

Assessing Social Work Practices in Early Child Care and Education projects; the Experiences of Selected NGOs in Addis Ababa.

A Thesis Submitted to Addis Ababa University School of Social Work in Partial fulfillment of the requirement of Masters of Social Work.

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Declaration

I, Jerry Daba declare that this research entitled “Assessing Social Work Practices in Early Child Care and Education projects; the Experiences of Selected NGOs in Addis Ababa” is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of reference and this work has not been submitted before by any others at any institutions.

Jerry Daba

Signature_____

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Abstract

Early childhood is the most important span in a child's life. Thus disadvantaged children in Ethiopia are lagging in their full developmental potential in their early years. Absence of quality and integrated interventions are amongst impediments. Hence, this study explored social work practice of early child hood care and education projects, assessing experience of selected three NGOs in Addis Ababa. A qualitative research approach was utilized. Purposive sampling was used to select 30 participants, including social workers, program managers, parents, and woredas experts. Data were collected using in-depth interviews by semi-structured interview guides. Additional data were also obtained from observations and document reviews. Thematic analysis was utilized and all sources of data triangulated for accuracy. The results unveiled education, health, parental education, and livelihood-securing activities are the key components of social work practices. The results further unveiled roles and responsibilities of social workers are assessment, facilitation, advocacy, mentoring, and community mobilization. Regarding parents' perception they place a higher value on in-kind assistance rather than consciousness-raising intervention and they have good attitude for social workers even if they are unaware about the profession. Lack of; resources, specific guidelines, a code of ethics, trainings, integrated service, and awareness about social work have all been identified as challenges hamper deployment of social work discipline pillars in early childhood development practice. The study has long-term implications for in-depth investigation of the studied topic, as well as standardization of social work practice to magnify its contribution to the delivery of high-quality early childhood education and care.

Key words; Social Work Practice, Early Childhood Development, Early Childhood Care and Education

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ECCE:	Early childhood care and Education
ECD:	Early child hood Development
ECEC:	Early childhood Education and Care
ESDP:	Education sector Development Plan
MOE:	Ministry of Education
MOH:	Ministry of Health
MOWA:	Ministry of Women Affairs
NGO:	Nongovernmental Organization
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Social work is a profession that is grounded in social justice and social change with the concern of individuals, families' groups' communities, and society as a whole (NASAW, 1995). Social work practice implies the application of social work values principles and techniques for the attainment of empowerment, social change, and social justice (Horjersi, 2015).

The field of social work and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) are linked through the child welfare systems (Razgale, 2014). It supports children's survival and growth, development and learning including health, nutrition, physical and emotional development from birth to eight years of age. It also comprises the support a family and community need to promote children's healthy development (Mary, 2013).

Early childhood development is one of the most important phases in a child's life. There is an enormous amount of research proving that when children attend high-quality early childhood programs, they have better chances of succeeding in school. Quality early childhood programs provide children with the tools they need to learn social, behavioral and learning skills at their own pace, in terms they can understand (UNESCO, 2007/2008).

Globally Kindergartens and nurseries were first established in the 19th century in Europe and North America, and even in numerous of the developing countries, as the modernization creates engagement of women in the labor force, this in turn accelerates the demand for daycares and formal ECD centers (Kameran, 2006). Meanwhile, the emergence of different developmental theories is considered to be the reason for a growing interest in ECD. Global initiatives such as education for all, sustainable- development goals, and different

conventions on child rights and protection have a great contribution to the standardization and expansion of ECCE services and centers. (Kaspar, 2014)

In Africa, the notion and emergence of modern early childhood education and care showed in the 1960s after the independence of African countries from the colonization. However, despite the global interventions and initiatives, there are problems in enrollment rate and quality of ECCE service provisions (Kamerman, 2006). Especially in sub-Saharan countries, the greater population of children below five is not reaching their full developmental potential. Fundamentally as a result of poverty, malnutrition, and lack of early stimulation and learning opportunities as well as due to the absence of holistic intervention and integrated service provision (Michelle, 2012).

The history of Ethiopia in ECD care was in the hand of religious institutions. The opening of Kindergarten in Dire Dawa in the 19th century, by France missionaries, was the major breaking through for the emergence of early care and education at the institution level. The expansion of ECCE passes through the rise and falls during different political regimes of the country. The involvement of NGOs and international organizations has a great foundation for the expansion of ECCE services. However, the concern of government and other important sectors was minimal until recent years (Demeke, 2003).

In Ethiopia, ECCE is getting considerable attention in recent years. The need for children's development has been properly recognized in the country's education, health, and social welfare policies. As well, the national policy framework of early childhood care and education was formulated in 2010.

However, there are still drawbacks in the implementation of the policies as well as in quality and accessibility. In addition, there are problems with integration and holistic interventions of different stakeholders and including community and parents in the ECCD interventions. Multi-sectoral commitment and intensive researches are needed to improve the ECCD operation of the country as labeled by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], (2007/2008). Accordingly, this study assessed social work practice in ECCD concerning the experience of selected three NGOs in Addis Ababa Adera Foundation, Future Hopes Integrated Development Organization (FHIDO), and Sara Cannizzaro Child minders association.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the World Health Organization [WHO] and the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] (2012), early childhood development is defined as the period from the prenatal to eight years of age, which is the most intensive period of brain development. MOE (2012) defines ECCE as a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from conception to seven years of age and their parents and caregivers.

In Ethiopia's context, ECCE has four components. (1) Parental education, which focuses on raising awareness and empowering parents, (2) Development and stimulation are included in health and early stimulation (prenatal to 3 years). (3) Preschools: community-based kindergarten (4 to 6 years): this category includes both children and adults. (4) Non-formal school readiness classes and child-to-child initiatives in the community (MoE, MoH, and MoWA, 2010).

Children's exposure to ECCE intervention benefits children in dimensions of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Furthermore, it helps to ensure a smooth transition

to primary school and a better chance of completing basic education successfully (Kaspar, 2014). Beyond this, ECCE programs create conducive environment for the early identification of vulnerable children and children with special needs. In addition, investing in the early years has greater economic returns because the better-equipped children at the start are more effective later as citizens (MoE, MoH, and MoWA, 2010).

As indicated in Education Statistics Annual Abstract MOE (2020), the population of children who are under the age of seven is 18, 901,464, which is 18% of the general population (100,716,564). Nationally, 45.4% of children are enrolled in pre-primary classes, an increase of 4.7 percentage points from the previous year's result of 40.7%. While the intended goal of Education Sector Development Program V (2015–2020 G.C.) was 80%,

In Addis Ababa, gross enrollment in preprimary education is 105.5%, while the net enrollment ratio is 97.25% (MOE, 2020). The preprimary education enrollment rate in Addis Ababa increased at a rapid rate in the last five years of the ESDP, but as recent studies reveal, the structural and process quality issues are still in question (Desie, 2016).

In addition to pre-primary education, the other component of ECCE is nurturing care, which has the following components: good health, adequate nutrition, security and safety, responsive care giving, and opportunities for early learning. However, the multiple deprivation analysis showed that about 97 percent of children in Ethiopia experienced deprivation in at least one of six dimensions (stunting, nutrition, health, water, sanitation, and housing). Malnutrition and other adverse life experiences have caused nearly 60% of Ethiopian children under the age of five to fall short of their full developmental potential (MOH, 2020).

The implementing organizations of ECCE at the national level include the Ministries of Women, Youth, and Children's Affairs, Education, and Health. Internationally, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, the World Bank, and other similar organizations were involved in ECCE framework planning, policy formulation, resource allocation, and setting minimum standards. Numerous local, and international NGOs in Addis Ababa intervene in ECCE through health, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), education, and nutrition by intertwining global and national policy frameworks in different projects. The involvement of the government in ECCE was highly notable in the last decade, but the history of NGOs is more prior in giving services to disadvantaged children (Fantahun, 2016).

The assessment of the national ECCE policy framework by MOH (2020) indicated gaps in partnership with families and communities, indicating lower participation of the community and in providing integrated nurturing care services for children under pre-school age. On the other hand, the reviewed studies and situational analysis recommend multidisciplinary collaboration, intergraded community, and home-based services as one strategy for mitigating the existing ECD problems stated in the above paragraphs. As a result, this research aims to assess the practice of social work in ECCE among selected NGOs, as social work is one of the pivotal professions in causing intergraded services to empower communities and individuals as well as advocate for wider society.

In Ethiopia, professionals in ECEC encompass a wide range of personnel, including preschool teachers, people working in governmental and non-governmental organizations, and people working at the Ministries of Education, Health, and other similar Organizations. The study of Kassahun (2013) revealed that most of the personnel have qualifications in sociology, psychology, geography, multicultural education, or educational leadership, at either the

bachelor's or master's level, all of which have very little or no specialization related to children's development and early years education.

Regarding the social work profession, it is becoming a recognized profession in some government institutions, including hospitals and courts. Meanwhile, as different reports indicate, NGOs widely hire social workers and practice social work indirectly or directly. However, there is a trend towards considering social work as a working position in which people with different qualifications could work (Wassie, 2019). Accordingly, this research assessed the existing social work practice by expending social work core values, principles, and specific knowledge bases of social work practice in ECCE.

Specifically, the study assessed the existing practice by contextualizing the set of procedures stated by Nancy (2003, p. 205) on how social work practice in a school setting which comprises: documenting children's history; planning meetings with parents; counseling parents; participating in school meetings; advocating for the rights of children; working with schools; working with families; making home visits; assessing special support needs of children; working with community agencies; and collaborating with different professionals. Furthermore, social workers must maintain their role as advocates and policymakers to convey the message of social justice and social change to the issues surrounding ECEC for the improved security of children, families, and communities, as early childhood care and education are fundamental rights of children to live and develop to their full potential (Azzi-Lessing 2010).

Related to ECCE, AdungaMenye (2020), Fantahun (2016), Tekazewdu (2016), and Molabekalu (2019) studied challenges, opportunities, practices, and quality of early childhood care and education in different kindergarten schools in different parts of Ethiopia. The studies

focus on assessing the quality of ECCE using educational standards, policies, and initiatives at the global and national levels as a reference. Their research findings identified prominent gaps, such as a lack of skilled personnel, standardization, and integrated service. Furthermore, the studies identified low enrolment rates and poor infrastructure and structure quality as ECCE problems in Ethiopia.

However, as far as my search went, I did not find any studies directly focused on assessing the social work practice in ECCE. Therefore, social work practice in ECCE has researchable areas such as the role of social workers in ECCE, challenges and the magnitude of current practice. Accordingly, this study aimed to fill the knowledge gap regarding social work practice in ECCE through the experience of selected NGOs in Addis Ababa.

1.3 Research Objective

1.3.1 General Objective

The goal of this study was to explore about how social work is practiced in ECCE programs concerning experiences of NGOS in Addis Ababa by applying social work professional skills and principles to early childhood development.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To explore social work practice components in ECCE projects.
- To identify roles and functions of social workers in ECCE projects.
- To explore perception of parents towards social work practice in ECCE projects.
- To explore challenges in social work practice in ECCE settings.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are components of social work practice in ECCE projects?
2. What are the roles and functions of social workers in ECCE Projects?
3. What are the challenges of social work practice in ECCE settings?
4. What is the perception of parents towards social work practice in ECCE projects?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will fill the existed gaps concerning on social work practice in ECCE projects or in early child intervention. Since there are limited literatures on the raised issue this study will give hint on the trend of social work practice in ECCE concerning on sampled NGOS.

In addition the study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the general standards that are applicable in social work practices in the ECCE and early intervention. In addition NGOS with social work units can use the document as an opportunity to grasp helpful implications for improvements.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The scope the research is limited to social work practice in ECCE projects in selected NGOs in Addis Ababa.

