

Running Head: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY
PROJECT: THE CASE OF EDGET BEANDENET SCHOOL, HAWASSA PROJECT SITE OF
ACTION FOR SELF RELIANCE ORGANIZATION (AFSR)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN SOCIAL WORK

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JUNE, 2014
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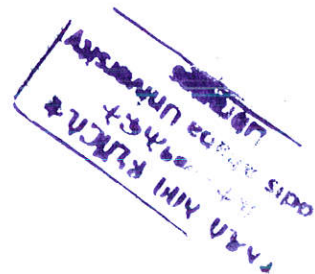
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RESEARCH AND GRADUATE PROGRAM

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Abstract

The study assessed the contribution of social accountability project. Qualitative research method based on case study technique was used in order to explore and deeply understand the contribution of the project. Primary data were gathered from key informants and focus group discussion participants. The data was processed through thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that social accountability project has its own share for enhancing the level of involvement, participation and empowerment of the community through its community scores card (CMC) and community mobilization (CM) mechanisms. Results of the study indicate that the project in its education intervention helped the school community to address its problems through mobilizing both internal as well as external resources. The project has found that development actors should play a facilitation role and provision of technical assistance in the process of development. In general, the project should be taken as a starting point to sustain the development endeavors of Ethiopia since it has a great potential to aware the community to see its strength, potential and available resources. Thus, the project should be scaled up to enhance development in the country.

Key Words: Asset, Participation, Empowerment, Community Development, Development

Acronym

ABCD – Asset Based Community Development

AFSR – Action for Self Reliance Organization

CBO – Community Based Organization

CFT – Community Facilitation Team

CRC – Community Report Card

CSC –Community Score Card

CSO – Civil Service Organization

GRB –Gender Responsive Budget

GTZ-MA – German Agency for Technical Co-operation-Management Agent

LCO – Love for Children Organization

MCDP – Multi Purpose Community Development Project

NBCD – Need Based Community Development

OPRIF – Organization for the Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Female Street Children

PPB – Participatory Planning and Budgeting

PTA – Parent Teacher Association

SAP – Social Accountability Project

SNNPR – Southern Nations Nationalities People Region

SWDA – Siqqee Women Development Association

UNDP – United Nation Development Program

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Background

Introduction

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, asset building became an emerging theme in neighborhood revitalization. The work of Sherraden (1988, 1990 & 1991) suggests that households and neighborhoods develop not by income alone but also by savings and asset building (Page-Adams & Sherraden 1997 cited in Wilke, 2006, p.4-5).

Focusing on assets assumes that the sources of solutions to a community's problems rest upon the community itself. The role of external intervention is primarily one way of helping a community to identify, mobilize its own assets. Ideas and resources can come from outside, but the spark of renewal must emerge from within the community (Wallis, 1996, p.37). Thus, development agents and professionals should consider the wealth of the community and play a facilitating role in the process of community development schemes.

Part of the principles of planning with an asset orientation is to involve the community in the process of identifying its own strength. Such an engagement reinforces sense of community identity. Focusing on assets enhances community endeavors. The question is "What can we do with the assets we have now?" and the response must be flow from within the community (Wallis, 1996, p.37).

Social accountability system and practice would contribute to alleviate problems of poor communities. According to Mandefro (2010), lack of a proper social accountability system and practice are among the major factors contributing to the majority of problems of poor citizens.

Accountability can be defined as the obligation of power-holders to take responsibility for their actions. Accountability is an integral component of 'empowerment' and hence, poverty reduction. It can also be analyzed differently from the perspective of - "making services work for the poor" (Singh, Kumar, & Shah, 2004, p.5).

Accountability is, thus, a central element of all aspects of human development since it contributes to ensuring that the interests of the poorest and most marginalized groups in society are taken into consideration. It is a core human rights principle and, therefore, intrinsic to the human rights-based approach to development (UNDP, 2010). Principles of human right and dignity are also fundamental to social work practices.

According to Malena, Forster and Singh (2004, p.3), social accountability is defined as an approach towards building a sense of accountability that relies on civic engagement among ordinary citizens. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom up.

The concept of social accountability is closely linked to that of participation. It is the participation of citizens that distinguishes social accountability from other such mechanisms and expands opportunities for participation at the macro-level (Malena et.al, 2004, p.7). The power of these mechanisms is that apart from enforcing accountability, they lead to empowerment, increased participation, joint planning, and knowledge of rights as well as strengthening of democracy and governance (Singh et.al, 2004).

One of the tools upon the implementation of social accountability project is using the Community Score Card (CSC) which is an instrument to demand social and public accountability and responsiveness from service providers. By linking service providers to the community, citizens are empowered to give immediate feedbacks on the services they have received. CSC process uses the “community” as its unit of analysis, and is focused on monitoring developments at the local levels. It facilitates community monitoring and performance evaluation of services, projects and government administrative units (World Bank, 2005). In addition to this, the use of citizen report cards—as performance monitoring and feedback mechanisms—has

also gained significance since the late 1990s. It evaluates different service providers from a user perspective and, thereby, makes the service providers more accountable to the citizens (Ahmad, 2008, p.15).

Besides the above mentioned tools, social accountability project consist of various other mechanisms that increase the participation of the community, empowerment, joint planning, decision making as well as resource mobilization to solve the interwoven problems of the community. This project was implemented and still being implemented by different development agencies.

Thus, this research paper is intended to assess social accountability project that was implemented in Hawassa by Action for Self Reliance Organization (AFSR). The research tries to explore the contribution of social accountability project in the study area. It examines whether or not the project strategies allow community members to realize their power, capacity and resources. Besides, attempt is made to assess broadly the strength, limitation and lessons learnt from the project. The role of AFSR and other development actors during the implementation of the project are also briefly assessed in this research. At the end, highlights are given on the implication of the project for social work practices, policy and research.

Statement of the Problem

According to Kretzmann & McKnight (1993), viewing a community as source of endless list of problems and needs leads directly to much lamented fragmentation of efforts to provide solutions. It also denies the applicability of basic community wisdom thereby regarding problems as tightly intertwined, as symptoms in fact of the breakdown of a community's own problem-solving capacities. It, thus underline the perception that only outside experts can provide real help. Such a need based strategy guarantees only survival, and hampers community

development (p.2). Thus, focusing only on problems, vacant, needs and relying on the outside help made issues of community development in question though it has its own contributions to solve the problems of a given community at some place or other.

On top of this, all the historic evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local communities are committed to get engaged whole heartedly and invest their resources in the effort. Thus, employing alternative approach that focuses on the capacities, skills and assets becomes imperative. This strategy starts with the community's basic internal strength to meet its needs. And external resources may seek for after fully identifying and utilizing the existing social, human, financial & material capitals to promote its development.

Communities host a wealth of resources that could be mobilized for its own betterment. However, community members themselves need to realize that they have the capacity, power and resources to act. Community action supports government endeavors in its delivery, and in turn, the government can financially support communities' efforts leading to quick social transformation. In addition, this kind of development, initiated and implemented by the people themselves, is more likely to create sustainability (Community Connection, p.3).

Top down trend which is based on need survey, lack of accountability, unaware community in its potentials & unclear role of development agents could lead for un development outcome. Under such circumstances, the poor have inadequate employment opportunities and little voice in decision making. They often lack basic services and have limited access to state-sponsored systems of justice. The scheme rarely holds government representatives accountable. Therefore, the poverty reduction program falls short of delivering sufficient services, developing

infrastructure. Effective policies and interventions that build the assets of poor people allow the poor to transform those assets into poverty-reducing benefits (World Bank, 2007).

Currently, social accountability initiatives could be taken as a good window of opportunity to work on the community development issues and address the above mentioned concerns since the principles, strategies and implemented activities finally make the communities to realize their internal capacities, power and resources embedded at the individual, community, association, institution and economy. The communities could use these resources to solve problems by themselves and look for other support only when required. In addition, the project could assume to enhance the involvement, guidance and engagement of members of the community in development schemes and ensures the responsibilities of development practitioners in their actions. Such a scenario, ultimately leads to demand-driven/ people-centered approaches which is a core ingredient for development.

Social Accountability Project is a new initiative in Ethiopia and is not yet studied. Cognizant of these facts, this study examines the practical contribution of social accountability project towards promoting asset oriented and bottom up. The study tries to identify its contribution in terms of participation, empowerment and realization of own potential. This study also highly commends for Social Accountability Project Promoters to show the importance & strength of the project in transforming their practice from top down development strategy to vice versa. Therefore, this study clearly explores the need for asset oriented development strategy.

Profile of Action for Self Reliance (AFSR)

AFSR is established in November 6th/2000 as nongovernmental, non for profit organization to address the interrelated problems of children and women in particular and disadvantaged community groups in general by applying an integrated community development approach. AFSR works in Addis Ababa (Nifas Silke/Lafto sub city, woreda 11 & 12) and SNNPR (three sub-cities of Hawassa city & Malaga woreda).

