E must start at the time of project design, and they must be planned together (UNDP, 2009). The integration is for clear identification of project objectives for which performance can be measured. Effective and timely decision making requires information from regular and planned M&E activities.

- **Coherent framework**

A framework is an essential guide to monitoring and evaluation as it explains how the project should work by laying the steps needed to achieve the desired results. A framework therefore increases the understanding of the project goals and objective by defining the relationships between factors key to implementation, as well as articulating the internal and external elements that could affect the project's success. A good M&E framework can assist with ideas through the project strategies and objectives on whether they are ideal and most appropriate to implement. One of the best practices that have been adopted because of its structured approach is the use of the LFA as a tool to aid both the planning and the M&E functions during implementation (Aune, 2000: and FHI, 2004). This gives it great leverage in that from the beginning the project design hence implementation are integrated with performance measurement through identification of indicators that will demonstrate how the project is performing during implementation.

- **M&E budget**

The project budget should provide a clear and adequate provision for M&E activities. A M&E budget can be clearly delineated within the overall project budget to give the M&E function the due recognition it plays in project management (Gyorkos, 2003: and McCoy et al., 2005). Some authors argue for M&E budget to be about 5 to 10 percent of the total budget (Kelly and

Magongo, 2004: IFRC, 2001). The intention with this practice is not to be prescriptive of the percentage that is adequate, but to come up with sufficient funds to facilitate the M&E activities. Provision of a budget for M&E ensures that the M&E activities take place when they are due. It also ensures that M&E are not treated as peripheral function.

- **Personnel assigned for M&E activities**

Human capital, with proper training and experience is vital for the production of M&E results. There is need to have an effective M&E human resource capacity in terms of quantity and quality, hence M&E human resource management is required in order to maintain and retain a stable M&E staff (World Bank, 2011). This is because competent employees are also a major constraint in selecting M&E systems (Koffi-Tessio, 2002). M&E being a new professional field, it faces challenges in effective delivery of results. There is therefore a great demand for skilled professionals, capacity building of M&E systems, and harmonization of training courses as well as technical advice (Gorgens and Kusek, 2009).

There should also be an individual who is directly in charge of the M&E as a main function (Kelly and Magongo, 2004) and an identification of different personnel for the different activities of the M&E such as data collection, analysis, report writing, dissemination of the monitoring and evaluation findings (AUSAID, 2006: Gyorkos, 2003: and McCoy et al., 2005). Having staff clearly designated with M&E roles and responsibilities ensures that some body is available to do M&E activities, and staffs appreciate that the project managers value M&E not as a compliance to the funding agency but as a tool for project management, learning and improving on the performance of the project.

- **Specification of the frequency of data collection**

There should be a clear specification of how often M&E data is to be collected and from whom. There should also be a specification of a schedule for M&E reports to be written (Gyorkos, 2003).

- **Stakeholder involvement**

Involvement of all stakeholders (beneficiaries, implementation staff, donors, wider communities) in the M&E process of the project is very important. Involve different stakeholders and balance their interests and priorities, assuming that accountability to participants and beneficiaries is equally as important as accountability to the donors.

Participatory approach to M&E is viewed as an empowerment tool for the beneficiaries and other stakeholders of project who in most cases are not consulted in this function. There is a lot of emphasis on upward accountability i.e. the donor without as much regard to beneficiaries and the communities (Aune, 2000). This obsession with upward accountability creates a barrier between the project and other stakeholders in terms of M&E, this result in the process being geared towards satisfying the demands of the donor at the expense of the other stakeholders.

There is also demonstration of downward accountability i.e. accountability to the beneficiaries. Involvement of the beneficiaries in M&E gives them a sense of ownership and contributes to long term sustainability long after the project donor has ceased financing the project and also increases the chances of more beneficiaries to take up the services of the project.

In reality having a fully participatory monitoring and evaluation requires a lot time and skill in getting a consensus from all the parties on what is to be monitored and evaluated and how, but

nevertheless there should be some level of participation in this process to obtain some benefits it accrues to the project.

- **Capture and documentation of lessons learned**

Lessons learned from the implementation should be captured and documented for incorporation into the subsequent projects and sharing with other stakeholders. The lessons would include what went right in implementation and what went wrong and why so that the mistakes are not repeated in the subsequent projects (PASSIA, 2004; Uitto, 2004). These lessons should be shared with the implementing staff.

M&E can only play a significant role in the accountability process if measures to enhance learning are put in place. Through regular exchange of information, reporting, knowledge products, learning sessions and the evaluation management response system, information from M&E can be fed back into the learning process and planning (UNDP, 2009).

- **Dissemination of M&E findings**

There should be M&E findings dissemination plan. Only an efficient system of dissemination will ensure that the target recipients receive the M&E feedback that is relevant to their specific needs. M&E findings should be disseminated to the stakeholders by way of a report to the donor depending on his requirement, communication or report to the community and beneficiaries and to the implementing staff to improve on their implementation practices and strategies (Gyorkos, 2003; and McCoy et al., 2005).