Definition of Terms

Social work; is a term applied to a specific profession that is committed to improving the quality of life for vulnerable people by helping them deal more effectively with the challenges they face and/or helping to change the social and economic conditions that create or exacerbate individual and social problems.

Practice; is a term used to infer what social workers actually do, as in the phrase social work practice. The word practice stands for action and performance by the social worker

Social work Practice in the context of ECCE; in the context of ECCE social work can be practiced through the child welfare systems, guaranteeing quality and safe child care, prevention of child abuse and neglect. Furthermore, social workers should work in, education and treatment of children, both in school and home setting. The other major task of social workers in the field of early education and care is; advocating on behalf of parents and children who need access to high quality early care to improve child and family well-being.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Concepts of Social work Practice

Social work is a helping profession which endorses social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to ensure wellbeing (NASW, 2008) .The profession operates by utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems; it works at individual, family, group and community level (Mary, 2013).

As Trevithick, (2012) stated social workers must have the necessary knowledge in order to practice social work in diversified settings. Basically, it is essential to obtain theoretical knowledge which embraces theories of different disciplines, factual knowledge which includes knowledge of policies, regulations, legislation; and practice knowledge which is composition of above domain of knowledge which reviles by reflective and reflexive activity during practice.

According to Bradford (2015) direct practice of social workers includes, community organizing, supervision, consultation, advocacy, social and political action, policy development, policy implementation, education and research, evaluation and other related domains of practice. However as noted by Trevithick (2012) in parallel social workers have to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs and have to strive to promote the responsiveness of, organizations communities, and other social institutions to individual's needs and social problems.

Social work practice gives high emphasis on shaping and creating environments that will be supportive and empowering. Foundation this aim is one of the most essential social work values: a strong belief in the importance of social justice which refers to fairness and moral-rightness in how institutions such as governments, businesses, and powerful groups recognize and support the basic human rights, dignity, and worth of all people (Mary, 2013).

Social work practices in any settings comprises activities of advocacy for helping clients to access and effectively use formal and informal community resources that enable them to self-advocate. Advocacy efforts aimed at directing toward improving administrative and public policies to support service users. Furthermore, advocacy efforts should emphasize the strengths and assets approach and shall promote interdisciplinary and inter organizational collaboration to enhance, and deliver effective services (Bradford, 2015).

2.2. Concept of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

According to UNICEF, UNESCO (2012) early childhood denotes to the period from birth to eight years of life. The term early childhood care and education (ECCE) refers to the variety of procedure and tools that sustain and support development during early years of life which includes education, physical social and emotional care ,intellectual stimulation ,health care and nutrition .It also includes the support a family and community need to promote children's healthy development.

As stated in Woodhead (2009) research proves that the earliest years of a child's life represent a crucial period of biological, neurological, psychological, social and emotional growth and change .However, poverty and other drawbacks can affect a child's developmental potential in numerous ways, the effective ECCE implementations can adverse the situation and have long

term positive outcomes for the life of the children. According to Kaspar (2014), early interventions consistent with realizing child rights, it is also an important pro-poor strategy capable of increasing equity. In general ECCE is an integrated approach for holistic child-development in which both early stimulation and education are seen as a network of activities carried out at home, preschool and community levels.

2.3 Global trends of Early Childhood Care and Education

Kindergartens and nurseries were first established in the 19th century in Europe and North America, and even in numerous developing countries. During the time a distinction was made between kindergartens for educational purposes and day nurseries to provide care. But subsequent developments were slow in several countries. However in European countries like France showed extensive developments occurring right after the World War II, and incorporate early education in education system in 1980s (Kamerman, 2006).

International conferences such as the world conference on education for All in 1990, jointly sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank, held in Jontien, Thailand, in March 1990, was a turning point in ECEC developments at global level . The initiatives on universalizing basic education as a fundamental right and eradicating literacy initiated a new stage in the development, advancement, and promotion of ECEC. The Conference Declares Learning begins at birth can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programs as appropriate for poor, mechanizes it stated especial concern needed for disadvantaged and disabled children. The Dakar, Senegal 2000 World Education Forum, the reaffirmed including the goal of increasing and improving all-inclusive early childhood care and education (Kamerman, 2006).

In many nations similarly the following major advents paves the way for expansion of early education in higher rate the changing roles of women especially, the rising rates of female labor force participation, disappearance of the extended family ,brain research weight the value of-early education the economic research stressing the benefits of preschool and globalization.

In Africa 1960s at the end of colonialism the establishment of independent states increases in female labor force participation rates, the extensive developments in child and family policies in respective countries. However, the current status of ECCE in the continent is full of drawbacks .As noted in the 2005 United Nations Committee report Coverage rates are increasing worldwide, though early childhood services of good quality remain inaccessible to the majority of the Africa's children (UNESCO, 2010).

2.4 Early childhood Care and education Attainment in Ethiopia: Trends, Current status and challenges

The initial history of early childhood education in Ethiopia connected with religious institutions. The modern early childhood care and education started as early as 1900 with the opening of the first kindergarten center in Dire Dawa however there was break for almost a century in the development. The socialist revolution of 1974 was a turning point in terms of expansion in the sense that from 1975-1990, the number and enrollment capacity preschools grew in significant rate .After the fall of the socialist regime there has again been a relative stance of silence on the issue, limiting the enrollment figure of kindergarten education (Demeke, 2003 cited in Teka, 2016).

According to the ministry of education, 1991 was the remarkable time for improvements and breakthrough for ECCE, before that interventions were highly centralized and poor in terms

of quality, showed low enrollment ratio, low access and lacked curricular relevance and responsiveness (MOE, 1994). The significant major taken during the time was the formulation and implementation of a new Education and Training Policy (1994) which assured the significance of early childhood education. Furthermore the adoption and engagement of Ethiopia in global initiatives such as education for all (EFA), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in MDG has significant impact on the operation of ECCE by setting standards for practice (Woodhead, 2009). Internally country's education, health, and social welfare policies include proclamations which recognize the re importance of early childhood development this intern contributed for the growing interest of early childhood care and education in recent years.

One of the golden opportunities through the historical path of ECCE in Ethiopia is the endorsement of the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2010). Latterly, strategic operational plan and guidelines for early childhood care and education in Ethiopia formulated depending on the policy. The policy has four pillars; Parental education. Health and Early stimulation program (prenatal to 3+Years), Preschools and community-based kindergarten (4 to 6 +years) and Community – based Non-formal school readiness. (MoE, MoH, MoWA, 2010).

Despite of all efforts mentioned above the current practice of ECCE in Ethiopia is far from seated goals and desired outcomes (Tsegai, 2015). As indicated in the situational analysis of national policy framework of ECCE there are diversified problems in early development of Ethiopian children in dimension of maternal health, child nutrition, child mortality, care and protection. The research finding of Tesfaye, (2018) identified the following problems at studied ECCE centers shortage of trained personnel, absence of supporting environment for

children disability, one-directional flow of communication between centers and parents. Furthermore, Tekazewdie (2016) identified lack of; uniformity of early childhood, stakeholder's participation, inadequate budget and monitoring system of the program as some of the major challenges that hindered the implementation of the program.

On the other hand non-governmental institutions guideline of ECCE in Ethiopia requisites necessary to promote developmental growth of young children (prenatal to 3+) ,however the practice of ECCE gives high emphasis for pre-school settings rather than children under 3. In addition absence of coherence and integrated intervention is among the current challenges (Fantahun, 2016) .

2.5 Social Work Practice in Early childhood Care and Education Settings

Field of social work and ECCE linked through the child welfare systems .Guaranteeing quality and safe child care is one way that social workers can participate in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Furthermore, social workers should work in, education, nursing, and public policy, both in school and home setting (Razgale, 2014).

As noted by Azzi-Lessing (2010) the other major task of social workers in the field of early education and care is; advocating on behalf of parents and children who need access to high quality early care to improve child and family well-being. Social workers must hold their role as advocates and policymakers, and convey the message of social justice to the issues surrounding ECEC for the improved security of children, families, and communities, as early childhood care and education is a principal right of children to live and to develop to their full potential.

At micro level social workers engaged in and work with child welfare, domestic violence services, public schools , child care centers, family and parenting support and

education, home- visiting, public health settings, the Women, infant and children program (Nancy, 2003), and in other related settings . At macro level shaping policies on early childhood care and education as well as advocating for affordable and accessible services for disadvantage and vulnerable section of the society. The knowledge of social workers is much more visible in child welfare, health, and mental health settings (Razgale, 2014).

In addition social work practice assists early childhood programs to become more aware of the impact that families and communities have on children's growth. Increasingly, the social workers in early childhood programs are striving to deliver services that are family centered, culturally relevant, and strengths based (Mary, 2013).

Specific roles of social workers in ECD programs include planning and coordination, parent training, and counseling family members. In parallel social workers should draw on their person-in environment perspective to educate policymakers about the importance of extending ECD services to young children affected by social and services are delivered in families homes, in early care and education programs (Mel, 2013).In addition social workers in early care and education settings should help parents to learn behavior management skills, addressing parenting concerns, and helping families to access additional resource programs (Razgale, 2014).

In general social workers bring important skills in advocacy, service linkage, counseling, and consultation to their work with young children and their settings. Social workers should play diversified roles to enhance integration of these concepts into various programs and ensure that they meet the diverse needs of children and families (Azzi-Lessing, 2010). On the other hand parent empowerment is another intervention of social work practice .By participating in policy and program in the various types of leadership, advocacy, and trans- disciplinary collaboration,

creating linkage, social workers can make significant contribution to improving the quality of services provided in early childhood care and education (Bradford, 2015).

2.6 Competence and Quality in ECCE

The term competence implies something that can be learned by training and professional preparation. Competence in the early childhood education and care context has to-be, understood as a needed competence characteristic of the ECCE system (Mathias, 2012). Participatory and democratic process, involving different groups including children, parents, Families and professionals who work with children is one way of quality assurance. As recommended by Participatory approaches can proceed in two ways: in discussion with stakeholders, to generate a guiding curriculum and monitoring that engages and supports staff, parents, and children (Miho, 2012).

The (OECD, 2006 cited in Mathias, 2012) framework describes quality of ECCE as constructed from seven interrelated elements:

1. Orientation quality; the level of attention that a government brings to early childhood policy through legislation, regulation and policy initiatives
- 2 .Structural quality; it refers to structures needed to warrant quality in early childhood programmers, and is ensured by the clear formulation and. Structural requirements mainly define the quality of the physical environment (buildings, space, outdoors, pedagogical Materials); the quality and training levels of the staff; an appropriate curriculum properly

3. Educational concept and practice; the educational concept and practice of centers are generally guided by the national curriculum framework which sets out the key goals of the early childhood system, which differ from country to country.
4. Interaction or process quality; concerned with quality of interaction between caregivers and children, among children themselves, and the quality of relationships within the educator team.
5. Operational quality; focus on responsiveness to local need, quality improvement and effective team building: operational quality is maintained by leadership that motivates and encourages working as a team and information sharing.
6. Child-outcome quality or performance standards; ECEC services should give higher emphasis present and future well-being of children.

2.7 Parents Role and Participation in ECCE

ECCE initiatives and programs should consider parents as participant and partner parents have to informed about policies and strategies at national level and of the centers which centers their children attended. ECCE needs cooperative commitment of all stakeholders' participation as a result strong participation of parents more accountable (OECD, 2006).

Parents' gains in parenting skills and knowledge of child development and learning could found through participation in education courses and engagement in the ECEC service. Furthermore, training parents of toddlers to help their children learning has been found to positive results on later school achievements (MoE, MoH , MoWA, 2010).