The vision of the organization is to see children grow-up in a favorable environment. The mission is to assist children to help themselves; achieve self-sufficiency through access to education, health care, protection services and strengthening institutions to support them to take actions. The value of the organization includes partnership, respect, responsibility and self-reliance. AFSR has been intervening and working in areas of education, health (protection of women and children from HIV/AIDS), household poverty reduction and livelihood promotion (AFSR, 2013).

Profile of Edget Beandenet School

Edget Beandenet School was established in 1998 E.C with the support of the government and the community. The school is located at Hawassa, Haike Dar sub-city, Gudmale woreda. It has a total of 1,148 students. The school has a plan to begin grade 8 in the coming Ethiopian New Year and now it is in the preparation stage. Although the school had a number of problems, they were solved through the collaborated effort of Hawassa Administration Education Office; Parents; Women, Child and Youth Office of Hawassa; AFSR and Gudmale Administration Office (School Profile, 2014).

The mission of the school is to produce active citizens through provision of quality and effective education at Edeget Beandenet School. With the coming ten years, the school envisions

to see professionals who are responsible, accountable, efficient and capable to engage in the development endeavor of the country and contribute their share for the betterment of the nation. The general objective of the school is to produce citizens that are responsible for themselves, their family and their nation through the provision of quality education and research services. The value of the school includes democracy, equity and equality, justice, nation love, responsibility, professionalism, saving culture, participation and look for knowledge (School Profile, 2014).

Description of Social Accountability Project

AFSR and its partner organizations, which include Love for Children (LCO), Multi Purpose Community Development Project (MCDP), Organization for the Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Female Street Children (OPRIF), and Siqqee Women Development Association (SWDA) implemented SAP with the financial support obtained from GTZ-MA. The project was implemented in 27 schools in three Regions (Addis Ababa, SNNPR and Oromia regions). This study assessed the contributions of SAP based on information collected from one of the project targeted school; Edget Beandenet School at SNNPR, Hawassa, Haike Dar sub city of Gudmale woreda.

The social accountability project was planned to be implemented for 18 months from January 2008 – June 2009 but due to the delay in fund release it had actually been in operation from April 2008 to May 2009 (14 months). Hence, the organization was forced to design and implement an acceleration plan which allows frequent revision and adjustment of the original work plan and activity schedule to help materialize the project within its actual life span.

Social accountability practically refers to all actions and tools that communities use to make not only development actors/service providers but also the community to be responsible for their performance. The overall goal of the project was to attain improved public service delivery and enhanced development effectiveness through community participation and to make basic service delivery more equitable, effective, efficient and responsive through the application of social accountability tools such as community score cards, community mobilization and empowerment (Manual on Community Mobilization and Empowerment Process, 2008).

According to AFSR Proposal (2007), there were three specific objectives to be met through piloting social accountability project. These were:

- (1) Empowerment of PTA and community to use social accountability mechanisms to monitor school performance and education outcome.
- (2) Enhancing the capacity of partner organizations to respond to the development needs of children; and
- (3) Ensuring gender equity through active involvement, guidance and engagement of community and PTA within the school

Given such goal and specific objectives, the participation of communities in the targeted school as well as the awareness of the school communities about social accountability project was very high.

The major strategies applied by the SAP to improve education service delivery in a participatory way included community mobilization, community capacity building, and community score card which assisted the community in prioritizing of its needs and wants on a

specific service in line with the required resources. This emphasize on taking collective action for a common purpose by involving all stakeholders which are parents, teachers, students, school administration as well as Woreda education office.

The project started with an intensive discussion on the concept and objectives of SAP with the school community and then, with the establishment of Core Facilitation Team (CFT) consisting of representatives of all stakeholders. Afterwards, the school community was divided into groups (parents, teachers, students, PTA, Woreda Education Office) and a responsible person was assigned for each group from the CFT to lead the group. On such basis, each group arranged its own meeting to develop agenda and scores based on reasoning before both the service user and provider presented their consolidated score and recommendations. An interface meeting was organized; an open and participatory discussion was then conducted on the score and recommendations. Finally, a joint action plan was developed. Those steps were summarized and categorized as preparatory work, idea generation, consolidation, and planning/moving together stages.

Community and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) empowerment for active engagement in the administration and teaching-learning environment of the school has helped to bring about the desirable changes both in the thinking/community outlook and physical infrastructure of the school. Additional classrooms, allotment of spacious playground, procurement of teaching aids are some of the indicators for the achievement of the project objectives.

Research Questions

This study is proposed to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the major contributions of social accountability project in Edget Beandenet 1st Cycle School, Haike Dar sub-city?
2. Has the social accountability project assisted the community members to realize their capacity, power and resources?
3. What was the role of AFSR and the other development actors in the social accountability project?
4. What are the major strengths, limitations and lessons drawn from the social accountability project?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research are intended to help development actors to understand the importance and contribution of Social Accountability Project in their development endeavors since the concepts, strategies as well as principles are new in Ethiopia. It also gives brief highlights on how the project promotes citizens' involvement, empowerment and ensures government/service providers accountability for bringing development through giving emphasis on strengths than gaps.

Moreover, the results of the study underlined the role of development actors in any development process and helps AFSR, as well as other advocators to understand the project's strengths, limitations as well as get lessons for further intervention and amendment. In addition, the findings of the study could serve as a reference for further studies in the area.

Objectives of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to assess the contribution of Social Accountability Project towards development.

Specific Objectives

- (1) To assess major contributions of Social Accountability Project in the study area.
- (2) To assess whether or not the community realizes own resources.
- (3) To evaluate the role of AFSR in Social Accountability Project.
- (4) To examine major strengths, limitation and lessons from Social Accountability Project.

Working definitions

Accountability – denotes obligation of power holders in taking responsibilities for their action.

Asset - refers to wealth, capacities, knowledge, skills, power and resources.

Community – designates a group of individuals who reside in a specific geographic area with members who share common values, customs, traditions, and aspirations for development goals of their own initiatives and/or through the support provided by partners.

Community development - refers to the social capital &/or capacity growth, which describes the endeavor of residents on organizing and mobilizing their resources for the achievement of consensual developmental goal.

Development actors - are formally established governmental or nongovernmental organizations or associations working towards the enhancement of the living conditions of the community in which they operate.

Development - refers to structural changes and improvements within community systems encompassing both economic changes & functions of institutions/organizations concerned.

Empowerment – is political or organizational strength that enables people to collectively carry out their will. It enhances the capacity of individual or group to make purposeful choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Participation – refers to the process of taking part, becoming actively involved or share in a given program.

Social Accountability – an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagements.

Conceptual Framework

Social Capital and Communicative Action theory are chosen to be a theoretical framework of this study. Beside these theories, asset based community development (ABCD) model and strength based perspective are used to assess the contribution of Social Accountability Project. These perspectives focus on solidarity, strength, capacity building, open communication & trust which employed to analyze the findings.

Different development actors' play a key role in community development process through collecting need based data to bring about changes on the intended concerns. But this process could contribute only as a short term remedy and fails to reach sustained development. Thus, there has to be professionals dedicated to promote asset based approach too and facilitate the development endeavors.

Social accountability project consist concepts such as: the involvement, guidance and consultation of the community, focus on building relationship, participation, empowerment,

citizen centered priority, searching for strength and capacity and institution as a facilitator. These concepts align with asset oriented development approach, thus could contribute for development. Social accountability project and asset oriented development approach have linkage since both focus on strength, asset identification, participation, empowerment and implementation of demand driven development scheme. Therefore, this research study attempts to explore the contribution of social accountability project towards building asset oriented communities.

*Literature Review**Models of Community Development*

The concept of community connotes a collection of people who interact and share common characteristics such as interest, identity, culture, activities, or spatial location. There are two notions of community: geographical (spatial based) community and relational interest based community (as cited by Gusfield in Butterfield & Chisanga, 2008, p.1). Spatial-based community refers to people who reside in particular locations identified by marked physical boundaries, as is the case with the village, neighborhood, town, or city. Interest-based community refers to people who share a common identity through social values, socio-economic status, and ethnicity and so on (Butterfield & Chisanga, 2008, p.1). In this paper, the definition of community focuses on the group of people residing in common geographical places.

The concept of development connotes positive change in living conditions through planned improvement. As a planned activity, development is a conscious and deliberate process of analyzing the situation, articulating goals and objectives and implementing programs to achieve the set goals (Butterfield & Chisanga, 2008, p.1). All planned change efforts imply a commitment to certain ends, adherence to a certain view of reality, and acceptance of certain modes of realizing those ends (Bennis, Benne, Chin & Corey, 1976, p.189).