### **2.1.6 Overview of Non-Governmental Organization in Ethiopia**

While Ethiopia has a long history of mutual self-help organizations and informal community groups, the formal nongovernmental sector has historically been weak and marked by adversarial relations with the state (Clark, 2000). Any autonomy enjoyed by civil society during the reign of

Emperor Haile Selassie was severely restricted after the Derg regime assumed power in 1974. State authorities closed down almost all independent professional organizations and interest groups, including traditional associations in rural areas. Those organizations that survived state repression focused on providing emergency relief services. However, the famines of the 1970s and 1980s forced the Derg leadership to open the door to international assistance, triggering an influx of foreign NGOs that often relied on local partners to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid (Clark, 2000).

Ethiopia's NGO sector expanded rapidly during the brief period of political liberalization that followed the EPRDF's ascent to power. As aid flowed into the country to support the political transition, new professional associations and development organizations emerged (Sisay, 2012).

In February 2009, the government adopted the Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies, the first comprehensive law governing Ethiopian nongovernmental organizations. The law imposed a wide range of burdens on civil society. Most important, it divided all civil society organizations into three categories: Ethiopian charities and societies, Ethiopian resident charities and societies, and foreign charities and societies. The first category comprises all NGOs that receive at least 90 percent of their funding from domestic sources, and only these groups are allowed to work on the advancement of human and democratic rights; the promotion of equality of nations, nationalities and peoples and that of gender and religion; the promotion of the rights of the disabled and children's rights; the promotion of conflict resolution or reconciliation; and the promotion of the efficiency of the justice and law enforcement services. In addition, the proclamation specified that any charity or society could allocate no more than 30 percent of its budget to administrative activities. As a result, organizations were forced to count basic operational expenses—including staff allowances and benefits, monitoring

and evaluation expenditures, and travel and training costs—as administrative overheads, triggering widespread pushback (Birhanu & Getachew, 2013).