According to Girma (2014) medium of information exchange between school and parents and in the context of ECCE setting have different forms and structure. The major

mechanizes are semester-based conferences, student performance transcripts, signatures of parents on children's exercise books, care giver-parent exchange of information while children are dropped and picked, and end of a day . However the involvement of parents in ECCE is limited to schools rather they didn't get considerable participation in the conception of policies and projects. Beyond this the service provisions for parents regarding training, education even if parental education is one of the four pillars national policy framework for ECCE.

2.8 The role of NGOs in Early Childhood Care and Education

Numerous local and international NGOs are operating in different countries across the world specifically most NGOs are operating in the third world countries by taking part in the development endeavor of the countries.

Early child hood development and care is one of the sectors most NGOs are involved in to improve the education sector development and address education to different groups of the community voluntary organizations and community based organization. The agencies can play an important role in the achievement of required targets of universalizing basic education and overall wellbeing of young children .The common supports includes, supporting formal by providing scholarship, teacher support, classroom construction, stationery support, and scholarship for higher education for the children of poorest of the poor family (Jagannathan, 2001).

In addition to the above interventions there are programs of action such as the free health for improvised women and children, nutritional and health related interventions to improve quality and equitable ECD services for all children. However in our county's context the services provided by agencies mostly focus on education and care for children's at age of

education excluding children under 3 years of age and lack integrated intervention system. (Girma, 2013) .

2.9 Summary of Literature review and Reflection

The reviewed literatures illustrate the importance and higher profit of investing in early years of human development. ECCE is one of the world platform formulated for ensuring the overall development of children from birth to eight years of age. However, the initiatives of ECCE in our country are far from achieving the desired outcomes and goals of national and international policies .Multi-dimensional socio-economic problems and fragmented intervention of different institutions contributed for low achievement .The other insight gained from the literature the practice and significance of social work profession. The experience other nations demonstrated the role of social work and social workers in early childhood account for quality provisions and improvements.

As the objective of the study is to assess the social work practice in ECCE projects, the reviewed literatures provided frameworks for assessing the practice. Further, the searched literatures showed the area of social work practice in ECCE is rarely studied concept ,mostly the researched areas of social work practice are in institutional child care and in hospital settings .As a result this hint directed the researcher to have constructivist stance and for preferring qualitative approach as it is convenient for driving studies in inductive way in barely studied

concepts .Beyond this the research aimed at assessing social work practice through experience of NGOs as a result the literatures indicated qualitative approaches are appropriate for grasping experience and subjective connotations of participants.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Philosophical Paradigm

A paradigm denotes a researcher's worldview and beliefs about an object or phenomenon. It is a foundation to set the ontology and epistemology of research. Accordingly, a constructivist paradigm was selected as the guide for the entire study. In the constructivist view, the reality is a subjective creation; there is no single reality. It emphasizes the importance of context in the process of knowledge construction and accumulation (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The ontological direction of constructivism is anti-foundational. Therefore, it rejects implementing any lasting, base standards by which truth can be universally known. Instead, they believe in socially constructed multiple realities. Constructivist epistemology is subjective. External reality cannot be directly accessible to observers without being influenced by their worldviews, concepts, backgrounds, etc. In addition, constructivism focuses on the contexts of participants' views and historical and social contexts to draw patterns of meaning (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, the research method for this study was selected based on the above theoretical assumptions and stance of the researcher.

3.2 Research Design

This research is exploratory and cross-sectional. The researcher observes at one point for a set amount of time in cross-sectional research. Exploratory research is typically conducted in the interest of gaining new areas of inquiry in rarely studied areas, with the goals of the research being to: scope out the extent of a particular phenomenon, problem, or behavior; generate some preliminary ideas about that phenomenon; or test the feasibility of undertaking a more wide-ranging study about that phenomenon, as Bhattacharjee (2012) puts it.

The goal of this study is to analyze social work methods in early child care and education initiatives, as well as the experience of selected NGOs in Addis Ababa; hence an exploratory research methodology was used. According to my search, the earlier studies on ECCE have a strong focus on quality issues. Furthermore, the majority of these investigations are carried out in preschool settings. This study, on the other hand, looks at the confluence of social work and ECCE in order to learn more about how social work is practiced in an ECCE setting in our country.

Qualitative research, according to Leavy (2017), values the depth of meaning as well as people's subjective experiences and meaning-making processes. We can gain a thorough understanding of activities, practice conditions, circumstances, and people through this method. As a result, the study employed a qualitative research methodology because the goal was to examine the role and practice of social work in sample NGOs in relation to ECCE in their operational setting, as well as to gain an in-depth understanding of current social work practice.

For the chosen research topic, a case study is the ideal sort of method. Case studies, according to Creswell (2014), allow researchers to conduct in-depth analyses of a case, a

program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. As a result, the study looked into the practice of social work in ECCE by using NGOs as case studies.

3.3 Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted at selected NGOs operating in Addis Ababa. NGOs are organizations that operate with not-for-profit motives. The agencies provide basic social services; undertake community development, environmental protection, social development, and other diversified aspects. (Jagannathan, 2001) .According to the list of Agency for Civil society Organizations, there are **2673** NGOs registered in Ethiopia amongsb**1871** are located in Addis Ababa.

The following organizations were selected using sampling criteria; Adera Foundation, Future Hopes Integrated Development Organization (FHIDO), and Sara Cannizzaro Child Minders Association. The organizations were selected to explore social work practice in ECCE projects from different standpoints; in a daycare center, community-based support, and in kindergarten.

Adera Foundation

Adera foundation is foreign organization founded in 2012 GC. The agency located in Nefassilk Lafto Sub city .The agency operates by setting primary objective of strengthen family unit in the nation of Ethiopia .The agency established its own day care in order to give time for parents to engage in bread wining activities. Furthermore, it facilitates programs to promote self-sustainability among destitute families. Currently the organization is supporting 310 children and their families.

Future Hopes Integrated Development Organization (FHIDO)

Future Hopes Integrated Development Organization (FHIDO) is an indigenous, Ethiopian resident charity working to build self-reliant and self-sufficient generation in Ethiopia. The agency Started operation in 1986. The implementation area of the agency is Arada Sub city ten woredas. The agency support children, youth and their families through improving education, health, livelihood, nutrition, housing and psychosocial statues. The agency runs sponsorship program, early childhood care and education, basic education, youth development program women empowerment, care for vulnerable children and gender and child protection programs.

Sara Cannizzaro Child Minders Association (SCCMA)

SCCMA is local charity organization founded in 2004 by Sara' s family inspired by vision of 15 years old girl Sara Cannizzaro .The agency located in Addis Ababa Nefassilk sub city . The agency runs kindergarten, sewing and embroidery training center and the has library for after school programs in order to achieve its missions &goals to enhance children's emotional psychological, personal and social development and wellbeing, improving status of targeted households in absolute poverty .The agency enrolled 50 children annually for kindergarten and the sponsorship program .

3.4 Data Sources

Data sources of the study were NGOs, currently implementing ECCE projects and which have social workers. The agencies were selected by snowball sampling based on selection criteria stated below. Furthermore, the stake holders of selected NGOs (government officers of education, health, women and children affairs office located in the operational districts of the agencies) used as data source.

3.5 Sampling Technique

In order To get deeper understanding on the issue being studied, appropriate sampling methods need to be chosen (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research requires a limited number of informants, whom selected deliberately so that their in-depth information will give optimal understanding about an issue. Accordingly the study used purposive sampling. The participants of the study was social workers, service users, parents and key informants from major stakeholders whom work with sampled NGOs ; officials from women and children affairs office , and community representatives. As insisted in the above statements the participants were selected based on their experience and knowledge of the researchable topic. The NGOs was selected based on their strategic intervention areas and the duration of their experience in the area of ECCE.

3.5.1 Selection Criteria for NGOs

- Engagement in ECCE projects ten and more years.
- Targeted on early years of children aged (0-8).
- Presence ECCE/ECD projects.
- Havening strategic directions for ECD programs
- Presence of social workers and social work unit.
- Residence in Addis Ababa.

3.5.2 Selection Criteria for Study Participants

- Working in selected NGOs (leaders of the organization, ECD department, and social work unit.
- Working in governmental organizations which are stakeholders of the NGOs.

- Being a parent/guardian of child who enrolled in ECCE projects.
- Being a community member in the site of ECCE project.
- All participants was selected based on their seniority, direct involvement, experience and knowledge in the subject of the study

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

In qualitative research, the major tools of data collection contain; interview, observation and document review (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In this study, the above data collection instruments were employed to gather information about social work practice in the selected NGOs specifically in ECCE projects.

Interview-The purpose of the interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and /or motivations of individuals on specific matters (Yin, 2012). In this study an in-depth interview with a face-to-face manner was executed.

Totally 30 interviews was completed. The interview was taken 30 -60 minutes. Unstructured interview guide was employed for data collection. In the data collection process, note taking method and partly voice recording was used. Differentiated interview guides were prepared for leaders, social workers, parents and other stakeholders. All tools were prepared in English and it was translated before the interview into Amharic.

Participants of In-depth Interview; participants of in-depth interview was ECD department leaders, social workers and parents/guardians of enrolled children including program mangers. As well as stakeholders of the NGOs; Education, health, women & children affairs office officers of intervention woredas .Those participants selected as they are appropriate source of data in order to get deeper insight and perspectives of the participants about the study

subject, since the participants engaged in detailed activities of ECCE projects .Data gathered through in-depth interview employed to understand kind of social work services being delivered, roles and functions of social workers, internal challenges including parents/ guardians perception towards social work service.

Observation- observation is a method of data collection offers the opportunity to record and analyze behavior and interactions as they occur, and enables to gather information from physical setting of the study area (yin, 2012). In this research a non-participant observation was applied. In non-participant observation, the researcher does not become part of the activities he/she is observing. The researcher will carefully watch the interaction of participants without involving him/herself.

Data gathered through observation- observation was executed to grasp data how daily activities practice in the study area and how service users and providers communicate. Beyond this observation helped to gain data from physical settings such as office setup of social workers ,ECD departments ,class rooms and compound of ECCE centers ,which helped to get insights about the impact of infrastructural settings on the practice ,and in creating child friendly environment for children.

Document Review - Different agency documents such as minutes, reports, client profiles and other related sources located in the sample agencies was used to grasp supportive information and for cross checking the data obtained from interview and observation.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The study applied the following steps of thematic qualitative data analysis stated in (Creswell, 2014) initially the collected data arranged for analysis which involves transcribing

interviews, typing field notes, and sorting the data into different types. The next step was reading or reviewing at the entire data, this provides a general sense of the information and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning and understand sayings, tones and impression of the informants .Afterwards the data were coded by organizing in to themes .The last step is making qualitative interpretation and discussion of the finding and results.

3.7 Quality Assurance

According to (Bhattacharjee, 2012) the quality of data was assured by applying the following ways; maintaining credibility through data triangulation across subjects or data collection techniques, checking conformability extent to which the findings reported in the research can be independently confirmed by others .

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Social researchers are expected to approach their task in an ethical manner .The ethical measures taken in this study was assuring consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, and the right to withdraw from the study. Privacy refers to the freedom an individual has in determining time, extent and general circumstances under which private information should be shared with or withheld from others. (Bhattacharjee, 2012) In this study privacy was maintained by conducting the interview in the place and time chosen by the participants. More over the study purpose, major significance and future implication was stated for informants before any attempts to collect the data.