Community development is a planned effort to produce assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life (Phillips & Pithman, 2009, p.10). Thus, it is a planned approach to improve the standard of living and general wellbeing of people. There are many approaches to community development such as grassroots (bottom up) and top down approaches or from expert to multiple approaches; and from conflict to technical, self help and

empowerment approach. However, this study considers two dominant approaches of community development (a) the conventional or traditional approach which is focusing on identifying the issues, problems and needs of a community, on the other hand, (b) asset based community development which focuses on community's strength, capacity and assets on the other (Hains,2009,p.39-40).

Need Based Community Development

Need based community development (NBCD) is a traditional approach to identify the issues, problems and needs of the community. In many low-income neighborhoods, it is easy to identify the problems. They are reflected in vacant and abandoned houses, boarded up store fronts, empty lots filled with trash, and countless others. By focusing on those problems, the communities tend to concentrate only on what they are missing or try to solve only those problems currently face, they miss or ignore their root causes. This approach seems the most prevalent both among communities and service providers (Haines, 2008, p.39).

NBCD is a top down strategy which focuses on the immediate needs and deficiencies of neighborhoods and villages. The main hitch with this needs-based approach is that it tends to foster dependency among neighborhood (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). In order to acquire the necessary resources for the neighborhood, both the communities & providers exaggerate the severity of the problems. Instead of looking inwardly for the solutions in the community, they try to look outside resources and help.

As to Robinson (1994) cited by Todaro (1994), experience has shown that top down approach of community development is not effective enough to alleviate poverty. It exacerbates economic inequities and injustice. In addition to natural resources and capital goods, human

resource enhancement is essential to achieve development enlarging the range of choices that ordinary people can make about their own lives.

Focusing on what the community lacks indents the community pride. Citizens begin to believe what their leaders/providers are saying and view themselves as unable to take charge of their situations & fail to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Under such circumstances, citizens no longer view themselves as capable producers, but rather consumers of services. The negative results associated with the needs-based approach have, as of recent, led researchers to come up with alternative approaches (Wilike, 2006).

Asset Based Community Development

According to Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) as stated by Butterfield & Chisanga (2008 p.5): Asset based community development (ABCD) is a participatory approach to community capacity building. It cultivates initiatives, skills, talents, and capabilities of individuals and local associations within impoverished communities. Only after assets from “inside the community” are inventoried and mobilized, do communities call upon outside institutions to fill the gaps in community development efforts.

ABCD is an asset based strategy that starts with what is available in the community, the capacities of the residents and workers, and the associational base of the area, instead of with what is absent. It focuses on agenda building and problem-solving capabilities of the local community, associations and institutions. It is relation-driven and focuses on enhancing such relationship (Wassies Kebede, Melese Getu & Desalgne Negeri, 2011, p.25).

ABCD is a bottom-up strategy of community development, drawing upon the best of what a neighborhood has to offer. It shifts the focus of community development from “problem

solving” to “asset building”. This approach involves identifying and tapping all of the potential assets in a community (Wilke, 2006).

Julie Wilke further states that ABCD approach operates under the premise that neighborhoods can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing (but often unrecognized) assets, thereby responding to and creating local opportunity for positive changes. All these testimonials confirm for sense of urgency towards asset-oriented and people-centered path of development.

According to Mathie and Cunningham, ABCD draws on: appreciative inquiry which identifies and analyses past successes, strengthening confidence and inspiring action; the recognition of social capital and its importance as an asset; participatory approaches to development based on the principles of empowerment and ownership of the development process; collaborative community development models that place priority on making the best use of the community’s resource; motivating efforts to strengthen civil society by engaging people as citizens in community development & making local services more effective and responsive (Briefing Paper, p.10). These characteristics are also summarized as appreciative inquiry, linking and mobilizing, organizing and mapping, monitoring and evaluating, and community economic analysis (Community Connection, p.5).

As to Kretzmann and McNight, (n.d) (cited by Allen (n.d, p.1) there are four basic components to the assets of a community. They are: individuals, associations, institutions as well as economic assets. The key to discovering a community’s assets is a system which is asset-based, internally focused, and relationship-driven. According to Evans (n.d.) as cited by Wassie Kebede et.al, “the fundamental principle of asset-based approach is that investment in assets

provides a platform for community development. The model acknowledges that development is a process and that assets are one essential contributor to that process” (P. 25).

From Need to Asset Based Community Development

A wide range of community based practices have come to complement conventional expert-based, top-down government intervention for the purpose of assessing local needs (Zhang, 2008, p.2). Ewalt, Freeman, and Poole (1998) have noted in *Community Building: Renewal, Well-Being, and Shared Responsibility*, the Social Work Educators urge professionals and community members to engage in effort “define community interests; define assets that already exist; define assets that are required; develop community capacity in governance; strengthen mutual helping processes toward shared responsibility; identify and strengthen local leadership capacities; improve participation of all populations, including youths, women, and people of color, in decision-making” (Fellin, 2001, p.178).

In order to mobilize communities’ resources, a community must first take stock of its talents and skills of the community no matter how modest. In this respect, asset-based and need-based approaches to community development differ in many ways. Need-based schemes focus on identifying the people or places in need; asset-based strategies aim at empowering residents through collective organization, political engagement, and control over local resources. It also takes into account the unique features of the locality. The important step in capacity-building is to recognize a community’s talents and capacities, whereas need-based targeting does not require intimate familiarity with local physical, social and political resources. Compared with need based, targeted approaches to community development, capacity-building require deep familiarity with a community’s social, political and physical conditions (Zhang, 2008, p.9).

At the heart of the ABCD approach, there is deep appreciation for the organic steps that citizens take instinctively when building social capital. Social capital is best explained allegorically, as an invisible bank account into which the assets of social relationships and networks are invested. Assets such as time, energy, skill and vision are held there, and as they grow, so too do the strengths, and social fabric of the community – in a sort of intangible compound interest. Like any capital, when wisely managed, social capital enhances the well-being of the citizens who 'banked it' (Russell & Smeation, p.6).

Theories of Community Development

There are seven theories that community developers cite to guide and frame the complexity of community development work. These theories are: social capital, functionalism, conflict, symbolic interactions, communication action, rational choice and Giddens's Structuration. In this study, the researcher considers social capital and communicative action theories to analyze concepts of social accountability in community development.

Overview of Social Capital Theory

As cited by Hustedde (2009) (in Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p.21) Social Capital Theory focuses on relationships and is linked to the sense of solidarity. Trust, reciprocity and relationship building are essential in community development process. Structurally the social practices, organizations, or groups form relationships that play a role in establishing solidarity and capacity building.

According to this theory, friendship, trust and willingness to share some resources are integral part of collective action. Community Developers view these relationships as a form of capital. Social capital is that set of resources intrinsic to social relations, includes trust, norms & networks. It is often correlated with confidence in public institutions, civic engagement, self

reliant economic development and overall community well-being and happiness. Trust is part of everyday life that can be enriched among neighbors, public and private sectors. Reciprocity is also essential norm which stimulates recipients to give back to the community, in some form or other, what they acquire from it. There are bonding and bridging social capitals. Bonding refers to ties among homogeneous while bridging refers to ties among different groups (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

Overview of Communicative Action Theory

Jurgen Habermas born in 1929 is a German Sociologist and Philosopher. He provides a theoretical basis for a view of planning that emphasizes widespread public participation, sharing of information with the public, reaching public consensus through dialogue rather than exercising power, avoiding the often bureaucratic and reflective model of technical expertise.

As cited by Hustedde (2009) in (Phillip and Pittman, 2009, p.21) communicative action theory focuses on smooth interactions for change. It is linked to the concept of full participation. Within a framework often dominated by technicians, the corporate sector, or national political constraints, practitioners raise questions about how the voice of citizens can be heard at all. Communicative activities that link individuals, networks and institutions into a community of place or interest are essential to establish a communicatively integrated workforce. He argues that technical knowledge only is not sufficient for development, thus it must be balanced with practical interests that deals with interpretation of technical knowledge for an individual, his family, or community. For him emancipator knowledge which incorporates both technical knowledge and practical skill is essential for the liberation of self-consciousness. All in all his communicative action theory and political objective are based on open and unlimited communication.

Community development involves the participation of networks, groups and individuals whose voices defines their own problems and dreams. If technicians or political and corporate interests dominate discussions, community development efforts may not be successful. Therefore, there should be intersection in the technical and corporate knowledge with local and practical knowledge. These combinations can lead to emancipator knowledge that offers fresh ideas and actions (Phillips and Pittman, 2009).

Strength Based Perspective

A strength approach is a specific method of working cooperatively and resolving problems experienced. It does not attempt to ignore the problems and difficulties. Rather, it tries to identify the positive basis of the challenge and move forward to address their problems. It allows one to see opportunities & hopes for solutions rather than just being blinded by hopelessness. It avoids labeling others and assuming power. This fundamental principle of facilitating for as well as encouraging others widens the scopes of what can be achieved (Hammond, 2010, p.3-4). Strength based approaches to social work practice motivates participants to explore and exploit the strength and resources of clients and environments for gratifying achievement of goals (Saleebey, 1997 as cited in Rapp, Pettus, & Goscha (2006), p.4).