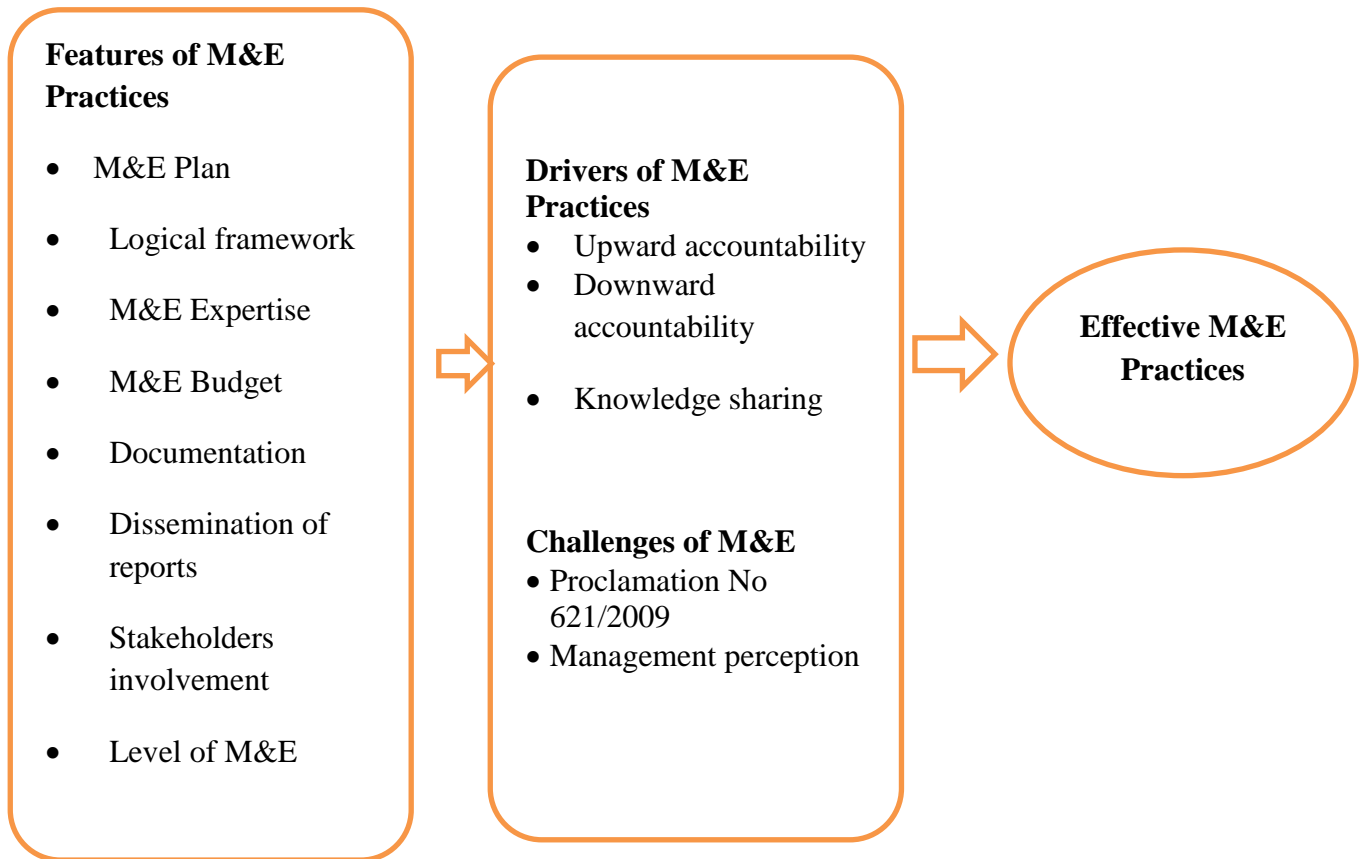
## **2.2 Empirical Review**

The literature that exists in relation to M&E best practices in Ethiopian NGOs is limited. Therefore, only those that are directly or indirectly related to the objectives of this study were reviewed. The first case study that was taken as an empirical framework is a work of Asnat Mulugeta in title *Assessment of practices & Challenges of M&E; The case of Local NGOs Executing Health projects*. The research sought to assess the practice and challenges of M&E in health projects considering several factors that affect the practice of M&E. These include stringent legal framework, not friendly M&E tools, lack of finance, deficiency of expertise, and inadequate baseline.

Another study Zelalem Tadesse (2016) on Challenges of implementing HIV/AIDs related projects in local NGOs in Addis Ababa: An Empirical Study, in overall the study assesses the project management practices and challenges of local NGOs. The research found out that the projects lack effective M&E system.

This study aim to assess the practice of M&E in projects run by NGOs found in Addis Ababa, considering the necessary features of best M&E practices. The study by Sisay (2017), Yohannes (2017), Mutyaba (2013) and Peter (2017) were to assess the factors that determine the effectiveness of M&E and their impact on project success. This research considered the following features; level of M&E, M&E Plan, Logical framework, availability and presence of M&E expertise, budget allocation, documentation, stakeholders' involvement, and information dissemination to assess the practice and challenges of M&E in those projects under study.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodological approach, research design, data collection method selected for this research and explaining why these particular methods have been chosen. Then, the sampling and data analysis method will be discussed.

### **3.1 Research Design**

To develop an understanding of M&E practices, case study design was employed. Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995).

### **3.2 Research Approach**

This research is using a qualitative study since the study had given the researcher the ability to ask open questions to discover what is happening and gain insights about a topic of interest (Saunders et al., 2012), which is M&E practices in NGOs found in Addis Ababa. Focusing on NGOs in Addis Ababa, a qualitative approach is also flexible and adaptable to change (Saunders, 2012) which will enable getting critical insights into the NGOs' management perspectives about M&E.

### **3.3 Sampling Method and Sampling Size**

As per the data obtained from Charity and society agency on September 7, 2018 there are 3295 NGOs in Ethiopia. 406 are Foreign, 86 Ethiopian Resident Societies, 2256 Ethiopian Resident

Charities, 130 Ethiopian Charities, 364 Ethiopian Societies and 53 Consortium. Since these NGOs vary in capacity, accountability, area of intervention, and impact of laws, a purposive sampling technique is used. Purposive or criterion-based sampling is applied in this study which is a non-probability method of sampling (Burns, 2000). It involved nonrandom selection of “information rich cases” (Patton, 1999) according to the presence of specific criteria defined by the researcher.

In view of the nature and scope of the research, the availability of participants, time limitations and anticipated costs a total of 10 (ten) NGOs was considered in the study.

### **3.4 Data Collection Method**

According to Saunders et al. (2012), there are a number of ways to conduct exploratory study.

In this research, both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and conducting an in depth individual interviews which was designed to capture the different variables of the study. Primary data from different sources also complemented and supported findings. Documents such as reports, manuals, policy and procedures were also used to collect secondary data.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods using appropriate technology. Data analysis was the process of cleaning and summarizing data so that it becomes information that can easily be interpreted and conclusion will be drawn from, hence, supporting decision making (Creswell, 2005). Data analysis was the whole process which started immediately after data collection and ended at the point of interpretation and processing data.

The data collected was subject to both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. Linking quantitative and qualitative data analysis had strengthened the overall research design, as well as the interpretation of the findings (Kothari, 2008).

Data processing was carried out through editing, coding and classification. Cleaning of data was first done through a careful scrutiny of the responses to detect errors and omissions. This had brought about the accuracy and consistency on the facts gathered (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Similar responses were brought together. Data were then be classified on the basis of common characteristics and attributes and tabulates in form of statistical tables.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations related to respondents have been taken in the best possible manner. Research ethics was put into consideration when developing and administering data collection tools and techniques, to avoid any form of harm, suffering or violation. By making clear why the research is conducted and sending an invitation letter to all the ten NGOs under survey, the information sought was collected. Further, the identity of the respondents was protected.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

#### **3.7.1 Reliability**

To ensure reliability of the research, the research objectives were stated in a precise and concise manner. In this research, reliability was enhanced by including some close-ended questions into the interview schedule, designing appropriate survey questionnaires, and carefully documenting the steps involved in conducting this study so that it can be replicated in the future. In this study, triangulation is exemplified by having multiple data sources to have more reliable answers depending on different perspectives.