3.9 Limitation of the study

Due to the obvious nature of the research approach, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. This research is based on a qualitative approach, namely a case study. The study is a

qualitative exploratory study that systematically focuses on studying the social work practice in Addis Ababa's ECCE Projects NGOs

Chapter four

4. Finding

In this chapter, the profile of research participants, the process of data collection, and the practice of social work in ECCE are discussed. The major issues identified in this study are presented in the following themes: social work practices provided in ECCE projects; roles and functions of social workers in ECCE projects; challenges of social work practice; and parents' and the community's perceptions of ECCE social work services. Other subtopics are incorporated to elaborate on the main themes.

4.1 Description of the Study Area

Adera Foundation, Sara Cannizzaro Child Minders Association (SCCMA), and Future Hopes Integrated Development Organization (FHIDO) were the three NGOs studied. Adera Foundation is a non-profit organization that offers daycare for impoverished children. SCCMA is a non-profit organization that operates a nursery, a kindergarten, and a sewing and embroidery training center in the area. FHIDO is a local non-profit organization that executes family assistance projects as well as community development activities. The organizations listed above were chosen to gain unique perspectives on social work practice in daycare centers, kindergartens, and community-based intervention.

4.2 Description of Study Participants

Research participants were selected based on their experience and relevance to the subject of the study. The identified participants include social workers, program managers, ECD department leaders, parents, and officials from government Woredas (Women and Children Affairs, Education, and Health Office). The participants were professionals who had been working on ECCE projects for more than two years and parents who had enrolled their children in the selected NGOs and stayed in the agencies for more than two years.

A total of 30 individuals participated in the study. Among whom, (3) program managers from the selected NGOs, (1) ECD department leader, (7) social workers from FHIDO, (2) from Sara Cannizzaro, (1) from Adera Foundation, (9) parents of enrolled children, and (9), participants from government offices were selected for this study.

The age range of the participants is from 22–47. Participants' educational levels range from sixth grade to master's degree. The work experience of the interviewed professionals ranges from 2–10 years. Parents of enrolled children, on the other hand, remain as service users in the organization for 2–10 years.

4.3 Description of the Process of Data Gathering

The data gathering was undertaken from May to June 2021, which consists of the dissemination of letters to respective agencies and setting appointments. The interviews were held at selected organizations; FHIDO, Adera Foundation, and Sara Canizzarro respective intervention Woredas of NGOs were held on different days based on their schedule.

4.4 Major Social Work Services Being Provided in ECCE Projects

4.4.1 Enrollment and Social work Service Delivery Mechanisms

According to the informants, the children were enrolled based on the selection criteria of each NGO. Among selected agencies, the common selection criteria are living with a single parent, having lower-income, which is defined as under 800-1000 ETB per month, permanently residing in the implementation area, and special concern is given to orphans and vulnerable children. The number of children is determined by the strategic dimension and resource capacity of the agency. Enrollment of children was done in collaboration with the Woreda women and children affairs office.

Because the research was conducted in a daycare center, a kindergarten, and a community-based intervention, there are some differences in service delivery mechanisms. To list them one by one, FHIDO provides family help programs for enrolled children and communities in the intervention area. The Adera Foundation runs a daycare center that focuses on the children who are enrolled (under the age of four). During their stay, the children are provided with different goods and services to help their development. Sara Child Minders Association operates a kindergarten as well as other services such as education and empowerment of female parents. In general, as per the connotation of informants, main service delivery mechanisms comprise material provision, awareness creation, and capacity building for individuals and institutions.

4.4.2 Components of ECCE Projects

As per indication of collected data, the social work service in the studied agencies regarding ECCE consists of major components such as education, healthcare, livelihood securing, and parental education, which will be stated in detail in the consecutive paragraphs below.

Education

The primary aim of Adera Foundation is to take care of children for mothers who are trapped in sustaining their basic needs, however as it has been indicated by PM1, they learned that they can educate them while they stay in the center so as education specialist hired in the agency. Even if the age of enrolled children is under three, they got an education on reciting the alphabet, counting numbers, communication skills, and similar activities. The education specialist prepares a lesson plan for caregivers and they discuss the progress of children every Thursday.

Fortunately, the researcher got a chance to observe the weekly meeting between the educational specialist and the caregivers. The discussion topics were about the weekly performance of the students, different behaviors of children, challenges they faced while teaching, the next plan, and preparation of teaching aid materials. For instance, one of the conversations between the caregiver and educational specialist was about a girl who disturbed the class and was presented as follows.

Educational specialist; how was the behavior of child x last week did she still cry and disturb in the middle of the class?

Caregiver; she is changed a little but she still disturbs the class, mocks other students and she seeks attention from us by throwing materials.

Education specialist: Do you try to discuss with her mother?

Caregiver: yes her mother also told us she has the same behavior at home and she doesn't know how to manage her insisted to us to do something.

Educational specialist: You must give extra attention to her and reward her for her excellent actions, as well as praise her in front of her mother anytime she improves, and we will check her progress at the next meeting.

The preceding conversation demonstrates that, in addition to academic tasks, they also recognize and respond to children's unique characteristics. Furthermore, the organization establishes a link with a private kindergarten, and once the child enters kindergarten age, the agency covers the school fees, monitors academic achievement, and provides support until the child completes elementary school.

Whereas FHIDO implements the early childhood development program in a cycle that includes enrolled children aged 6 months to 5 years old, according to the ECD department leader. The children are provided with scholastic materials when they enter kindergarten. In addition, the agency supports government schools in ten (10) Woredas.

The interventions in schools include the provision of school material such as instructional aides, indoor and outdoor games, the construction and refurbishment of lunch shelters, restrooms, and other similar items. On the other hand, there are capacity-building activities for interactive teaching approaches. As noted by the leader of the ECD department, learning through play, child development principles, and positive disciplining methods are among the training methods provided in the last implementation year. Besides, transportation expenses and supporting materials for special-needs children are dispersed for schools located in the implementation area.

Sara canizzaro is an NGO-owned kindergarten and its prime objective is to provide free, quality kindergarten education for destitute children. The agency enrolls 50 children annually and educates them for four years by providing scholastic materials, uniforms, and feeding. However, PM2 explained that the kindergarten follows the curriculum of the Ethiopian education bureau; however, they intertwine it with the Montessori education system. The Montessori teaching methodologies were introduced and trained for all the staff located in the compound.

The Montessori teaching method, according to SW3, is interactive and full of activities that allow students to learn by touching materials and developing their understanding. As a result of the agency's customization of the Montessori Method with locally available materials, the compound's staff has been trained in Montessori and knows how to interact with children.

In general, as stated in the above paragraphs, the education service of selected NGOs encompasses material provisions, infrastructure development in schools, and educating children in formal and informal methods to develop the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children.

Health Care

According to informants, the sampled NGOs cover the medical expenses of all enrolled children. The organizations reimburse the costs when the children become ill. They also assist their service users in obtaining health insurance. The other major activity in the health intervention is the measurement of children's height and weight to track their growth. Following that, the detected underweight children are given nutritious meals until they reach their normal weight.

As per the explanation of SW1 at FIHDO, guardians/parents got food preparation training for infants and toddlers in locally available recipes. Furthermore, at a community level, in collaboration with health extension workers, awareness creation is executed on pre-natal and post-natal medication, procedures of vitamin intake, vaccination of infants, family planning and other similar topics.

Materials are provided for health centers dwelling in the intervention area to ensure quality early childhood medication systems. Meanwhile, at FHIDO, enrolled children receive sanitation and hygiene materials. Their parents' or guardians' got medical expense coverage as well, to protect the family and create a safe environment for the child. In addition, children with chronic illness and special needs need to be supported in accordance with their needs as per the statement of informants.

In addition to medical coverage, the Adera Foundation offers a feeding program for children while they stay in the daycare, as informants stated. The feeding program aims to provide nutritious food to children who otherwise would not have it, and there is a permanent nurse who monitors the children's health, allowing for early detection of health issues. In addition, the agency's nurse educates parents, either formally or informally, on how to keep their children safe and healthy.

As per the explanation of SW3 in Sara Canizzaro, the major health care interventions other than medical coverage include feeding programs aimed at achieving a healthy diet and inducing an effective teaching and learning process. In addition, the agency carried out preventive health care interventions by creating awareness.

During the COVID19 pandemic, all of the sampled agencies provide sanitary materials, participated in awareness-raising programs and provision of handout services such as food for mitigating economic stress created by the pandemic.

Livelihood Securing

As per the yield of data gathered through interviews, one of the major interventions in ECCE projects in the selected study areas is to induce income-generating activities, while there is a slight difference in systems of implementation. Participants in three organizations simultaneously indicated the major aim of income-generating activities in empowering parents to fulfill the fundamental needs of their children who are at the age of early childhood to satisfy their physical and emotional needs.

FHIDO's ECD department leader explained that currently 810 children are enrolled in the ECD cycle, among whom 45 mothers get support for IGA (Income Generating Activities) annually. The individuals selected after the execution of assessment which assure their eligibility in collaboration with the Woreda women and children affairs office.

Subsequently, eligible mothers are provided with startup capital based on their assessed need. Subsequently, they attend 10 days of basic business skills training, which is used as a guide for the commencement and progress of their small business. Among the interviewed parents, P3 stated the following about how IGA intervention benefited her:

I have a three-year-old enrolled child here; earlier, I washed clothes door to door, which was quite exhausting, and things became more problematic when I was unable to work as before due to health issues. Finally, I quit most of my customers and started working in one house, which was not enough to sustain our

lives. After the agency staff examined my situation, I received a washing machine, and the training and follow-up helped me to move forward. Now I have customers, and the business is doing well, and I measure my progress by the fact that I am providing food and other necessities for my family in a better way.

According to the statement of PM2 in the daycare center at Adera Foundation, parents of enrolled children got vocational training and certification to equip them with skills that generate income. The training includes sewing, wickerwork, and kitchen operation. After they complete the training, they start their business, using their savings as initial capital.

Likewise, Sara Cannizzaro's organization trained parents. According to the informants in the agency, there is certified cooking training by a trained chef hired permanently for the feeding program and to train parents of children. Additionally, there is sewing training for mothers. Then tools and initial money are provided for them to start a small business.

In general, the data gathered indicates IGA activities in three organizations include undertaking need assessment, training, initial capital provision, and crate linkage for employment and marketing their services and products.

Parental Education

Parental education is one of the fundamental components of ECCE because parents are the primary actors in child development; informants from three organizations stated the mechanisms and interventions of the organizations that have similar content but differ based on the strategic dimension of the NGOs. As a result, parental education mechanisms and content are presented below, stratified by studied NGOs.

FHIDO provides parental education for parents through coffee ceremony sessions packaged for 10 months, using visual aids and a manual of parental skill training. As per the document review, the components of the manual are stratified according to the life span of early childhood (0–8) years old. The parental skill manual has components such as: skills for understanding children, communication skills with children, responsive caring, anger management, following children, and ways of disciplining children.

The visual aid manual consists of education in the following stages: prenatal, birth to 12 months, 12 to 24 months, 3 to six years, and 6+ years on health, nutrition, and protection. The ECCD department leader describes the process of parental education as follows: initially the volunteers (representatives of the community selected by Woreda) got training on the manuals, then after they cascaded them to 10–20 individuals located near to their residence, through a coffee ceremony. Meanwhile, different awareness campaigns are conducted on the issues of health, inclusive education, and child protection.

The benefit of the education was stated by P3 as follows.

I attended the coffee ceremony for ten months. What I remember is that I got ways to feed my child and communicate with her, and how to involve her siblings and my husband in the process. Furthermore, it helps me to register and take her birth certificate on time.

Similarly other parent of enrolled child (P4) indicated that;

Before joining the FHIDO program, I didn't pay attention to every activity of my child; instead, I just left him on the field to play with his friends, and I thought that was enough. However, parental education has assisted me in comprehending and following his emotions

and social skills. On the other hand, the coffee ceremony session allows us to share our experiences, freely discuss our concerns, and form bonds with one another.