In the Briefing Paper (p.10), ABCD is a process of self-mobilization for change. Building on the skills of people, power of associations and supportive functions of institutions and services, it is in a position that allows it to exploit existing strengths even much strong and base for future developments. By encouraging pride in achievements and a realization of what they have to contribute, communities entertain confidence in being producers, rather than recipients. Thus, they gain collaborative relationship with agencies (Foot & Hopkins, 2010).

Active and empowered communities and individuals, with their own resources and assets working for them serve as a means of pressure for additional external resources which they gear to the most effective and use (Briefing Paper, p.10). Thus, a strength approach offers a genuine basis for addressing the primary mandate of communities' participation in the control of resources and needs in a meaningful and ways through healthy and workable relationship. Empowering people also offers to take a lead collaboratively in the process, working on mutually agreed upon goals, sparks off motivation and hope, creativity and experiential growth.

Social Accountability

Social accountability has been defined as “an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, in which ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability”. Poor people are the greatest beneficiaries of effective social accountability initiatives as they are the “most reliant on government services and least equipped to hold government officials accountable” (Malena, Forster, & Singh, 2004, as cited by Ahmad, p.11&12). The proponents of social accountability maintain that by involving citizens in initiatives geared towards demanding accountability of elected leaders, social accountability also strengthens democracy (Ahmad, 2008, p.12).

The concept can also enhance development outcomes and progress towards the achievement of human overall development cited in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by strengthening links between governments and citizens to improve public service delivery; monitor government performance and foster responsive governance; emphasize the needs of vulnerable groups in policy formulation and implementation; facilitate effective links between citizens and local governments in the context of de-centralization as well as empower marginalized groups traditionally excluded from policy processes (UNDP, 2010). According to

the United Nation Development Program (P.8), accountability is a key element of a human-right based approach, which emphasizes the relationship between the duties of the State and the corresponding entitlements of the individuals.

Appreciative Inquiry Summit is one of the tools applied to promote citizen deliberations and public dialogues to build social accountability. It is opposite of problem solving in that it appreciates inquiry (AI) & focuses on the positive aspects or core strengthen of a community or organization. By focusing on what works, rather than fixing what does not work, it enhances the system or organization capacity for collaboration and change. AI summits bring together diverse groups of people to study and promote their endeavor upon the tangible assets of an organization or community. Democratic Dialogue is also another tool of social accountability that focus on an open and inclusive dialogue process through involving all stakeholders to address complex social, economic and political problems (UNDP, 2010).

Importance of Social Accountability

There are three main importance of social accountability – improved governance, increased development effectiveness and empowerment. Social accountability practices enhance the ability of citizens to engage in a more informed, organized, constructive and systematic manner, thus increasing the chance of effecting positive change. By enhancing the availability of information; strengthening citizen voice; promoting dialogue and consultation between policy makers, service providers and citizens; and creating incentives for improved performance of social accountability, it contributes toward increased development effectiveness. Since poor people are most reliant on government services and least equipped to hold government officials to account, they have the most to gain from social accountability initiatives. These initiatives can also empower them by providing information on their rights and entitlements and soliciting

feedback from poor people. Social accountability mechanisms increase and aggregate the voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (Malena et.al, 2004, p3-6).

Link between Social Accountability and other Development Agendas

Again, according to Malena et.al, (2004), Social accountability mechanisms have a key role to play in improving governance and deepening democracy. It has also strong potential to contribute to poverty reduction through pro-poor policy design, improved service delivery and empowerment. It has great potential to draw attention to the needs of vulnerable groups in society. It is closely related with civic engagement, right based approach to development, participation, transparency, public sector reforms and decentralization (p.7-8).

Social Accountability Tools

Social Accountability consists of a wide range of tools: community score cards; citizens' report cards; community mapping; participatory planning and budgeting; gender responsive budgeting as well as social auditing. Among them, the frequently used tool in the Social Accountability project is a Community Score Card (CSC) through which citizens monitor the quality, accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of community based public services. It provides opportunity for citizens to analyze any particular service they receive based on their personal feelings, to express dissatisfaction, to provide encouragement if good work is done and to suggest additional measures to be taken if issues remaining are reported (Social Accountability Guide).

Community Score Card (CSC) is a hybrid of a Social Audit (SA) and Citizens' Report Card (CRC). Social Audit is an independent means of evaluation of the processes and related performance of an organization and its attainment of social goals. It enables an organization to assess and demonstrate its social, economic and environmental benefits. Thus, social audit does

not only examine the financial status and performance of an organization but also the contribution it has made to the lives of the people it is supposed to serve. On the other hand, the CRC allows service users to provide their feedback on issues of accessibility, quality, responsiveness and costs of basic services. It is a simple but powerful tool to provide a rigorous basis for communities, civil society organizations or local governments to engage in dialogues for planning as well as improving the delivery of public services (Social Accountability Guide).

According to this social accountability guide, the most important properties of the CSC are: applying citizen-driven tools that enhance citizens' civic involvement and voices to complement conventional supply-side mechanisms of accountability; improving the communication between communities and service providers by building their capacity and insight; revealing which aspects of services are working well and which aspects are not, as well as how the service can be improved through joint action plans and follow-ups. The information generated allows service providers to implement improvements that respond to the needs, priorities, and preferences of the service users; tracks assets &/or spending. It helps to create a common understanding on the prevailing problems/solutions, encourages local problem-solving and facilitates community ownership of projects. It encourages community participation and enhances a culture of constructive dialogue. It also promotes co-operation and clarifies both roles and responsibilities of service users/community and providers/development actors. It also helps the community to track its assets. All in all, it is a tool that empowers citizens to actively decide on their own affairs, instead of just being passive spectators.

In addition to these, CSC improves the performance of service delivery by making it client centered and promotes accountability and transparency between service users, providers, and also between donor funds and government budget management. This trend helps service

providers to monitor progress and service quality together with the community (Social Accountability Guide). Thus, the concepts operating in the Social Accountability project indicate some ingredient of the principles of ABCD such as participation, empowerment, internal strengths, resources, assets and the like.

Community Mobilization

Community Mobilization can help meet the challenges of societies in transition by changing attitudes, norms, practices and behaviors of individuals as well as groups. As a result, communities are able to better assess their needs, identify options for addressing them, prioritize resources, leverage and create solutions. Often such process leads to structural changes within communities and brings about a critical transformation that supports lasting change. Thus, community mobilization ensures that communities are in the driver's seat of any change process (MercyCorps report, 2009, p.2).

Community Mobilization is characterized by respect for community and its needs. It also involves a capacity building process through which community members carry out and evaluate on a participatory and sustained basis to improve service delivery system. Therefore, community mobilization process involves assisting service users and providers alike to identify and solve their own problems through participatory, transparent and a two way communicative approach (Manual on Community Mobilization & Empowerment Process, 2008, p.6).

According to this manual, critical step in community mobilization includes: recognition of the need to mobilize, creating community ownership of the issue, identification of internal community resources, knowledge and skills to address the issue, identification of priority needs/issues, community planning and action as well as increasing the capacity of the community.

Community Participation and Empowerment

Community Participation is closely linked to voicing, social accountability and civic engagement. It can be viewed as a process whereby people assert their part and contribute towards policy development and implementation (UNDP, 2010). According to Mercy Corp (2009) report, community participation is about meeting the interests of the whole community. When every member of a community has the chance, directly or through representation, to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of community-level initiatives, there is a higher likelihood that the program reflects accurately their real needs and interests.

As to Perkins (1995) cited by Rubin (2008, p.12), empowerment is a psychological feeling that individuals have when they feel they can accomplish chosen goals, it is also political or organizational strength that enables people to collectively carry out their will. Empowerment occurs when ordinary people discover that they have the capacity to solve the problems they face, control the means to do so, and have final, authoritative say in decision making. According to Jennings (1990) cited by Rubin, empowered individuals are willing to and able to assert their collective wills, even when faced with the opposition from the established political or economic entities.

Similarly, as to Friedmann (1996, p.164) cited by Zhang (2008, p.7), defines empowerment as: “the self-organization of the poor for collective survival. The goal is to gain ample access to resources essential for livelihood. Although self-organization is fundamental to the achievement of a given goal, outside help, especially by the State, is needed in order to obtain satisfactory results on a scale commensurate with the size of the problem.” Hence, empowerment is a means to enhance the capacity of an individual or group to make purposeful choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2007).