### **3.7.2 Validity**

Validity of the data collection tool was done through consultations with M&E specialists and three pilots testing. The survey was done in voluntary based on the time and date convenient to them.

Since this study applying purposeful sampling, the finding could not be generalized in the scientific sense. Rather, they are "working hypothesis, not conclusions" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 125) that should be tested again at some point in the future. This means that the results and findings about M&E practices in NGOs in Addis Ababa represent the current situation in those NGOs, however; studies should be continued to examine the change in this situation regularly which could be changed at any time in the future.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter introduces the main findings of presented subjects according to topic areas being raised, and followed by discussion on presented themes. The study firstly sought the extent of M&E availability and application in NGOs. If there is any, the drivers of the application, and the main challenges and obstacles of the application will be presented.

### 4.1 Findings

#### 4.1.1 Profile of the Respondents

In the next two tables (Table 1 & Table 2) I summarized the profile of respondents. This two tables show us how deep the surveyed experts have the knowledge of the case under study.

| Number of Years | Number of NGOS |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1-4             | 1              |
| 5-8             | 7              |
| 9-12            | 2              |
| >12             | Zero           |

*Table 1: Experience with the current organization*

| Number of Years | Number of NGOS |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1-4             | Zero           |
| 5-8             | 6              |
| 9-12            | 4              |
| >12             | Zero           |

*Table 2: Experience with M&E practices*

From Table (1) we can observe that 70% of M&E experts surveyed worked between 5-8 years in the organization under study. While in Table (2) depicts 60% of the respondents had an experience of 5-8 years while the remaining 40% between 9-12 years in M&E. In response to

Question 4 of Section (A) of appendix 1 (See Annex 1):which was raised to know whether they had taken different M&E trainings or not, eight (8) respondents agreed that they had taken different trainings in relation to M&E activities.

#### 4.1.2 M&E Practices

All ten of the Ethiopian NGOs under the study are applying M&E. Table (3)summarizes the findings on the questions raised to see the presence of M&E practices.

| Statement   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Is there M&E system in your organization?   | 10  |    |
| The organization has a well-defined structure that includes a monitoring and evaluation unit                                | 10  |    |
| The organization has a policy or set standards in place describes roles and responsibilities of the operation of M&E System | 10  |    |
| The organization conducts assessment of the overall performance of M&E system on a regular basis                            | 10  |    |
| The organization has skilled personnel who perform M&E  | 9   | 1  |
| Do you think that the M&E is considered as a part of the life cycle of the project in your organization                     | 10  |    |

*Table 3: Availability of M&E practices*

##### 4.1.2.1 Availability of M&E Unit or staff

In responses to the question “*Do you have specialized M&E unit in your organization?*”(See Annex 1):nine (9) of the ten NGOs understudy have M&E Unit. However while they were asked the number of experts in the unit, all answered -they only have one M&E expert. They reported that since they have constraint in resources and administrative costs, they do not afford to recruit more experts. On the other hand one NGO, Tulane International, do not have a specialized staff or M&E unit.Tulane International (2018) explained that the M&E activities are undertaken by

functional managers or any staff in the organization. Access to appropriate technical expertise is essential in order to ensure the validity and longevity of an M&E plan (Mathis et al. 2001). HFC explained that: *“now a day’s almost all funders are using, having M&E expert, as one selection criteria.”*

#### **4.1.2.2 Internal or External M&E**

Nearly all probed NGOs were using a mixture of both internal and external evaluation for different reasons. Internal M&E will be under taken by the staffs mentioned in section 4.1.2.1. Since there is high demand from the donors and fund condition, the NGOs conduct M&E continuously internally. However at the end of the project/program they always conduct M&E through experts sent from the donors or by recruiting external consultants. For example Land O’lakes mentioned it us follows:

*“We usually use M&E internally but there are times for external evaluation mainly midterm and end line evaluation.”*

While Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) explained it as follows:

*“Since the organization is reluctant to recruit external consultants we regularly us internal M&E but the program is four years and now we are about to conduct through external evaluators.”*

#### **4.1.2.3 M&E Plan and Presence of Logical Framework**

This section shows findings to the questions that sought to determine the availability and the nature and process of development of M&E plans of projects implemented by the respondents. It is divided in to two subsections i.e.: design of the plans, and content of the plans. Findings to each of them are presented in the next sections.

Referring to the responses of Question 4 of Section C of Appendix 1 (See Annex 1) which was sought to determine whether the respondents had a plan that guided M&E of the projects they were implementing, all the ten NGOs under the study have a plan that guides M&E when implementing the project.