Similarly, the Adera foundation provided parental education for parents of enrolled children. The SWR2 stated the agency staff, including parents, were trained in TBRI (Trust-based Relational Intervention) theory by customizing it in the agency's context, which has a process of empowering, connecting, and correcting a child's discipline. In general, empowering entails meeting a child's physiological, emotional, and psychological needs. Connecting entails understanding children and responsiveness. The final step is correcting undesirable behaviors by studying correcting mechanisms.

Additionally, the foundation provides a monthly "dinner time" culture for the enrolled children's mothers and fathers. Dinner is prepared by the mothers as a group. A trend's goal is to foster a sense of community and belonging. Additionally, the platform is used by agency experts to educate and disseminate information to parents, as well as collect feedback from parents on service delivery.

On the contrary, Sara Cannizaro provided parental education as well as life skills training. In an in-depth interview with SW5, he revealed that parental education is carried out through monthly life a skill training that covers topics such as parenting, communication, saving habits, child protection, health education, and other related topics.

For instance interviewed parents of enrolled children replied the following for the question that says what kind of training do you gain from the agency? P6 insisted;

Once I remember, I learn about family, how to follow up and communicate with them. The training enables me to give more attention to tiny things that weren't bothering me before.

P2 also added;

I remember the training they taught us about breastfeeding and food preparation, and it helped me provide different diets for my child from affordable and available items.

Child Protection

The study revealed that NGOs intervene in child protection by raising awareness and undertaking child protection assessments. Assessments take place mainly when children come to the agency for service as well as during home visits. For instance, the home visit questionnaires of the agencies contain similar phrases and questions about the wellbeing of a child and his or her surrounding environment.

Experts from the agency endeavor to resolve child protection issues whenever they are reported or detected. Through consulting with parents, and if critical child abuse occurs, they assist their clients in referring the case through the legal process.

Furthermore, data gathered shows that most NGOs are concerned with preventing child abuse through raising awareness. For example, as seen in FHIDO, there are attractive drawings in the agency's compound and billboards put up at public gatherings with sayings that raise awareness of children's rights. On the other hand, NGOs facilitate discussion platforms aimed at increasing the responsiveness of government sectors.

The listed components of ECCE service provision were also confirmed by the respondents from woreda women's and children's affairs office, health, and education offices that they affirmed agencies' execution of activities in collaboration with them and that they assisted the organization in enrollment of service users, service linkage, and community mobilization. They also engaged in monitoring and evaluation of the services given by the agency. In relation to this, W3 from the education office explained that the involvement of NGOs in early childhood care and education interventions has a greater contribution to assisting destitute children and families.

4.5 Roles and functions of Social Workers in ECCE Projects

4.5.1 Routine activities of social workers

Daily tasks of social workers are grouped into Enrollment of children, sponsorship activities, program activities, home visits, and "counseling" based on the results of an in-depth interview with eight social workers.

Enrollment of Children

The selected NGOs have a similar trend in the procedures for enrollment of children. In collaboration with Woredas women's and children's affairs offices, social workers register new children based on the selection criteria of respective agencies.

During registration, parents sign a consent form. In addition, the profile of the child registered mainly contains age, sex, health status, family size, guardian/parent profile, living condition, and address. Registering the above-stated information is the task of the social worker. Meanwhile, the files are documented for each child with the facilitation of social workers. They

also read the concept note and orientated the parents about the service they would get from the organization.

Sponsorship Activities

In the context of the study area, sponsorship activities infer activities related to creating bondages between sponsor and child by producing quality data. The NGOs secure their funds from international donors. As indicated by informants', the sponsorship activities of the agencies have quite a difference and are stated one by one below.

FHIDO administers one-to-one sponsorship; the agency's primary donor and sponsors reside abroad. SWR5 explained that one of her main responsibilities in sponsorship is to update the data of enrolled children, which includes the child progress report (CPR) and the annual letter. The Child Progress Report (CPR) is software that records age, gender, grade, family background, health status, height, weight, talents, hobbies, and other related information, and it is updated annually. In addition, assisting children while they are writing letters and drawings is also part of the daily routine of social workers.

Currently, the organization has enrolled 848 children in the early childhood development projects, and social workers are responsible for 150-250 children each. On the other hand, after they had gathered the data, they had to edit and report it to the head office, which is another responsibility. In addition, social workers translate, read, and deliver packages for children sent by donors, as well as assist them in writing replays.

Unlike FHIDO, the Adera Foundation does not have a one-to-one sponsorship program. The foundation is an international NGO, with board members residing in the United States of America, and it seeks to fund various means. Sponsorship is not one-to-one; instead, a sponsor

may support a group of children, or a group of donors sponsor a specific number of children. As a result, the social worker takes group photos of children while they are in class, playing, eating, or doing other activities. Furthermore, the social worker updates the master list once a year by talking with parents when they come to pick up their child. The donors are also supplied with various progress reports, and the social worker is in charge of 310 children.

While in Sara Cannizaro, even if there is support from abroad through the founders' families, the majority of the sponsorship is obtained locally from private companies and individuals. As a result, the social worker sends sponsors status reports as well as thank you letters with photographs of the children. As the fund is being raised locally, resource mobilization is at the top of the list of social workers' responsibilities.

Program Activities Social Workers Engaged in

Program activities infer to social workers' engagement in the intervention of NGOs in education, health, parental education through awareness creation, material provision, and so on. One of the major program activities is material provision. The social worker has the task of delivering materials, such as school supplies, food items, cash transfers, and so on, from pursuing a process to disbursement. In addition, documentation of the provisions is another responsibility of the social workers.

Even if there are different mechanisms in the studied agencies, the social workers engaged in similar activities, such as executing different assessments of individuals for IGA support and psycho-social assessments of enrolled children, for instance. SWR 7 stated that;

My roles and daily routines include monitoring the ongoing emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing and development of each child; evaluating his/her skills and performance with teachers and discussing actions to be taken; and conducting children's behavioral and emotional functioning every semester, including setting up and facilitating meetings with teachers and other staff on the educational performance and social development.

Another colleague added that

I am responsible for recording behavioral evaluations through a format prepared for each child with columns for student name, behavior, the support given with date, and behavioral changes. As well as selecting parent committees who participate in ongoing activities in the project and running parent meetings, to assess emotional and psychological wellbeing in the family.

The additional task of social workers in program activities in ECD programs includes creating linkages for empowerment of children and their parents. For instance, SW1 stated her experience.

During the assessment, the social workers identified children with special needs and referred those children to organizations to directly intervene on their special needs by writing supporting letters. For instance, we provide a wheelchair for one of our clients through networking with other organizations.

Similarly, another SWR7 from the Adera Foundation describes the linkage system as follows;

In our organization, there is employment linkage and marketing of products for clients. For instance, some of the sewing products are displayed in the center and sold when the visitors come, and there is also employment linkage.

In general, Social workers' duties in program activities include raising awareness, conducting training, reporting program activities, and recognizing and documenting achievements in order to share best practices in ECCE interventions.

“Counseling”

The social workers interact with clients daily and mentor them on issues related to their family and children, even if it is not formal. For instance, SWR 1 explained;

I talk with my clients daily about their problems, their child's conduct, health issues, or their complaints, and I discuss and mentor them, as well as listen to them patiently even if the matter is not resolved by me.

Here are some conversations with service users and social workers during observation, while the researcher was observing some documents in the office;

Client: *how are you x? I didn't get time to come and talk to you.*

SWR: *I am fine how are you?*

Client: *as you see her my girl is very thin she doesn't like eating, everybody says to me she doesn't look like 3 years old, I am worried she might be sick due to this.*

SWR: *why don't you come last time, when we post an announcement of growth monitoring children anyways you have to come for the next monitoring.*

Client: *Okay I will, I always shout at her, this might be the case she afraid to eat.*

SWR: *you have to be patient and try to serve the food differently to attract her and also try to give her a small amount in the nearest time interval, don't worry she is active and pretty. You have to bring her for the next growth monitoring if she became underweight supplementary food will provided for her.*

Client: *okay thank you so much.*

Another client also come in to the office and talked with social worker emotionally

Client ;*Good after noon X what is the reason I didn't get material to start a business , is there anyone eligible than me , all people know that I am living hardly with my 2 babies but you give washing machine for others and my villagers by ignoring me it is not fair .*

SWR: *X please comedown we all serve our clients equally and I understand you but we can't provide for all mothers at a time, we try to involve you in round. I will register you and inform your case to head office, if there is new thing I will let you know, don't be upset everything will be fine.*

Client: *Okay but this agency always forgets me when there is support in any kind, I will wait see what will happen.*

In addition SWR1 denoted that,

Even if there is no platform for standardized sessions, our clients have trust in us and tell us about their difficulties in their marriage, behavior of their children, health problems, what they should do to improve in their life and other difficulties they are facing. We

always try to induce a sense of hope in their minds to search for a solution. Whenever they share their difficulties with us, we register and try to represent their problems to the head office during our monthly meeting if the case is within the capability of the organization.

Furthermore, the interviewed social workers explained that they also have a mediator role. The clients share family disputes and difficulties with the social workers, and they try to mediate the family and try to mentor them to solve the problems. They also insisted the bondage created through everyday interaction makes the clients develop trust in them and seek advice and guidance from them.

Despite the absence of guidelines and structure for professional counseling and therapy, social workers engage in informal counseling with their clients in their day-to-day interactions.

Home visit

Home visits are one of the core tasks of all social workers, according to their statement. Once or twice a year, registered children are visited at their homes. The purpose of the visit is to assess the child's wellbeing and the child's living environment. Furthermore, home visits are used to identify major changes in the family's life, such as a new baby, a family member's death, or a change in income, and it is one way of gathering feedback from parents on service provision.

Attitude of Leaders of the Organizations towards the Role of Social Workers

The program managers of the studied NGOs replied with similar ideas regarding the role of the importance of social workers in ECCE project intervention. They stated that social

workers are important professionals for intervention as they have close interaction with society, which helps them grasp problems at a grass-root level. On the other hand, social workers are active agents in community mobilization and community development activities.

In addition, they suggested that social workers have a role in delivering awareness of the mission and vision of the organizations to the service users and other stakeholders. Specifically, in ECD, they play a key role from the planning of the project to implementation.

PM1 responded unique description for the role of social workers he stated that;

For us, our social worker very magnificent; she is in charge of 310 children and their families. In my opinion, a social worker's main function is to act as a link between the client, the community, and the agency. She consults and talks to each of them. She knows every detail about each family and brings their difficulties to us.

ECCE interventions have multiple dimensions of intervention on the development of gross motor, fine motor, language, cognitive, social/emotional, self-adaptive skills, and morals and values. As a result, inter-disciplinary teams are needed to induce effective intervention. As per the explanation of respondents, the trend of the NGOs is explained in the paragraphs below.

At the Adera foundation internally, the professionals are a social worker, education specialist, and nurse who educate and assess the psychological, emotional, and physical well-being of children. In FHIDO, the ECD department head, social worker, and other supporting staff engaged in the teamwork. Whereas in Sara Cannizzaro's case, since it is a kindergarten, there are teachers, social workers, social educators, and care givers.

Externally, as the informants from government Woreda indicated, the NGOs work with women's and children's affairs, education, and health offices for referral linkage, community mobilization, and parental education. Moreover, the government offices follow up and monitor the implementation of the organizations, and there is a quarterly review meeting with the NGOs .

On the other hand, other professionals specialized in ECCE, health, education, and other fields participate in the interventions of the agencies as intermittently paid for inducing capacity building activities, reviewing plans, designing strategic plans, and so on. On the other hand, PM2 explains that the membership of the agencies in different umbrella organizations helps to share experiences and refresh outdated practices within the organizations.