Asset-based policies emphasize empowerment and capacity building and asset-building efforts promote long-term relationships under the form of partnerships. Long-term partnerships stimulate self-help and self-organization, easing a community's access to various local and government resources. Therefore, empowerment has three major components: organization (collectively), access to resources and external help (Zhang, 2008, p.7).

Empowerment contains the psychological component – how people feel about themselves, the cultural component – shared perceptions about the ability to take action, and the structural component that lends the capacity for battling those in privileged positions. Empowerment is achieved collectively (Rubin, 2008, p.61). It primarily emphasizes on collective organizations and resource identification in order to see what is available in the inside and goes to seeking for external resources to solve the existed problems of the community.

According to World Bank, (2007), empowerment has intrinsic as well as instrumental values. Intrinsic value refers to the capacity to make effective choices on basic human right and development principles. Instrumental value refers to its positive correlation with growth and poverty reduction, an effective realization of choice is contingent on formal and informal institutions. The formal institutions include laws and regulatory frameworks that govern people's behavior. The informal institutions consist of “unofficial” rules that govern bureaucracies, casual cultural practices, and value systems, as well as norms of behavior that operate in household or among peer groups. Endowment of financial, human, informational, material, organizational, psychological and social can affect a person's ability to access another asset. Thus, empowerment is not only an instrument for achieving an objective but also can be an end in itself.

Method

Design

Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (1994, p. 82) emphasize that the state of our knowledge on a topic is dictated by one of the two methods we would apply in a research work. Thus the researcher has opted for one method, which is qualitative study design to explore in detail about the contribution of social accountability project in community development process. Qualitative research is described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to be highly involved in the actual experiences (Creswell, 1994 cited by Williams, 2007).

According to Kenneth (2002), qualitative research is important to promote understanding of the issue. Since the study has focused on the new development initiative which is social accountability with general objective of exploring its contributions, qualitative research was applied. Besides, this design is helpful to understand in depth the thoughts of the study communities & stakeholders participating in the Social Accountability project of AFSR.

There are various methods to conduct qualitative research. According to Creswell (2003), there are five methods of qualitative research: case studies, grounded theory, ethnography narrative/content analysis and phenomenology. Among them, case study design was used to conduct this study. Case study explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case is bounded by time & activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995, p.15 cited in Creswell, 2003). Thomas, (2012, p.23) also states that case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems

which are studied holistically by one or more methods. It is about seeing something in its completeness, looking at it from many angles. Thus, it is especially good for getting a rich picture and gaining analytical insights. The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2011, p.4).

Besides as Yin (2011, p.53), cited Herriott & Firestone (1983), the evidence from multiple cases is often considered compelling, and the overall study is, therefore, regarded as being robust. This study aimed at exploring the contribution of Social Accountability project for a development in general. It investigates the strength & limitation of the project and draws lessons in addition of examining what the role of development agents would be. Therefore, case study qualitative research method is suitable and employed for this study.

Study site

The study site was Edget Beandent 1st Cycle School, Hawassa, Haike Dar sub-city, Gudmale woreda where AFSR implemented its social accountability project. The school was established in 1998 E.C with the support of the government and the community. It has a total of 1,148 students. The school has a plan to begin grade 8 in the coming Ethiopian New Year and now it is in the preparation stage. The school had a number of problems (shortage of class rooms and teachers, absence of clean water and toilet, lack of office utilities, shortage of school equipments and the like) but with working hand in hand with Hawassa Administration Education Office and Action for Self Reliance, most of the problems (shortage of classrooms, absence of tap water, shortage of teachers) were remained as history (School Profile, 2014).

Sampling Techniques and Procedures

The study had a total of twenty one participants. Key informants are selected from AFSR (Executive Director), School (School Principal) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA Leader). They are selected purposefully because of their position and knowledge on the project to be assessed. In addition to this, three focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with parents/community members, teachers and students. As King & Horrocks (2011), cited Morgan (1997, p.67), advises that, particularly, a range of 6- 10 participants is advisable. Besides Blumber (1969) cites in King et.al, “a small number of individuals, brought together as a resource group, is more valuable in many instances than any representative sample (p.61)”. Thus, each group consisted of six persons was selected for focus group discussion since it was favorable to generate adequate information. The researcher also believes that six for the focus group discussion made the discussion manageable, time saving and helps to follow up.

Data Collection Tools

Creswell (2007, p.179) states that qualitative research utilizes multiple sources of data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the issues under study. Thus, this study uses both primary and secondary data sources in order to obtain the desired information that would answer the research questions raised. For convenience, a purposive sampling technique was applied to select key informants as well as focus group discussion participants.

Key informants interview was conducted with three participants: AFSR Executive Director, School Principal and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Leader using a semi structured interview guide. This helped to dig out information about the contribution, strength, limitation

and lessons learnt from the project as well as assessed community involvement, empowerment, strength and role of development actors.

Three focus group discussions (FGD) with eighteen participants from parents/communities, teachers and students were primarily intended to supplement and build on the results as extra sources of data. Thus, it will enrich the data obtained from the key informant interviews. In order to get detailed information, probing questions was used in both cases.

Secondary data such as previous studies, AFSR project documents, reports, publications, discussion papers, books and electronic information in relation to the topic under consideration are consulted and reviewed.

Data analysis Techniques

The data collected from key informants and focus group discussions were analyzed qualitatively. Since the medium of communication was in Amharic, translating and recording all the audio & written materials into English was imperative. The records were analyzed manually by coding the text under various issues of interest in the study. This allowed organizing the statement made by different respondents according to the particular categories of issues. The data in these categories were then synthesized for the write up of the various sections.

Limitation

It is difficult to find government officials who were participated in the social accountability project. In addition to this, the student participated in the focus group discussion do not have much information about the project because they were not participated in either in

the training or any activities related with the project. Yet, as a facilitator, the researcher tried its best through posing questions that can be answered based on their observations in the school.

Ethical consideration

According to Creswell (2003) a researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of participants. Thus, in this study the researcher has given due consideration to that ethical guideline. Besides' anonymity and confidentiality are ensured in all the research process. Lewis (2003, p 66-67) also underlines, ethical consideration should be made in every research. Thus, the researcher has maintained that principle equally for all to avoid harm. At the initial stage, the researcher has arranged a session for informed consent to make certain that each respondent clearly understands the content and purpose of the research and the intended use of the information. And after completion of the research, all the recorded, both hard and soft copies were discarded.

Findings of the Study

This section presents the findings on the contribution of Social Accountability Project towards development. Data were collected from a total of twenty one participants including three key informants and eighteen focus group discussion participants (six teachers, six students and six parents) who were purposively selected from Action for Self Reliance and Edget Beandinnet School. The findings are sectioned in four parts: (1) community participation, empowerment & development; (2) role of AFSR & other development actors in SAP; (3) contributions of the project; and (4) strength, limitation and lessons learnt from Social Accountability Project.

Community Empowerment, Participation and Development

Since the main objective of the study is to assess the contribution of SAP for development, the participants were asked on the actual extent of their participation and involvement on the project. Each participant explained depending on their perception and level of experience in the life span of the project.

The strategies used in the project that is community mobilization, empowerment, and community score cards as well as activities related with discussions and interface meetings were highly enhancing the participation of the community. CSC, in particular, has promoted wholehearted participation of all stakeholders in the process. Its contribution in building collective efforts and fostering actions deserves appreciation for it has helped to transform the deplorable situation of the education system of Edget Beadent School to a level worthy of praise. The approaches followed are noted to have promoted strong sense of ownership among community members too (Key Informant 1).

In addition to the community score card, community mobilization activities have enabled to capacitate all stakeholders of the school (teachers, parents, students, PTAs, Woreda and Zone Education Bureau and local administration) to identify the problems related to the school services and act on mutual basis to solve the problem as well as to undertake similar activities in the future (Key Informant 2).

FGD participants from Teachers and FGD participants from Parents too, have confirmed that the community score card system is a powerful tool to enhance community participation, voicing out needs as well as identifying capabilities to solve the problems. Similarly Key informant 1 & 3 expressed that the nature of the project by itself is highly motivating and has the potential to empower the community. In addition to this, it has its own contribution to reduce dependency on external support and promotes utilization of own resources (Key Informant 1, 2 & 3).

According to the evaluation report 2010, all stakeholders in the project work together for the attainment of a common goal that is offering quality education. The project created meaningful civic engagement and participation in the management of the education sector with a sense of ownership and belongingness. On top of this, the project has also brought about positive change in communities attitude. Participants of the process realize that the service users have the right to obtain quality service and the community have untapped potential to mobilize resources to improve the educational service delivery.

The approaches contributed for enhancing active participation of community members since the tools like community score cards, community report cards, discussions and the

interface meetings are participatory and promote empowerment of the community. It is a very effective tool that helps to bring about development (Key Informant 3).