Referring to the responses to Question 5 of Section C of Appendix 1 (See Annex 1) which was raised to know the presence of any log frame in aiding the M&E of projects, all the organizations under study responded “Yes” for this question. This means that the projects implemented by the respondents are aided by the LFA. NCA explained: *“we use Result Frame Work and report against it every year”*

Consistently using and designing of M&E plan implies that the responding organizations are monitoring and evaluating the projects they implement. Projects without M&E plans are not effectively monitored and evaluated (PASSIA, 2004: and McCoy et al., 2005). Without prior laid out procedure and plan the M&E will only be done at the whims and discretion of the project manager. The M&E plan is a document which provides details related to indicator measurement and data collection (how the indicator will be measured, who is responsible for data collection, how frequently data will be collected, etc.).

Using the logical framework approach (LFA) aids in identifying the logic behind project elements and performance measurement, how they are related and the underlying assumptions. Use of the LFA makes the planners of the project to think from the onset in terms of measuring performance i.e. monitoring and evaluation, by identifying the measures and criteria for success during the planning stage (Vannopen, 1994: as cited by Aune, 2000). This finding may be

explained by the fact that majority of the donors insist that the NGOs use the LFA to design their projects as condition to funding (Aune, 2000: Reidar, 2003: and Kaplan and Garent, 2005).

#### **4.1.2.4 Individuals' Capacity in Charge of M&E**

As presented in the profile of the respondents (Table 2), all had M&E work practices. And also as presented in section 4.1.2.1 there is one M&E expert in the nine NGOs under consideration. Specifying an individual in charge of M&E evaluation ensures that when the M&E activities are due someone ensures that they are done.

On the other hand, absence of a clear and separate financial provision for M&E activities and not using sufficient expert for M&E activities will have a negative impact in the practice of M&E. One of the implication of this is that the M&E activities are not given the due recognition they deserved (Gyorkos, 2003: and McCoy et al., 2005) and were only done at the whims of the project manager, this would result in some activities not being done at all. This would result in inefficient and inadequate M&E of the projects.

#### **4.1.2.5 Information Dissemination**

It is noted that in the organizations under study different information are disseminated at different levels through different means continuously. However, as presented in the Table (5) M&E findings were disseminated to the donors or the government officials only. According to the experience drawn from USAID Turkey M&E plan broad dissemination and discussion of results at all levels (all stakeholders) enables an exchange of information, creative thinking and innovative solutions to issues (Mathis et al. 2001)

Almost all the NGOs are disseminating the M&E findings to the donors and the government officials only. Disseminating the findings to stakeholders facilitates ownership for the projects

and is a learning opportunity for the stakeholder's strategies (Gyorkos, 2003: and McCoy et al., 2005). Since not all the stakeholders received M&E findings, the projects missed the full benefits of such practices.

| <b>Disseminate M&amp;E Findings</b> | <b>NO of NGOs</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| No dissemination                    | Zero              |
| On Notice Board                     | Zero              |
| Report to beneficiaries             | Zero              |
| Report to Donor                     | 10                |
| Newsletter                          | Zero              |
| Report to government officials      | 8                 |

*Table 4: Information Dissemination*

#### **4.1.2.6 Use of Information and Communication Technology Enabled Tools to Collect, Manage and Analyze Data for M&E Purposes**

In regards to this question all the respondents agreed that they use information communication technology enabled tools to collect, manage and analyze data for M&E purposes. It is noted that all the NGOs are using different tools which range from simple excel to M&E software.

#### **4.1.2.7 Documentation of Lesson Learnt**

In response to Question 11 of Section C of Appendix 1 (See Annex 1) which was sought to show as presence of documentation of lesson learned, except two the others do not document lessons learned.

Capturing and documenting the lessons learned on the projects enables the stakeholders to learn from the projects and incorporate the same in to subsequent projects. Not documenting lessons

learned means that the project stakeholders did not optimally learn from the previous projects they implemented and this could have resulted in repeating the same mistake.

#### 4.1.2.8 Fund Allocation for M&E

The respondents were probed for whether there is a budget allocated for the M&E, and the percentage of budget to the overall project budget. The findings were presented in the next section.

Almost all the respondents answered that there is a budget allocated to M&E activities. The percentage constitution of the M&E budget to the overall project budget is presented in next Table (6). According to the World Bank (2011) specification, M&E activities should not be allocated less than 10% of the total budget.

| <b>% of M&amp;E Budget</b> | <b>No of NGOS</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Less than 5%               | 2                 |
| 5-9%                       | 6                 |
| 10%                        | 1                 |
| More than 10%              | Zero              |
| No specific %              | 1                 |

*Table 5: Percentage of M&E budget to Overall budget of the project*

An inadequate financial resource to execute M&E is one of the factors that negatively affect M&E system among NGOs. If NGOs experience shortfalls in funding for their activities which implies that the funds available only go to the actual carrying out of project undertakings. M&E is therefore regarded as an expenditure that they cannot manage to pay for and thus gotten rid of it. If any is done at all, then it is done superficially, and it mainly involves just recording a few activities (Gilliam et al, 2003). As a result of inadequate funding, NGOs are unable to gather all

the required data for use in M&E and even bringing in external evaluators. Technologies like the internet that is required to aid the adoption of M&E system is something they will do without as they cannot afford. Therefore, not allocating enough budgets had the effect that M&E activities suffered a risk of being missed.