4.6 Challenges of Social work Practice implementation in ECCE Projects

This section presents challenges stated by informants which hinder service delivery mechanisms. The major challenges are elaborated as follows.

4.6.1 Resource Constraint in Meeting the needs of Service Users

As stated by all of participants, even if NGOs register children based on their capacity there are budget constraints for provision of holistic service for children. SWR 7 illustrated his opinion as follows.

The majority of our organization's provisions are for educational materials and medical coverage, but there are other needs such as housing, unemployment, and other socioeconomic problems caused by escalating urban poverty. Early childhood development, in particular, necessitates integrated services from conception to eight

years of age. Mothers in destitute situations are not capable of passing through proper prenatal and postnatal care. In addition, intervention for children under three mostly focuses on awareness creation, which is minimal compared to the need. Despite the fact that we are tired of resolving this in a sustainable manner through livelihood securing projects, even if the number of families addressed annually is reduced due to a lack of resources.

SW1 also stated that due to budget constraints, most service users are dissatisfied because the agency's services do not meet their expectations, and as a result, they are unwilling to attend awareness-raising events and training. Furthermore, ECCE necessitates extensive infrastructure and materials because it encompasses health, education, and other factors that necessitate a holistic approach and huge investment. However, the activities are limited due to budget constraints.

4.6.2 Work load of Social Workers

The outcomes of the study revealed that the agency social workers had several tasks. One social worker, for example, is in charge of 250–300 children on average. Furthermore, they are participating in both sponsorship and community development activities. This incident prevents social workers from conducting a comprehensive assessment of the children and their environment. All of the social workers who were interviewed indicated that their responsibilities always went beyond their job descriptions.

Furthermore SW5 explains;

The enrolled children in the agency have programs stratified by age under; ECD for under five children, 6-14 basic education, and 15-24 youth development. As a result, for

instance, I am responsible for children in the ECD program and basic education. This overload has an effect on how we design problem solving models for each individual as we thought in the theory.

Likewise, SW in Adera day care affirmed that

There are many tasks assigned to me. Among them, assessing children's wellbeing, disusing with parents, and monitoring the academic performance of students are a few of them. In addition, the social work position is unique in that you have a moral responsibility to listen to each of your clients. In addition, I also facilitate awareness creation programs and present information about my clients to other teams. In such cases, we may lose focus due to multiple responsibilities. This in turn affects the quality of intervention adversely and creates time shortages to execute activities as needed.

In general participants' highlighted overload of the work and emphasized on having more social workers.

4.6.3 Inadequate Training of Social Workers

In addition to a shortage of social workers, the study discovered that they did not obtain appropriate training in the field of social work and didn't have that much skill in how to apply it to early childhood development care and education. Furthermore, the majority of social workers do not have a social work degree, as presented in the table below.

Code	Educational background
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SW1	Sociology & Social work(BA)
SW2	Sociology (BA)
SW3	Accounting(BA)
SW4	Accounting(BA)
SW5	Psychology(BA)
SW6	Sociology(BA)
SW7	Social work(BA)

Table-1 (Own survey, 2021 educational back ground of the social workers)

There is a trend among the agencies to hire various individuals who studied social science for the post of social worker. Furthermore, even though their educational background is unrelated to social work, some people get hired if they volunteer for the organization.

According to social workers' feedback, the capacity-building training they received was primarily in the areas of leadership and management, project management, resource mobilization, child protection, and psycho-social support concepts. On the other hand, they get training which is differentiated as per the aim of the organization. For instance, at Adera Foundation, the social workers are trained in TBRI (trust-based relation intervention) and implement the theories and concepts while interacting with children who stay at the daycare center.

According to SW7 in FHIDO, social workers received training and experience sharing in partnership with Addis Ababa University School of Social Work, and the students came into the agency for practice. Except for this occasion, all of the informants stated that they had not attended any training connected to the profession of social work or the intertwined concept of social work and ECCE.

The informant who has a social work background explains the following in response to the question: "What is the difference between working in the position with a social work background?"

Even if there are obstacles to putting the theories we've learned into reality, my education has enabled me to understand a child in a holistic light and to apply some theories to solve problems and communicate with customers. Because there is no policy or ethical code in place in the agency for the operation of social work practices, my education has assisted me in guiding and intentionally observing my activities.

4.6.4 Absence of Particular Guidelines and Code of Ethics for Social workers

All of the interviewed social workers stated that the organizations have a general code of ethics for employees. In addition, the studied NGOs have the following policies that they use to guide their intervention in different intervention areas: human resource policies, resource mobilization strategies, stakeholder engagement strategies, procurement policies, child protection policies, gender policies, economic strengthening guidelines for disability, gender, and culture, and safeguarding policies. Although these policies are related directly or indirectly to early childhood care and education interventions, as per the informant's indication, there are no guidelines or codes of ethics particular to social workers.

In response to the question of how they act and find solutions for their clients in the absence of a code of ethics and guidelines, social workers said that they mostly use what they've learned through experience and from their seniors. They are led by the activities outlined in the annual plan and apply their knowledge and skills in dealing with clients, they point out that the trend hasn't started in other similar organizations they are familiar with.

On the other hand, SW7, who has a social work background, noted that even if charity work needs a sense of humanity, the social work code of ethics might help to get ethical insight on how to act at an individual family level and especially to observe the whole context of the child. On the other hand, it enables us to act consciously by examining the consequences of our actions.

4.6.5 Lack of Inter-disciplinary Collaboration and Integrated Work

PM1 discusses the absence of integration from two perspectives: those of NGOs and government stakeholders. During enrollment, government stakeholders, particularly the women and children's affairs office, register families in contradiction of the selection criteria. They resist well-to-do families if they know each other or if they are misled by community leaders' partiality. We try to fix this by doing assessments and home visits, but there are some circumstances when we can't help.

In addition, PM1 elaborated that NGOs operating in simultaneous implementation areas sometimes have service provisions overlapped and resources wasted by working on the same target group. There must be a system to overcome the situation by working collaboratively to fill our gaps in this scarce world.

Most interviewed Woreda officials, on the other hand, indicated that the NGOs are heavily influenced by donor policy and interest; some of their interventions have insignificant

support for the children and families. For example, some policies focus on community development, such as constructing school facilities, health centers, and community awareness creation. While these activities are important, the children who bring sponsors through their names receive insufficient support.

4.6.6 Dependency Syndrome

All of the informants agree that the long-held intervention of NGOs has created a sense of dependency and that the individuals prefer more handout services than software interventions. Parental education and different trainings are viewed as insignificant by service users, as most of the clients are not willing to attend without incentives, and this factor hinders the achievement of the desired outcome of awareness creation activities.

4.6.7 Negative Impact of COVID 19 Out-break

As per the statement of all interviewed participants, COVID 19 adversely affects the income of NGOs because of the decline in sponsors. On the other hand, software projects such as awareness creation, monthly discussions, and coffee ceremonies were postponed and did not take place for more than a year, resulting in a void in the interaction of service users and NGOs. This became an obstacle to implementing activities as indented in the annual plans. In addition, basic social work practices such as home visits were banned for a long period of time, making it hard to assess the situation of the children. Though things are now stabilizing, the effect of the pandemic can still be seen.

4.7 Perceptions of Parents towards Social Work practice in ECCE Projects.

This section presents the interview held with parents of enrolled children in the selected NGOs, which is presented by focusing on their feedback and their perception of social work services and social workers.

4.7.1 Feedback of Parents towards ECCE Services Provisions

The parents indicated that the agency's service is helpful to them and assists them when they are having difficulties with their children. On the other hand, the service provisions give them insight on good parenting skills and have positive feedback. Especially in the two Adera Foundation daycare centers and Sara Canizzaro Kindergarten, the parents explained that the agencies solve their problems in the middle of caring for their children and working to sustain their lives. For instance, P1 indicated;

Before my child joined the day care, it was difficult for me to engage in casual work with my child. However, when she joined the agency, I got hope and time to work. In addition, my child got nutritious food here and we got 500 birr, teff, and monthly. Generally, the agency helped me to raise my child without previous stress.

Similarly P2 stated that;

I don't have a word to thank the agency. I am an uneducated single mother. I don't have the time and ability to help my child with homework and observe his academic performance. However, the agency helped me by following and educating my child and I learned some methods on how to feed and discipline my child.

The other positive feedback from the parents is on the initiation of the agencies into income generating activities. For instance, P5 stated that *"they taught me sewing; now I started working in my home and by now I have started selling my products and am very happy and motivated for changes in my future."*

Additionally parents appreciated the longitudinal service provision of the NGOs, for instance, FIHDO support and follow-up of the enrolled children till they turn eighteen years old.

Parents in general explain that they are happy with service provision, though p1 and p3 have reflected different views, stating that the government is providing scholastic materials that were previously provided by NGOs. However, there is no measure taken by the agency to provide another support that substitutes the scholastic material provision.

In addition, P9 in FHIDO stated that the focus is on training and provision of some sanitary materials. However, there is a need for other support like handout provision as things are getting difficult due to the current inflation. Furthermore, the parents insisted that the IGA program's supports are induced for fewer people in a year, and they have been waiting for a long time. In general, most of the interviewed parents have complained about the inadequacy of the handout service provisions.

In terms of their participation level, parents indicated that there are annual meetings, monthly discussions or quarter-based gatherings in different methods in the selected NGOs and they participate in planning sessions. Furthermore, they present their feedback in the office for social workers and other staff. However, some parents indicated that they mostly didn't attend those meetings, that they didn't understand some of the issues presented, and that they did not have time to attend the meeting.

4.7.2 Perception of Parents towards Social workers and Social work Service Provision

The parents perceive the following activities as social work service practices. They considered the registration of children, where they write letters to their sponsors, material provision, health, income-generating activities, and other services. The majority of the parents explain the handouts or material provisions as a social work service.

Similarly, SW4 stated that service users give more value to material provisions than others. However, the service provisions on awareness creation and parental education are valued by fewer individuals, and others don't attend properly. And most parents attend the training for the purpose of getting an allowance. Meanwhile, the social workers assure clients measure the social work service by what they get from the agency.

On the other hand, parents share their perception of who the social workers are as the ones who treat, give service, and help their children. Some of the parents spoke about the behavior and the kindness and patience of the social workers.

Moreover, they stated that social workers are like family members who are the closest people to sharing their difficulties and consider them the reason and the bridge for the support they receive from the NGOs. The finding indicates the behavior and commitment of social workers, which alter the perception of the service users towards social work, even if they don't have clear knowledge about the profession.

4.8 Summary

The study looked at social work ECCE interventions in kindergartens, daycare centers, and community based interventions through three organizations: Adera Foundation, Future Hopes Integrated Development Organization, and Sara Cannizzaro Child Minders Association.

According to the study, education, health, parental education, and livelihood-securing activities are the key components of social work practice ECCE initiatives. The everyday activities of social workers, on the other hand, include material provision, informal counseling, home visits, sponsorship activities, and program facilitation. Furthermore, according to the study, agency heads have a positive attitude toward the function of social workers.

Furthermore, the study highlights the major challenges of social work practice in ECCE projects, including budget constraints for encompassing holistic service provision, work overload among social workers, insufficient training for social workers, and the fact that only two of the seven social workers have an educational background in social work, all of which have an impact on the implementation of activities performed by social workers. In addition, the absence of specific guidelines and a code of ethics for social work in an ECD setting is one of the challenges stated by informants.