With regard to the sustainability issues, “The school communities (teachers, students & parents) still use the tools and concepts to identify, rank and prioritize needs. We use the tools to pursue various alternatives to fill gaps in our needs from inside and solicit outside support for those obstacles which we do not find solution from the community. The project has phased out for AFSR but not for our school” (Key Informant 2).

Key Informant 1 also, has the opinion that the project has an immense promise with a vast potential to bring change in the community. It helps to change attitudes particularly in doing face to face & constructive discussion; and assist the community to be innovative and creative especially in the areas of community resource mobilization.

Although PTAs were established before the inception of the project, they only came to the forefront after they got motivated in the SAP. They now clearly understand their roles and places in the education service delivery system. In addition to this, parents and other community members have come to realize that they have a pertinent role in the education system which enlightened them to seriously monitor service improvements (Evaluation Report, 2010).

All stakeholders are able to unleash their potentials for the improvement of service delivery systems in the target school. And the focal school where the pilot project had been implemented served as a learning center for other non-targeted schools through sharing of their knowledge and experiences. These achievements revealed the social accountability project

contributed a lot to enhance community capacity and demonstrate the sustainability of the project (Evaluation Report, 2010).

Contribution of SAP in Edget Beandenet School & Community

Parents, students and teachers were the main actors participated in this project in identifying problems in line with the internal assets (skills, knowledge, relationship, finance, labor and the like) to solve the problem. Social accountability project focuses on gathering together, discussing on any issues, and reaching to a common consensus to solve problems. It also makes not only teachers but also parents to be responsible for the teaching learning process as well as qualifying the services of the school (FGD participants from Teachers).

Key informant 2 argues among all the projects that were implemented and are being implemented; Social Accountability Project tops in advancing the quality of education in Edget Beandenet School through enhancing the participation of the school community. 'I am very surprised when I see the school community are willing to invest all what they have including their time, knowledge, relationships they have with others etc. to improve the status of the school'.

In support of this, Key informant 3 stated that it is because of the introduction of this project that Edget Beandenet School has expanded the school compound, built more class rooms and toilets for teachers and students, started the kindergarten services, installed tap water, and upgraded its class up to 7th grade.

The contribution made by the project in sensitizing the community on the rights of children for education was noted to be critical. Children's education is not limited only to books

& classroom activities. They need to have wholesome upbringing both at the school and home environments in matters such as physical and mental wellbeing. In a very short period of time, the project was able to address those issues (Evaluation Report, 2010).

As Key informant 3 pointed out, the project had a great contribution since it also works on the attitudinal change of individuals. It makes participants to think that they have the capacity to work and solve their own problems by themselves. For instance, there were problems related with hiring of janitor for the school toilet. Hence, parents discussed the issue and decided to contribute one birr per/month/family and hire a janitor and solved the problem. The students, too, were given the responsibility of cleaning their school compound. Thus, they set up their own program and clean their school accordingly. The school initiated the construction of toilet and establishment of clean tap water. Then a tap water and safe toilet were also constructed with 30% of parents' contribution & 70% of the government budget.

According to Key Informant 2, there were thematic areas identified during the implementation of the project. The school together with its core facilitation team took them all into consideration and came up with their solutions in the order of their urgency. Currently, the school is dealing with its last agenda that is the establishment of different in-school clubs.

According to September 2008 AFSR report, the prioritized themes were; narrowness of the school compound, shortage of reference books in the library, small number of teachers, absence of guard and cleaner, lack of staffs/teachers office, problems related with successfulness of the self-contained method, shortage of classrooms, shortage of budget to construct toilet and water tap as well as absence of different school clubs. In line with these thematic priorities, they

developed an action plan consisting of the activities with assigned responsibilities, time frames and resources.

SAP has a lot of contribution in our school. It really helps the school communities to develop a sense of responsibility, ownership and belongingness to the development process. Initially, there were some problems because of the imprinted thinking of waiting for external support only, where some teachers and parents resisted accepting the project. In the course of time, they realized the importance of looking inside rather than simply fraught for only external resources (Key Informant 3). Using the concepts of social accountability, the school communities began not only to identify their needs but also the resources. Thus, they have improved their self-confidence and self-image (FGD participants from Teachers and Parents).

All in all, the Evaluation Report 2010 revealed that many of the government run schools have a numerous problems that severely affected the teaching- learning processes. The series of discussions made by parents, students and teachers, members of PTAs and the interface meetings held by service providers and users helped to identify and prioritize the critical problems of the target schools. Based on the problems identified, important measures have been taken to address them.

According to one of the teacher participant of FGD expressed that:-

The project opens the floor for the exchange of critical views in open discussions and promotes transparency in administrative and financial issues. Hence, we started focusing not only on our problems/needs but also on the internal resources available within our reach. The school communities have now realized that they have the potential and

capacities to address every problem they may encounter. And that is the outcome of the SAP for the good of all the members.

Due to the SAP, our school is different from many other schools. There is high participation of our parents in any school issues. They have a say on all the school concerns. The school principal is accountable for the regular attendance of each student. For instance, if a student misses class too often, she phones and asks her/his parents. If the student is ill she makes home visit. Teachers are also made responsible. They follow up each and every activity of students. If problems crop up, they come together, discuss and try to solve the problems cooperatively (FGD participants from Students).

One of FGD participants from Parents underlines that:-

Though it is hard for me to remember all, lots of the school problems such as shortage of classrooms and teachers, lack of toilet, shortage of reference books and the like were identified during the implementation of the project and were all solved through active participation of stakeholders and own available assets. And now we are ever ready to take similar steps for future improvement of our school.

With this same vein, one of FGD participant from parents shared his experience of how to maintain their neighborhood security with internal resources:-

Because of my training and participation in this project, I realized that nothing is beyond communal capacity. Upon instances which threatened our neighborhood security, I contacted the residents, discussed about it and proposed to work a schedule in which each male member of a household participates in maintaining peace in the neighborhood. All

agreed and are now working at nights according to our time table. Currently we are able to keep the peace and security of our areas and eager to share our experience with others.

According to Key Informant 3, social accountability project has not only helped the school community to depend on its own strength & resources but also to shoulder responsibilities to enhance the resource mobilization skills and carrying out duties willingly. The community appreciates the concept of the project because every stakeholder involves in decision making as well as helped them to realize their potential. They are now aware of SAP's initiative to bring change in their school and communities.

Role of AFSR in Social Accountability Project

According to key informant1, the role of AFSR includes allocation of resources for the project, organizing and conducting trainings, facilitating the overall activities of the project as well as monitoring, follow up and evaluating them. Whereas, the roles of the community includes active participation in all endeavors of the project; resource mobilization and asset identification; post project resource allocation; developing accountability; development and implementation of action plan.

All in all the role of the implementing organization was facilitation of the project activities while the school community and its stakeholders actually engaged in the activities of identifying agenda, prioritizing and moving forward to solve the developed agenda (Key Informant 2). Key informant 3 and FGD participants from teachers and parents shared this idea when they explained the roles and responsibilities of AFSR & the school.

*Strengths, limitations and lessons learnt**Strengths*

The strength of Social Accountability Project was briefly stated below:

Information obtained from one of the FGD participants from Teachers and Parents revealed that the strength of the project includes enhancing community's participation and empowerment, contributing for sustaining the development endeavor at the levels of both government as well as non government development actors. It also became a means for creating good opportunity for the school communities to identify their potentials and utilize it for improving the quality of education.

From the resource mobilization point of view, the project strongly promotes creativity. Persons who participated in this project are now trying to assess resources through aluminizing and linking issues with the available assets (Key informant1). According to Key informant 2, the project has impact on promoting open communication among school communities and enhanced problem solving skills/capacities. It has as well developed trust and good relationship between service users (Students & Parents) and service providers (School). And it also promoted a common understanding of the issues and collective decision to solve the problem.

According to one of FGD participants from Parents, the project has so many positive things that give value for people and empower them to do things. On top of this, they added that parents and students alike consider the school as their home and are investing all what they have for the betterment of the school. This is the major outcome of SAP which deserves to be scaled up to other schools.

Limitation

As social accountability concept and its implementation is a new initiative in Ethiopia, there are still resistances from some quarters such as school administration and teachers. In rare cases, the participants considered the meetings between service provider and user as a finger pointing and fault finding exercise but it gradually changed through time (Key informant 2).

The school community members forwarded a series of requests for financial and material support from external source only before their deep participation in the project and realization of the project's objectives (Evaluation Report, 2010). The project had a very short life span and reached to limited areas though it focused on changing in people's attitude and bringing development. And this may affect the long term impact of the project and have to be worked out (Key Informant 1). FGD participants from parents also expressed their wish to expand the project in other areas too in order to strengthen the development endeavor of the country.

Lessons Learnt

The following are the lessons learnt from the SAP: attitudinal change to bring about development within its community, has helped the community to wake up & know itself, its capacity, potential, strength and utilize it to bring change. Thus, it is advisable if both government and civil society organizations adopt the approaches of SAP and mainstream them in their programs so as to bring about genuine development in the country (Key Informant 3).