#### 4.1.2.9 Level of M&E

As shown in Table (4) below all NGOs surveyed in this study, conducted process or implementation evaluation (i.e. the measurement of inputs/resources and outputs such as the number of goods or services provided and the number of beneficiaries served by the project).

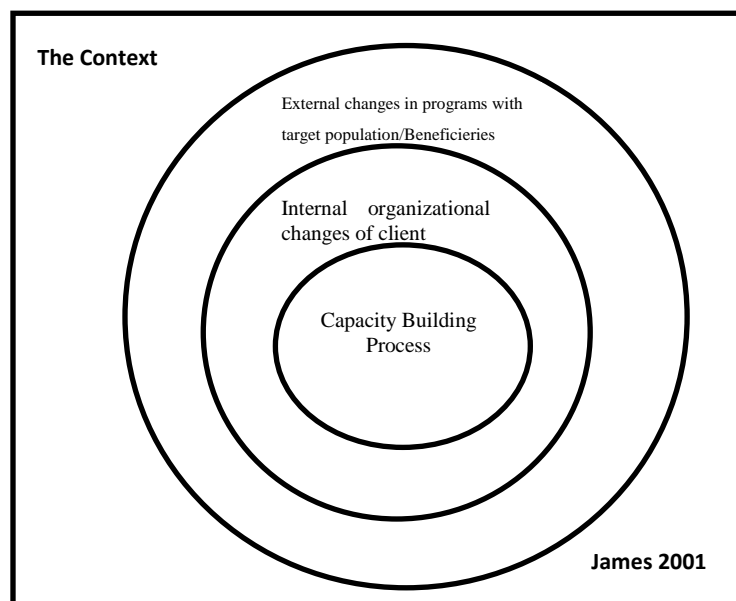
| Level of M&E                                   | No of NGOs |
|--|------------|
| Process evaluation (Input/Resources & Outputs) | 10         |
| Outcome evaluation (Outcomes/Results)          | 6          |
| Impact evaluation                              | zero       |

*Table 6: Level of M&E*

However, only 6 NGOs focused on a mixture of both process/implementation evaluation (focus on input/outputs) and outcomes assessment (i.e. the identification of change in individuals, the larger community/environment and the staff carrying out the program). On the other hand, there is no NGO which conducted evaluation on the highest level which is impact assessment.

Regarding M&E level, it is clear that the ten (10) NGOs conducted M&E on the inputs/outputs level because it is the basic level for any evaluation and all the NGOs have the responsibility towards their donors to be transparent by showing donors how the fund has been spent. Add to that, donors are more interested to hear about the numbers of beneficiaries served and services provided. NGOs also explained that conducting evaluation on outputs/activities level is much easy: “activities & outputs can be easily measured on the short term; for example, the number of health officers trained HMIS per year” (Tulane International Ethiopia, 2018).

M&E system requires a clearly established conceptual framework that shows how inputs are eventually linked to outcomes and impacts. In this context, James (2001) has developed a comprehensive model called “Ripple Model” for using M&E for different purposes of capacity building. This model illustrates the three main levels at which you can monitor and evaluate a capacity building intervention. According to James (2001) the capacity building is like a drop of rain which lands in water - the ripples flow towards to bring about changes at the internal organizational level of the client and then ultimately to the level of the beneficiaries of the client. The size and the direction of the ripple is influenced by (and in turn influences) the context in which it moves.



*Figure 1: The Ripple Model*

This model illustrates the three main levels of at which you can monitor and evaluate capacity building intervention. The intervention is like a drop of rain which lands in water- the ripples flow outwards to bring about changes at the internal organizational level of the client and then ultimately to level of the beneficiaries of the client.

Most of the NGOs agreed they would like to conduct impact assessment than process and outcome assessment, but they lack the required resources such expertise and money. This means that there interest between NGOs to conduct impact assessment what they lacked is the resources.

### 4.1.3 Drivers of M&E

The responses of all Ethiopian NGOs under study for the question of the main drivers of M&E are summarized in the next table. (Table 7)

| <b>Drivers of M&amp;E practices</b>   | <b>Number of NGOs</b> |
|---|-----------------------|
| To generate knowledge and enhancing organizational learning through documentation of M&E findings and lesson learnt.        | 1                     |
| To meet funders' M&E requirements and show accountability and transparency  | 10                    |
| To improve projects' effectiveness and efficiency   | 2                     |
| To show accountability towards government and other parties to eliminating sources of corruption and misuse of granted fund | 6                     |
| To show accountability towards the local community and beneficiaries  | 1                     |
| Other reasons, please specify   | Zero                  |

*Table 7: Drivers of practicing M&E*

All responders had consensus on their feeling of responsibility and accountability towards their donors. Through M&E, the NGOs demonstrated certain levels of transparency and accountability to their donors which enabled them to ensure the sustainability of the funds and attract more future funding. The NGOs demonstrated upward accountability as follows:

- Submitting monthly/annual narrative and financial reports,
- Documentations such as case studies, videos, attendance sheet, photos and campaigns and forwarding to them,
- Field visits by inviting donors to make field visits as agreed upon in terms of reference,

On the other hand only one NGO expressed that their main reason for M&E adoption is feeling the responsibility towards their community and beneficiaries and involving them in different levels. The downward accountability is exemplified by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA).