On the other hand, the study discovered that clients' perceptions of social workers and social work services were influenced by what they received from the organization, with service users placing a higher value on in-kind assistance. Clients do not value additional services such as parental education, awareness creation, counseling, or interventions in community development initiatives. In contrast, during the interview, a few parents stated that they see social workers as close relatives and the best mentors for their children. As a result, the study found that the conduct and communication skills of social workers affect the perception of service users. In general, the interviews with service users revealed that they are unaware of the tasks of social workers and the profession of social work.

In general, the findings of the study revealed that, despite multidimensional constraints, social work and social workers play an important role in educating, creating linkages and empowerment, and mentoring roles by serving as a link between the community, the family, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Chapter Five

5. Discussion

The study is intended to look into social work practice in non-governmental organizations' ECCE projects. Early childhood is a critical stage in human development because it lays the foundation for future success. Due to multifaceted socioeconomic challenges and a lack of integrated service delivery, Disadvantaged children in Ethiopia children in their early childhood do not reach their developmental potential (MOH, 2021). The research induces insights on how social work and ECCE are intertwined, as well as the magnitude of present practice, to magnify social work's contribution to quality ECCE service delivery.

According to the study, NGOs deliver ECCE programs in education, health, livelihood security, and parental education. As a result, the identified implementation sectors are aligned with the national ECCE policy pillars of parental education, health and early stimulation, preschool, and community-based non-formal preparation. Furthermore, the policy's strategic plan and guidelines indicated that the education and health ministries, as well as the offices stationed at the Woreda level, had a substantial mandate for the execution of operations based on the seated pillars. The findings revealed that the agencies implement activities per the guidelines by working closely with the Woreda's health education offices. Even if there are drawbacks to implementation, as stated in the latter paragraphs,

Material provision, parent empowerment, capacity building, and awareness creation are among the social work service delivery mechanisms identified through the study. The purpose and nature of social work activities are very similar with major components of social work service stated by Sheafor and Horjesi, (2015) : social care, which includes actions to provide necessities to people in need, and social treatment, which involves facilitating change through

education counseling or various forms of therapy, with the ultimate goal of improving social conditions through social justice .

Early childhood care and education projects were identified in the study as having social worker responsibilities that included updating, recording, and filing data for each child, enrolling, and updating data for each child in school, and home visits. Material provision, emotional and behavioral assessment of children and families, resource linkage for clients, facilitation of capacity-building training and informal counseling, facilitation of parent education, and community mobilization are some of the activities included in ECCE projects.

Those roles and functions of social workers stated above coincide with those stated by Nancy (2003): documenting children's history, planning meetings with parents, counseling parents, participating in school meetings, advocating for the rights of children, working with schools, working with families, making home visits, assessing special support needs of children, working with community agencies, and collaborating with different professionals. In particular, the two NGOs, which are daycare and kindergarten practice, are state entities at an individual level.

However, the NGO that runs family help projects and community-based interventions conduct the above activities collectively, not for each child and parent individually. For instance, the social workers work with schools dwelling in the intervention area through capacity building, awareness creation, need assessment, and the provision of materials. However, it is not implemented at an individual level.

Furthermore, the roles typically played by social workers in early care and education settings have been consultative parent education, identifying emotional and behavioral problems

in children, given their expertise in working with families and other systems. And in this regard, social workers can take part in assisting parents and teachers in developing appropriate behavior management skills. (Azzi, 2010). Even though it is not conducted individually and in sessions as stated in the literature, social work services in the studied NGOs include parental education, which includes parenting skills, pre, and postnatal child care awareness creation, life skills training, and other training for economic empowerment.

The social worker role in an early childhood development setting is highly intertwined with child welfare through granting quality and safe childcare, education, nursing, and advocating for disadvantaged families and children. In addition, it comprises actions taken to ensure child protection. In this regard (Moodie and Collies, 2013), the prime aim of the studied agencies is to ensure the wellbeing of disadvantaged children by sharing the burden of the family.

The study revealed that the agency social workers engaged in child protection activities mainly focus on prevention and response given. In addition, assessments were conducted to examine the situations of children when they come to the center and during home visits. Consequently, if signs of maltreatment and abuse are noticed, a consultation will be held with the parents. When cases are appealed to the court, the NGOs assist their clients by standing on their behalf.

The above activities are supported by Azzi (2010), who states that one of the interconnections between social work and child welfare is identifying children exposed to neglect, maltreatment, and abuse, including physical and mental violence. And treatment of trauma occurred as a result of neglect and abuse to mitigate its negative impacts on the process

of child development. In addition, social workers must be familiar with signs of abuse and neglect. As a result, they are required to assess children regularly to track and monitor their developmental milestones.

Social workers of the studied NGOs assess the situations of children through home visits or days when they come to the office using different checklists used to assess the wellbeing of a child and the situation of his or her family. Then, after the assessment of the children is recorded in their file this can be confirmed as a major responsibility of the social worker, as stated by Holland (2004). The social worker needs to check that these assessments are being done and are recorded in the assessment recording.

One of the fundamental conceptual relations between social work and early childhood development is early intervention for children with special needs. As per the study's illustration, the social workers during the assessment phase identify children with developmental disabilities and special needs, provide assistance based on the character of disorder and disability, and try to create referral linkage when the case is beyond the capability of the organization.

The above-stated attempt at early intervention slightly goes in line with the professional early intervention for children with special needs (Mary, 2013) of social workers, which includes assessment, consultation with guardians or parents, designing treatment plans, short-term counseling, and inducing information and referral linkage.

In general Social workers at all levels of practice should intervene in early childhood care and education programs by ensuring children and families have access to resources such as housing and employment assistance and services to address necessities for the healthy development of children. Moreover, social workers have to take part in policy and program

development, administration, consultation, and education by engaging in leadership, advocacy, and trans-disciplinary collaboration to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of services that vulnerable children receive, to ensure that they get the best possible start in their lives (Sheafor & Horjesi, 2015). According to the study's findings, social workers in ECCE are limited to individuals (children) and micro-systems such as families and schools. On the other hand, social workers in ECCE aren't seen in larger systems such as policy formulation, advocacy leadership, and so on. Social workers are hindered by work overload, a lack of knowledge, and insufficient training in implementing the principles of social work.

The professionalism of the social workers is another core point to discuss. According to the study's findings, only two of the seven social workers interviewed had a bachelor's degree in social work, which contradicts the definition section of the NASW child welfare standard, which states that social workers are professionals who have a bachelor's degree in social work from a school or program and who work with children. Furthermore, according to the NASAW code of ethics, social workers should only give services and portray themselves as competent within the confines of their education, training, license, certification; consultation obtained supervised experience or other responsibilities.

Moreover, supervision is also mandatory for the practice of social work by those who have a social work background and competence (NASW, 2012), although there are program coordinators who supervise social workers who don't have a social work background because there is no trend of setting up a separate department for social workers and social work units.

Yokyealem (2016) identified the following drawbacks to ECCE interventions: resource constraints for infrastructural development, a shortage of trained personnel, a lack of

coordination among professionals and stakeholders, gaps in parental engagement, and factors that impede the quality of service delivery, which are quite similar to some of the challenges identified through the study. Furthermore, Fantahun (2016) highlighted the following limitations in ECCE interventions: lack of experienced personnel, standardization, and integrated service, all of which are consistent with the study's findings.

The challenges of social work practice identified in the research, such as inadequate training of social workers, lack of supervision, customized guidelines, and code of ethics, are also assured by the study of Rahel (2017). Beyond this, the engagement of social workers in early childhood care and education needs specific guidelines and training that escalate the competency of the social workers towards early childhood development and early innervations.

Moreover, knowledge of theories, values, and ethics in the social work policy frameworks rooted in values and principles is important to providing culturally appropriate services to children and families involved in child welfare. (Trevithick, 2012). However, the findings of the study reveal that the social workers are executing their activities based on their previous knowledge and innate experience and using the general trends and culture of their organization due to the absence of training and guidelines in addition to their educational preparation, which is not related to the social work profession. Concerning parents' perception of social work practice in ECCE settings, the study found that the parents' feedback was good. They insisted on the provision of agencies to assist them in times of difficulty while they are caring for their children. However, the perception of parents towards the service is altered by the hand-out provisions they gain from the organization.

Furthermore, the finding illustrates that the perception of parents towards social workers is based on both the behavior and the type of service given. However, the result of the study shows that the parents don't have awareness about the social work profession and what they benefit from the service. This is in contradiction with the idea speculated by Razgale (2014) that parents have to be informed about why they are engaged in particular activities and the professionals have to justify their methods of working for them.

The finding of the study, which indicates inadequate participation of parents, is supported by the finding of MOH (2020), which indicates gaps in partnership with families and communities, lower participation, and integrated nurturing care services for children. Even if social work can induce effective ECD intervention by partnering with families and taking into account the needs and strengths of the family from a holistic perspective, practice in the studied areas contradicted those concepts because even if social workers try to empower families and identify the strengths of families, it is not done at the partnership level in a confinement way as stated in the literature due to a lack of resources, knowledge, and time to practice.

To summarize, the research demonstrates that there is a practice of social work in the studied NGOs in ECCE projects, and the social workers also take part in roles that are quite similar to social work practice principles in the child welfare and early childhood development arena by integrating community and family (Moodie & Collies, 2013) and the agencies. However, the absence of professionalism and a customized blueprint for the social work profession in early childhood care and education services impedes the contribution of the profession. As a result, the yield of the research has room for further investigation to intertwine the social work profession with ECCE interventions.

Chapter Six

6. Conclusion and Social work Implications

6.1 Conclusion

The study's findings on social work practice are congruent with social work values, principles, and practice models. For example, the services tend to protect children's rights, instill care and support, and the outcomes of interventions have a sense of social change and protect the principal rights of children: education and care. On the other hand, the identified roles of social workers are well-suited to the professional roles of social workers, such as broker, advocator, case manager, educator, and facilitator.

Furthermore, the agency's interventions coincide with the points of intersection of ECCE and social work, which are involvement in child welfare, providing quality and safe childcare, education, nursing, advocating for disadvantaged families and children, early intervention, and working with schools, health centers, families, and other systems. As a result of the foregoing, it is reasonable to conclude that social work is practiced in the agencies.

However, the existing practice's professionalism is in question. Since social work is misunderstood as a job title or position rather than a profession, Furthermore, social workers lack the skills and knowledge required to carry out social work in the early childhood arena. In

general, professional gaps and a lack of integrated services impede the profession's ability to provide high-quality ECCE services.

6.2 Implications of the study

The study's findings on the assessment of social work practice in ECCE projects in selected NGOs are discussed in terms of social work, practice, education, research, and policy implications in this section.

In terms of practice, the study provides practitioners with insights that can help them reflect on their practices by speculating on the drawbacks caused by the absence of professional intervention. Furthermore, it emphasized the importance of hiring professional social workers who are knowledgeable and skilled in the ECCE arena. Furthermore, it informs non-governmental organizations to develop specific standards, guidelines, and codes of ethics that align with national early childhood policies and social work standards.

In regarding education, as stated in the literature, professional values, theories, and models of social work are critical inputs for providing high-quality early childhood education and care. As a result, specific competencies and areas of knowledge that intersect social work and ECCE require training and education in addition to the generic social work education. As a result of the study, it was determined that there is a need for specialized social work education (department) on early childhood development in order to produce "early childhood social workers" who can work in schools, child care institutions, health centers, and other settings.

To the best of my knowledge, the conceptual and practical relationship of the social work profession and ECCE is barely -studied concept. As a result, the study will prompt other researchers to investigate the study topic from a variety of angles. For example, while this study focused on social work practice in ECCE projects run by non-governmental organizations, other researchers could look into how social work practice differs in government-led ECCE interventions.