As to the Evaluation Report (2010), working in partnership than working in isolation is the first major lessons learnt from the project. Secondly, constructive dialogue between service users and providers is an important approach to improve education and other service delivery

system. Thirdly, the community including the stakeholders have untapped potential to be mobilized (financial and non-financial resources) for growth. If motivated and assisted through facilitation, the community is able to do tremendous job to improve the quality of education. Education service delivery system could not be improved with government and other external inputs alone.

Discussion

In this section the contribution of social accountability project will be discussed in light of the objectives, literature reviewed and findings of the research. The study generally aimed to assess the contribution of social accountability project for development shining light on asset oriented development approach.

Under this general objective, there are specific objectives: exploration of the project contribution in Edget Beandenet School, the community's realization of its assets (capacity, power & resources) through participation & empowerment due to the project; role of development actors and stakeholders, and strength, limitation as well as lessons obtained from the project that would be employed for further development endeavors. This assists to understand the importance and potential of social accountability project.

Contribution of Social Accountability Project in Edget Beandenet School and Communities

The results of the data collected from key informant and focus group discussion participants revealed that, social accountability project has contributed in advancing educational service delivery in the target project sites.

Addressing long standing Problems of the School

Wilke (2006) states that ABCD approach operates under the premise that neighborhoods can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing (but often unrecognized) assets, thereby responding to and creating local opportunity for positive changes. Information obtained from all key participants indicated that the school had a number of problems that severely affect the teaching learning processes. But the series of dialogue made by parents, students and teachers as well as the interface meeting held by service providers and

users helped to identify and prioritize the critical problems (tap water, toilet, shortage of classrooms, and absence of kindergarten) of the school. Based on the problems identified, measures both from internal as well as external resources were taken to address these problems.

All participants of the study except focus group participants from students stated that due to the intervention of the social accountability project: additional classroom, tap water and kindergarten were constructed and the classrooms and kindergarten were equipped through both internal as well as external resources. The internal referred to the parents, students and teachers investment of their time, knowledge and skills during the construction and equipment of these infrastructures while the external referred to the financial assistance of the Zone Education Bureau.

In line with this, Friedmann (1996, p.164) cited by Zhang (2008, p.7), states “although self-organization is fundamental to the achievement of a given goal, outside help, especially by the State, is needed in order to obtain satisfactory results on a scale commensurate with the size of the problem.” This shows that people-centered path of development if coupled with assistance from State and other outside help are powerful mechanisms to transform the community.

Social capital is set of resources intrinsic to social relations, includes trust, norms & networks. According to key informant 2 and 3, expansion of the school compound was done through the positive social relations that PTAs and the school principal have with other stakeholders in the community. Similarly, Russell & Smeation (n.d) viewed social capital as “an invisible bank account into which the assets of social relationships and networks are invested and as they grow, so too do the strengths, and social fabric of the community – in a sort of intangible compound interest. Like any capital, when wisely managed, social capital enhances the well-being of the citizens who banked it” (p.6). This in general shows how social capital that is the

positive social relations, the developed trust within the community assist to actualize the development intervention of the community.

The school was also able to hire janitors for toilet through using the internal resources and students are also responsible to clean their school compound. Thus, the belongingness created through the project, clearly showed that development process is in the hand of the community and it is members' effort which matters in bringing qualified school services.

Finding from the 2010 Evaluation Report also stated that the project was able to address large number of problems of the school through active participation of the school communities as well as technical support of AFSR. Such joint action, contributed for qualifying the education service of the school and able to reach a large number of children.

Finding from one of the key informants further strengthens this indication that the project created meaningful community engagement in the management of the school system and this increased sense of ownership and belongingness for the development efforts of the school. According to Malena et.al, 2004, Social accountability practices enhance the ability of citizens to engage in a more informed, organized, constructive and systematic manner, thus increasing the chance of effecting positive change (p.6). Thus, as the involvement of the community increases in the developmental activities of their community, then sense of belongingness as well as positive changes will be achieved within a short period of time.

Change in Attitude

Information gathered from all key informants and focus group discussion participants from parents, teachers & students showed that social accountability project brought change in people's attitude: the community members realized that they have untapped potential to mobilize

resources to improve the quality of education, enhance open and face to face communication to attain the commonly stated goal.

“Communities host a wealth of resources that could be mobilized for its own betterment. However, community members themselves need to realize that they have the capacity, power and resources to act” (Community Connection, p.3). Evaluation Report (2010) also revealed the community was aware that education service quality improvement is not only the main responsibility of the government but all other stakeholders. This, alert the communities on their right to obtain quality services as well as capacity to improve the services.

As to the findings of the study, Edget Beandenet School, due to the intervention of this project, has discovered the opportunities at its hand while discovering the agenda and sought external assistance only for resources that are not available inside the school community. Such state of affairs contributed for the school communities (PTAs, parents, teachers and students) to realize their capacity. Thus, it enhanced their self-esteem as well as self-confidence. According to Foot & Hopkins (2010), communities entertain confidence in being producers as they realize what they have and their achievements. Thus, they gain collaborative relationship with agencies too. Therefore, appreciating the community and sensitizing them on what they have contributes to bring change in attitudes towards especially on their capability of intervening in any community concern.

Community Empowerment and Participation

Community Empowerment

Empowerment refers to actions that enhance the capacity of individuals or group to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. Empowerment is a

means to enhance the capacity of an individual or group to make purposeful choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (World Bank, 2007).

Data gathered from key informant 3 revealed PTAs have full information about the school and nothing was decided without PTAs knowledge and prior notification. This indicates that the project contributed for PTAs to know their role/responsibilities in the activities of the school. In addition to this, it helped all stakeholders to unleash their potentials for improving services of the school. It also encourages parents and other community members to talk openly regarding the improvement of the school. Thus, it empowers them to voice out their need, interest and concern. The UNDP (2010) document also confirmed that the project empowered groups in a community to participate in community concerns and policy formulations.

All in all, the output of social accountability project in the study area could be viewed as: (1) acknowledging and appreciating own strengths, (2) empowered the school communities and promote open discussion, transparency and active participation, (3) development of sense of ownership, (4) creativity in the areas of resource mobilization and (5) looking inside before searching outside support.

“Accountability is an integral component of ‘empowerment’ and hence poverty reduction” (Singh, Kumar, & Shah, 2004, p.5). Mechanisms of social accountability such as community mobilization, community score cards and community report card operate from bottom up and promote community driven initiatives. It enhances active participation of the community. These mechanisms make the community as well as the service providers and development actors to be responsible and accountable. It also promotes transparency, joint planning and actions.

Community Participation

Participation refers to the process of taking part or becoming actively involved. Fuller (1996) stated that true and development can take place when all actors equally and democratically participate and share their ideas, visions, and responsibilities to steer and implement their community or village development. Communicative action theory is one of the community development theories that focus on smooth interactions for change. It links development initiatives with the concept of full participation.

Within a framework of this theory, knowledge of practitioners should be integrated with the community knowhow to facilitate change in the community and the community should fully participate in the development scheme. Findings of this study also showed the same truth. The development practitioners' knowledge and the communities' skill were combined to solve each problems of the school and all stakeholders were active participants throughout the project. Thus, community participation is essential for any community development process to sustain the outcome of development.

In this project: parents, PTAs, students, teachers and the school administration as well as the Woreda and Zone Education Bureau actively participated in mobilizing of resources for the attainment of quality education in the school. Findings indicated that using the community score card as one of the monitoring mechanisms enhanced communities' participation and engagement in developmental issues of the school as well as others. According to Community Mobilization and Empowerment Manual (2008) "Community mobilization is a participatory process for collective action towards a common purpose by involving all stakeholders" (p.6).

All the stages of the project, starting from internalizing the project objectives to the final stages of interface meetings, gave the chance to the school community to participate actively.

Thus, such mechanisms and practices have the capacity to solve problems of the poor through involving and empowering them.

Development

Development is a conscious and deliberate process of analyzing the situation, articulating goals and objectives and implementing programs to achieve the set goal (Butterfield & Chisanga, 2008). And “Community development is a planned effort to produce assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life” (Phillips & Pithman, 2009, p.10). Thus, it is a planned approach to improve the standard of living and general wellbeing of people. Social accountability was one of the organization’s projects developed with the goal of improving education service through active participation, involvement and guidance of PTAs, community and other stakeholders of Edeget Beandent School at Hawassa. As a planned development endeavor the project had its own contribution in its target area. Findings of the study revealed that the project has a good initiation for promoting problem solving skills of the community. In turn, this kind of intervention has also its own share to shift the development endeavors from the traditional-need based approach to asset based approach. ABCD is an asset based strategy that starts with what is available in the community, the capacities of the residents and workers, and the associational base of the area, instead of with what is absent. It focuses on agenda building and problem-solving capabilities of the local community, associations and institutions. It is relation-driven and focuses on enhancing such relationship (Wassie Kebede, Melese Getu & Desalegn Negeri, 2011, p.25).