Finally, besides being responsible towards donors, the majority respondents (6 NGOs) emphasized drivers of M&E practices are to show accountability towards government and other parties to eliminating sources of corruption and misuse of granted fund.

There is a consensus among all the NGOs on the driver of accountability towards donors. PASSIA (2009) argued NGOs need to prove that they can use the resources effectively and fulfill all donors' requirements to have sustainable funds. The accountability relation could be explained at best by "agency theory" where (Slyke & David, 2007; Gibbon, 2002) explained that donors inherently have different goals, interests, and motivations. Therefore, M&E is simply part of a contract that needs to be agreed upon by the principal (donor) and the agent (beneficiary).

On the other hand, there is weak participation of beneficiaries in most of project management; project design, implementation, M&E. Despite the NGOs' weak involvement of their beneficiaries, most writers such as (Unicef, 2006; IIRR, 1997; Abbott and Guijit, 1998) argued that there is increasing tendency among funders to adopt participatory M&E and evaluation systems where beneficiaries are engaged from the first stage of project planning till project end and even in ensuring the sustainability of impact after the end of the project.

Comparing the findings with the literature reviewed, it can be inferred that there is an agreement between literature (Ebrahim, 2012 & Edwards, 1995), and research findings where all the NGOs under study except one give high importance towards "upward accountability". Because of their dependence on their funds, NGOs are donor driven and adopting the same agenda of the donors'.

Therefore, their accountability is “upward”. However, accountability should take in to account the views of different stakeholders, and primarily the beneficiaries (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), 2010). From the surveyed NGOs only one has given a big concern about the beneficiaries and was awarded a certificate in 2017 on Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS).

#### 4.1.4 Challenges and Obstacles of M&E

In order to understand the different challenges and obstacles found in the systematic application of M&E, the following questions were asked.

- “What are the main obstacles that your NGO face when they conduct the M&E activities?”
- “Do you think that the charity and society proclamation 621 has an impact on the M&E practices? If yes, how?”
- “Do you think that M&E is a cost to the organization?”

Table (8) summarized the challenges and obstacles of NGOs face while practicing M&E.

| Challenges facing NGOs  | Number of NGOs |
|---|----------------|
| Lack of sufficient human and financial resources dedicated for M&E  | 10             |
| M&E is costly, complex and time consuming process where these resources could go for achieving more results | 1              |
| The proclamation restricts us   | 7              |
| Management perception   | 7              |

*Table 8: M&E Obstacles and Challenges*

Rose (2002) explained that the major obstacle NGOs usually complain the lack of resources (e.g. time, money, personnel, and expertise) to be dedicated for M&E activities. Theten NGOs agreed upon is the lack of human and financial resources that could enable them to practice M&E in the

organizations. As presented in section 4.1.2.1 from the ten NGOs data collected nine of them have one expert for all the M&E activities.

In regards to thinking M&E as a cost to the organization, almost all, except one, the respondents agrees that M&E activities are not a cost to the organization and there is a fund allocated to the activities ranging from 5-10% for each projects. On the other hand 7 (seven) of them agreed the Charity and Society proclamation has an impact on using the fund and also agreed the management perceiving towards the M&E activities is another challenge.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations of the study, and suggestions for future researches.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study investigated the M&E practices, drivers of M&E and challenges faced by 10 (ten) Ethiopian NGOs found in Addis Ababa. Based on the findings I have made the following conclusions.

Firstly, even though the NGOs have M&E plan and are aided by Log Frame, the M&E practices compared with best practices is loose. According to the experience drawn from USAID Turkey M&E plan, best practices not only include linking M&E to strategic plans and work plans, but also focusing on efficiency and costeffectiveness, employing a participatory approach to monitoring progress, utilizing both international and local expertise, disseminating results widely, using data from multiple sources, and facilitating the use of data for program improvement (Mathis et al. 2001). As per the findings, M&E practice of these organizations is not on the acceptable best practices; this was mainly due to the following reasons:

- Lack of sufficient M&E experts in the organization,
- Not allocating enough separate and clear budgets to the activities,
- Absence of documenting lessons learned,
- Less involvement of stakeholders specifically community in M&E practices,

Secondly, the findings presented that the first major driver of adopting M&E is to demonstrate accountability and transparency towards donors. To a much lesser extent, NGOs conduct M&E

towards their community. Whereas Land O'lakes Inc. in addition to accountable towards donors they uses M&E to generate knowledge and enhancing organizational learning through documentation of M&E findings and lessons learnt. It is concluded that there is a clear gap in down ward accountability where only one NGO systematically involve beneficiaries.