The study also has policy implications in that government ministries, universities, professional associations, and NGOs must work to develop standards and guidelines for social work practice in ECCE settings by connecting the social work profession to national policies and standards of early education and care. On the other hand, the study assures that social workers' intervention is limited to the micro level, but they must be empowered to exert influence at the macro level.

In general one of the fundamental causes of the country's multi-faced chaos is the lack of attention paid to early childhood development. As a result, the field of social work must play a role in preparing children to become future successful citizens who will contribute to our country's greater future.

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Annexes

I. Table 1: Background Information Participants

S/N	code	Sex	Age	Position	Educational back ground	Years of
1	PM 1	M	39	Program Manger	Public health (BSC)	10
2	PM2	M	39	Program Manger	Research &Development (MA)	8
3	PM3	M	47	Program Manger	Community Development	11
4	ECDL	F	32	ECD department	Special need (MA)&	5
5	SW1	F	27	Social worker	Sociology & Social	5
6	SW2	F	27	Social worker	Sociology (BA)	3
7	SW3	F	25	Social worker	Accounting(BA)	4
8	SW4	F	26	Social worker	Accounting(BA)	4
9	SW5	F	25	Social worker	sociology(BA)	4
10	SW6	F	31	Social worker	Sociology(BA)	4
11	SW7	M	25	Social worker	Social work(BA)	2
12	SW8	F	34	Social Educator	Education(Diploma)&Huma	9
13	KI 1	F	28	Officer at women and children affairs office	History (BA)	3
14	KI 2	F	33	Officer at education	Psychology (BA)	2
15	KI 3	M	31	Officer at Woreda	Public health (BA)	2
16	KI 4	M	29	Officer at women and	Anthropology (BA)	3
17	KI 5	F	34	Officer at education	Sociology(BA)	4

18	KI 6	M	32	Officer at Woreda	Public health (BA)	3
19	KI 7	F	30	Officer at women and	Special need(BA)	2
20	KI 8	F	32	Officer at education	Special need(BA)	3
21	KI 9	M	29	Officer at Woreda	Nursing (BSC)	4
22	KI 10	F	49	Parent committee	Grade ,8	6
23	KI 11	F	35	Parent committee	Grade ,10	5
24	KI 12	F	39	Parent committee	Grade 10	8
25	P1	F	22	Parent of enrolled	Grade 6	2
26	P2	F	26	Parent of enrolled	Grade 8	2
27	P3	F	27	Parent of enrolled	Grade ,8	3
28	P4	F	31	Parent of enrolled	Grade ,9	4
29	P5	F	30	Parent of enrolled	Grade,6	2
30	P6	F	22	Parent of enrolled	Grade 10	3

Source: Researcher's Field in depth interview, 2021

II. Participant Information Sheet for Consent

1. Study title

Assessing the social work practice in ECCE projects: experience of selected NGOs in Addis Ababa.

2. Background and aims of the study

This study will be conducted by Jerry Daba , second degree student in school of social Work, Addis Ababa University (Tel: +251 921353484; jerrydaba41@gmail.com).

This study will assess how social work is practiced in ECCE projects concerning on experience of selected NGOs in Addis Ababa by expending social work knowledge and core values in the area of early childhood care and education.

3. Why have I been invited to take part?

You are invited to take part in this study because you are intervening in ECCE projects in sampled agencies directly or indirectly or because you are service user .Moreover you are selected based on your experience and knowledge about study concept.

4. Do I have to take part?

You are not obligated to participate in this study. You are free to ask any questions about the study before deciding whether to participate. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw yourself and your data from the study without precondition at any time, and without giving a reason, by advising the researcher of this decision.

5. What will happen in the study?

If you decide to take part in the study, the researcher will interview you and audio record the interview. The interview will take approximately half hour.

6. Are there any potential risks in taking part?

The researcher hopes that the experience of taking part in this study will be enjoyable for you. There will be no specific risks in this study.

7. What happens to the research data provided?

If you agree with participating in this study, the data collected from your interview will contribute towards the writing up of a thesis by assessing the social work practice in ECCE :experience of selected NGOs in Addis Ababa .All participants are able to request a summary of the research findings by contacting the researcher. All interviews will be kept anonymous, both in the transcript/records of the research and in the final written thesis. The researcher will ask your permission to use direct quotes in the thesis when necessary, but you are not obligated to agree to this.

8. Will the research be published?

If you agree to participate in this project, the research will be written up as a thesis. Once written, it will be deposited both in print and online in the Addis Ababa University archives, to facilitate its use in future.**9. Who do I contact if I have a concern about the study or I wish to**

complain? If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please speak to the relevant researcher (Tel: +251 921353484; jerrydaba41@gmail.com or the Advisor Dr. Debebe Ero.)

II .Consent Form

STUDY TITLE: Assessing the social work practice in ECCE projects: experience of selected NGOs in Addis Ababa

RESEARCHER DETAILS:

Jerry Daba

MSW student in school of Social work

Addis Ababa University

CONTACT:

Tel: 09213553484

E-mail address: jerrydaba41@gmail.com

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To assess the practice of social work in ECCE projects concerning on the experience of selected NGOs

1. I have read the study information sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw myself or my data at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences
3. I understand who will have access to personal data provided

4. I understand how personal data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project
5. I understand how research will be written up and published
6. I understand how to raise concerns or make a complaint.
7. I consent to being audio recorded.
8. I consent to having my photo taken.
9. I understand that audio recordings / photos will be used in research outputs
10. I consent to the use of direct quotes.
11. I agree to take part in the study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

III Guiding Interview Questions for Study Participants

1. Questions for leaders (executive Manger) of the Selected NGOs

Age_____

Sex_____

Educational status_____

Year of experience in the agency _____

A. understanding social work services being provided in ECCE projects

1. When does the organization founded?
2. What are the visions and missions of the organization?
3. Would you explain organizational structure of the agency?
4. When was the agency start implementing in ECCE projects?
5. When was the agency included ECD department in the organization's structure?
6. What are the components of ECCE projects and the duration?
- 7, what are social work services being delivered in ECCE projects?

B. Understanding roles and functions of social workers in ECCE projects

1. When was the agency start hiring social worker?
2. What are the general responsibilities of the social workers in the organization?
3. Would you tell me the number of social workers in the organization?
4. What are the major achievements you noticed gained after the engagement of social workers in ECCE?

5. Are there guidelines and code of conducts for social workers in EC

C. Understanding challenges of social work practice in ECCE projects

1. What are the major challenges of ECCE projects in general?
2. What are social work service challenges in the organization?

D. understanding the perception of parents and community towards social work practice in ECCE projects

1. Would explain how parents and community participate in ECCE projects?
2. What was the feedback of parents and community towards services being delivered?
3. Would you explain mechanisms used for gathering the feedback of parents and the community?

Thank you!!!!!!

2. Questions for ECD Department leaders

Age _____

Sex _____

Educational status _____

Year of experience in the agency _____

Educational background _____

A. understanding social work services being provided in ECCE projects

1. What are the major components of ECD projects?

2. Who are the targets of the ECD projects?
3. How Many Children are enrolled in ECD project?
4. What kind of professionals participates in ECD projects?
5. Would you explain the duration and termination of current ECD projects?
6. What kind of services does the agency provides for children under 3?
7. What kind of service does the organization provide for children enrolled in preschool?
8. Would you tell me selection criteria for enrollment of children in ECD projects?
9. What are the major activities incorporated in current annual plan of ECD project?
10. Would you explain major achievements in the department?
11. Does the agency ECD services linked with national and international polices, strategies, and development goals? How?

B. Understanding roles and functions of social workers in ECCE projects

1. Would you explain the roles and functions of social workers in ECD project?
2. Would you explain major tasks executed by social workers?
3. Does social workers engaged in child protection and welfare activities? If you say yes please explain how.

4. Does social workers engaged in advocacy activities in the behalf of children, parents and the community? If you say yes please explain ho
5. Is there counseling services provided for service users, if there please explain for whom and how it is provided
- 6 .Does social workers follow-up children who are attending in preschool and aged under the age of 3 and launch home visits? How?
7. Does social workers record the family background, health, academic status of enrolled children? How?

C. Understanding challenges of social work practice in ECCE projects

1. Would explain the challenges of ECD projects?
2. What kind factors hinder social work practice in ECD projects?

D. understanding the perception of parents and community towards social work practice in ECCE projects

1. Would explain how parents and community participate in ECCE projects?
2. What was the feedback of parents and community towards services being delivered?
3. Would you explain mechanisms used for gathering the feedback of parents and the community?

Thank you!!!

3. Questions for Social workers

Age _____

Sex _____

Educational status _____

Year of experience in the agency _____

Educational background _____

A. understanding social work services being provided in ECCE projects

1. What are the major components of ECD projects?
2. Who are the targets of the ECD projects?
3. How Many Children are enrolled in ECD project?
4. What kind of professionals participates in ECD projects?
5. Would you explain the duration and termination of current ECD projects?
- 6 .What kind of services does the agency provides for children under the age of 3?
7. What kind of service does the organization provide for children enrolled in preschool?
8. Would you tell me selection criteria for enrollment of children in ECD projects?
9. What are the major activities incorporated in current annual plan of ECD project?
10. Would you explain major achievements in the department?

B. Understanding roles and functions of social workers in ECCE projects

1. Would you explain your job description?
2. Would you explain your routine activities?
3. What do you think the role of social worker in area ECD should be?
4. Would you explain your roles and functions in the agency?
5. What kind of activities is induced for indenting strength of community and empowering them?
6. Do you engaged in those listed activities if for respond is yes how? If your respond is no what are the reasons?
 - Documenting children history
 - Facilitating meeting with parents
 - Counseling parents
 - Advocating for the rights of children
 - Participating in school meetings
 - Advocating for the rights of children
 - Working with families
 - Making home visits
 - Assessing special support needs of children
 - Working with community agencies
 - Collaborating with different professional and referral linkages

- Identifying strength of parents and community and empowering

C. Understanding challenges of social work practice in ECCE projects

1. What are challenges you face while delivering social work services in ECD?
2. What kind factors hinder social work practice in ECD projects?

D. understanding the perception of parents and community towards social work practice in ECCE projects

1. Would explain how parents and community participate in ECCE projects?
2. What was the feedback of parents and community towards services being delivered?
3. Would you explain mechanisms used for gathering the feedback of parents and the community?

Thank you!!!

4. Questions for stake holders of Selected NGOs

A. Understanding social work services being provided in ECCE projects

1. Would explain the services provided by agency through ECCE Projects?
2. How do you explain the collaboration level of the agency with your office?
3. Would you explain mechanizes and communications schedules with the agency?
4. Does social workers of the agency work with your organization? How?

B. Understanding challenges of social work practice in ECCE projects

1. What are the overall challenges in ECD projects in your setting?
2. What are the challenges in ECCE project when your organizations work in collaboration with the agency?

C. Understanding the perception of parents and community towards social work practice in ECCE projects.

1. Would you explain how the agency is ensuring the participation of the community?
2. What was the feedback of the community and parents towards project?

Thank you!!!

5. Questions for Parents /guardians of Enrolled children in the agency

Age_____

Sex_____

Educational status_____

A. Understanding social work services being provided in ECCE projects

1. When was your child enrolled in the agency?
2. How old is your child now?
3. What kind of services provided for your child?

4. What kind of service do you get from the agency?

B. Understanding roles and functions of social workers in ECCE projects

1. Do the agency social workers follow-up your child's health, education and family?

2. How many times do you bring your child to the agency within a year?

3. Do you report and consult social workers when you face difficulties?

C. Understanding the perception of parents and community towards social work

Practice in ECCE projects.

1. What is your feedback on service provided for your child?

2. What are improvements you see in after your child enrolled in the agency?

3. How do you participate in the ECCE projects?

Thank you!!!