Thirdly, in regards to the obstacles of M&E practices, it is noticed that lack of budget and experienced experts in a process of M&E practices is the primary challenge. This and other two challenges to practice M&E are interrelated. The Ethiopian charity and society proclamation 621/2009 declares that the administration cost of an organization should not be greater than 30%. On the other hand regulation 2/2003 of the charity and society classifies the cost incurred to M&E as an administrative cost. That is why the management thinks cost incurred to M&E as a burden to the organization rather than an asset. Therefore, they are not willing to incur additional cost.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

Generally, the study made the following recommendations.

- *Need for more participatory approach*

Stakeholders, specifically the beneficiaries should be involved adequately in M&E activities. The stakeholders should be part and parcel of the activities. Their participations should range from initial planning to opinion and decision making. This will ensure ownership of M&E results and also ensure those projects are having relevance to the beneficiaries' needs.

- *Allocate enough budget and human power*

To see the benefits of M&E practices organizations should allocate sufficient budget and must recruit necessary and enough M&E experts. The costs incurred to M&E practice is an asset for the organization.

- *Amendment of the proclamation and related regulations*

### **5.3 Further Study Recommendation**

I recommend further study on the following issues

- The role of beneficiary/ community in the practice of M&E.
- Actual impact of the M&E practices on the performance of the projects, and
- Quality of M&E Reports in Ethiopian NGOs.

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## **Appendix 1 Questioner for Survey**

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

Dear respondent,

I am a student of Addis Ababa University School of Commerce pursuing MA in Project Management. I am currently conducting a study on Monitoring and Evaluation Practices in Ethiopian Non-Governmental Organizations, as part of my study requirements.

Your responses are very important in the success of this study. I would like to assure you that the information will be only used for academic purpose and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank You in Advance.

Yours Sincerely

BiniamTeshome

Mobile 0982162512

**Instruction** Please tick the appropriate boxes which best suit your view and fill in the blanks where necessary. (You can tick more than one where it's appropriate)

**Section A: General information**

1. Could you specify your organization area of intervention?

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2. How long have you been working with this organization? (in years)

1-4     5-8     9-12     Above 12

3. Your work experience in monitoring and evaluation activities. (in Years)

1-4     5-8     9-12     ove 12     he

4. Have you had any training in M&E activities?

Yes     No

If yes, could you specifically state the training type \_\_\_\_\_

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**Section B: Monitoring & Evaluation Structure**

| SN | Statement   | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|----|---|-----|----|----------|
| 1  | The organization has a well-defined structure that includes a monitoring and evaluation unit                                |     |    |          |
| 2  | The organization has a policy or set standards in place describes roles and responsibilities of the operation of M&E System |     |    |          |
| 3  | The organization conducts assessment of the overall performance of M&E system on a regular basis                            |     |    |          |
| 4  | Top management has a positive attitude towards strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system                           |     |    |          |



To show accountability towards government and other parties to eliminating sources of corruption and misuse of granted fund

To show accountability towards the local community and beneficiaries

Other reasons, please specify

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8. To which level do you think your organization conduct M&E in the current time?

Inputs

Outcomes

Output

Impact

9. How do you disseminate M&E finding?

No dissemination

Report to Donor

On Notice Board

Newsletter

Report to beneficiaries

Report to government officials

10. What is the role of the community and specifically beneficiaries in the program M&E?

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11. Are M&E findings well documented and archived as "lessons learnt" for future use in other implemented programs?

Yes

12. What are the main obstacles that your NGO face when they conduct the M&E activities?

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13. Do you think that the charity and society proclamation 621 has an impact on the M&E practices? If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Is there any recommendation you would like to make for NGOs that could enhance the adoption of M&E practices?

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**If there is anything to say, please be free to use the next space.**

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**Thank You!**

## **Appendix 2 Interview Guide**

1. Is there M&E system in your organization? What was the reason to adopt?
2. Could you explain how M&E reports are produced? How are they used and disseminated?
3. To what extent does your organization have and apply M&E system?
4. Are M&E reports are easily accessible to public? How?
5. Do you think that M&E is a cost to the organization? Is there a fund allocated for M&E?
6. How do you feel the charity and society 621 proclamation towards M&E practices?

## Annex 1

### Summary of Responses

| <b>Section &amp; Question Number</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------|-----------|
| Sec A Q 4                            | Have you had any training in M&E activities?   | 8          | 2         |
| Sec C Q 2                            | Do you have specialized M&E unit in your organization?   | 9          | 1         |
| Sec C Q 3                            | Do you think that the M&E is considered as a part of the life cycle of the project in your organization?                               | 10         |           |
| Sec C Q 4                            | Do you normally have a plan that guides M&E when implementing projects?  | 10         | -         |
| Sec C Q 5                            | Does your organization use any framework (Such as Logical Framework) in aiding the M&E of projects?                                    | 10         | -         |
| Sec C Q 6                            | Does your organization use information and communication technology enabled tools to collect, manage and analyze data for M&E purpose? | 10         | -         |
| Sec C Q 11                           | Are M&E findings well documented and archived as "lessons learnt" for future use in other implemented programs?                        | 2          | 8         |