Results of the study shows that social accountability mechanisms help to create a common understanding on the problems and trail assets for solutions encourages local problem-solving and facilitates community ownership, participation and constructive dialogue. It also

promotes co-operation and clarifies both roles and responsibilities of service users, service providers, and community and development actors.

According to Robinson (1994) & Todaro (1994) in addition to natural resources and capital goods, human resource enhancement is essential to achieve development that enlarges the range of choices that ordinary people can make about their own lives. Thus, target communities of this project were trained in different concepts of social accountability and practiced it to solve their problems. Such action plays a great role to sustain and strengthen the result of the project.

Evaluation Report of (2010) as well as findings from participants revealed that the major outcome of the project was change in attitude especially towards making face to face and open discussion, realization of own needs and potentials as well as willingness to invest own resources for the betterment of the education system. This indicates the engagement of the school communities in activities of their school contribute for the betterment of their school system. They openly share their ideas and concerns, and they know that they have the capacity (as a form of labor, knowledge, skill, time and finance) to be invested for enhancing the quality of education in their school.

Such kind of participation leads to the establishment of sense of ownership for the development efforts and schools. All in all, Community mobilization mechanism of the project helps the community to realize and map their capacity, power and resources & to act upon it which leads to the overall development endeavors.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is a strategy for development, and begins with inventory of assets, skills, capacities and talents. It is a bottom up strategy and participatory approach. The Social accountability project also employed the same approach to bring the desired objectives. It has a relational based, agenda building and problem solving capacities. This

project makes the school to look outside resources only after having the full inventory of the inside resources which could sustain the development endeavor of the school. According to Kretzmann and McNight (2012), ABCD is a strategy for community driven development that starts with locating and making an inventory of assets and leveraging internal and external resources to support actions to achieve it.

PTAs were discussed to construct a toilet and clean water for the school, each parent was involved for the action through investing their time, money, skill, and knowledge, and then the Zonal Education Office of Hawassa supports their action after it sees their efforts. Parents have also used their strong social capital when they worked to expand the school compound. Though it is hard to avoid completely dependency on external resources, the result contributed for the community to see their inside for improving quality of education in their school.

In support of this statement, the findings from Key informant 3 indicate that currently the school has clean water and toilets for students as well as for teachers. This is because the construction work was started with financial, skill, knowledge and time contribution of parents & teachers, and when the Woreda education office see this situation, it influences the Education office of Hawassa to allocate the remaining budget and enable the school to finish all the construction. Though it was not in the priority agenda, the construction of Kindergarten was also approved with the same fashion.

Information gathered from the school and AFSR staffs showed that, the school communities were confident about the continuity and sustenance of the gains of the project after it's phased out. Key informant 2 stated that "the knowledge and skill gained from the community score card helped us to identify prioritize problems and how to address the problem. Now we

have all the instruments to tackle the challenges in our school”. In her own words, “the project was phased out for AFSR but not for our school”.

The result revealed that, the school still uses the community score card system to identify problems in line with their relevant opportunities for further improvement of the school performance. Thus, sustain the development process of the education sector to further qualify the services of the school.

The core principles of ABCD and social accountability are intersected in the areas of appreciation, confidence and action, social capital/assets, participatory (empowerment and ownership), collaboration, civic engagement and local services effectiveness and responsiveness's which all contributes for development. Social accountability tools also rely on civic engagement and help the poor community. It built on public discussion and works based on strength and positive dimensions.

The project contributes for change in attitudes especially in their realization of their potential. It also promotes the participation, empowerment as well as belongingness of the community in their development scheme. In general, social accountability project was successful and thus, laid the ground for development.

Role of AFSR and other Development Actors

Role refers to a function performed especially in a particular operation or process. According to Wallis (1996) “the role of external intervention is primarily one way of helping a community to identify, mobilize and grow its own assets. Ideas and resources can come from outside, but the spark of renewal must come from within the community” (p.37).

The findings of the study revealed that the major role of actors should be facilitating the development endeavor, provision of technical support and empowering the community to drive the development engine by themselves. This effort could include helping the community to identify, mobilize and grow based on its own assets while adding any resources from outside if it is not available inside. Therefore, development actors and professionals should consider assets of the community and play a facilitating role in the process of community development scheme.

Key informant from AFSR stated that the organization was responsible in the pre allocation of funds to implement the project; AFSR organized and conducted trainings on the concept of social accountability, facilitated the community score card, community mobilization and empowerment activities. Thus the school communities were responsible for allocating post budget (budget/other resources that could be labor, time, and skill and so on identified and found within the community) to improve the education system of the school. These allow the community to run the development efforts by themselves.

Strength, Limitation and Lessons Learnt

Strengths

Promoting Bottom up Development

Findings from all FGD participants & key informants revealed that social accountability project is a very strong project to promote asset oriented approach which highly contributes for bringing development. As to Robinson (1994) cited by Todaro (1994), experience has shown that top down approach of community development was not successful to alleviate poverty. Rather, it actually exacerbates economic inequities and injustice. Thus, the findings prove for the necessity

of bottom-up, demand driven/people centered development initiatives and call for development actors to divert the direction of their intervention.

Trust, Relationship Building and Open Dialogue

Among the seven community development theories, social capital which focuses on relationships and linked to the sense of solidarity is clearly pictured in the social accountability project. According to this theory, trust, reciprocity and relationship building are essential in community development process (Phillis & Pittman, 2009, p.21). Key informants of the study summoned that the project has strong part in promoting trust and good relationship among communities; build and enhance problem solving skills/capacities of stakeholders.

In addition to this, the participants confirmed how important open dialogue is among the service provider (school) and service users (student, parents) in the improving educational quality. Due to this project, the service users/community empowered to air out their concern regarding to the teaching learning process. According to communicative action theory, community development involves the participation of networks, groups and individuals. It should be also noted that the principles of community development entails participation of citizens in defining their own problems and dreams (Phillips & Pittman, 2009). Thus, findings of this study indicated that the school community defined its problems, identified assets and developed joint plan required to solve them. In all stage, AFSR facilitated the activities (trainings, arranging the discussion program, organizing the interface meetings and the like).

Findings such as parents' consideration of the school as their home, working hard and investing all what they have for the improvement of the school showed their belongingness to development efforts of the school. And such kind of intervention sustains the development

endeavors. There was high participation of the communities in the social accountability project, thus they owned the conceptions of the project and continue to use it to solve their problems.

Currently, because of the communities' understanding of the outcome of the project, the school uses the social accountability mechanisms to solve any of its difficulties. According to the finding from key informant 1, the enhancement of resource mobilization skills of the community paves the way for promoting asset oriented development approach since the project also focuses on working based on own capacities and strength. The community started to raise resources even through aluminizing and linking processes. Such situation will strengthen the development efforts of the school. Such information allowed for understanding that the community already manages its development endeavors by itself which reflects and answer issues of development. According to Elliot, (2006) as cited in Butterfield & Chisanga, (2008), development assumes continuous improvement in living standards when community members are mobilized and become active participants in the process of development (p11). Therefore, community participation in development initiations has its own share to the development efforts of the community.

Limitation

Misconception of Meetings

As social accountability concept and its implementation is a new introduction, initially, there were resistances from some of the school administration and teachers to accept the project. They considered the interface meetings between service providers and users as fault finding

exercise. But now, they understand the objective of the project and continue to work with others for the improvement of their school education system.

Limited Intervention Area

According to key informants focus group participants from teacher and parents stated, the project had a very short life span and reached to limited areas though it focused on change in people's attitude and brought development. Cognizant of these facts the organization expanded this project to other areas (Tabor, Ethiopia Tikdem and Addis Ketema schools; and in Adare, Philadelfiya, Wekero kebeles of Hawassa and Tenkaro, Haro and Mamincho of Malga , Sidama Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State). This could help to reach and create more people who are conscious on their potential and work to bring positive change in their respective areas and concern.

Difficulty to tackle some Problems with only Internal Resources

The Evaluation Report revealed that during the formulation of a reform agenda the school was made to solicit financial, material and human resources from the school community to address its identified and prioritized problems. Despite this effort, there were difficulties to tackle some of the critical problems like clean water supply and toilet construction due to the heavy cost they incur. This is also supported by Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) as stated by Butterfield & Chisanga (2008 p.5): only after assets from "inside the community" are inventoried and mobilized, do communities call upon outside institutions to fill the gaps in community development efforts.

According to data from all key informants, with resource obtained from the school communities; the school started the construction and when the government sees the effort, the Zonal Education Bureau covered the remaining required budget. Thus the students now have an access to clean water supply and toilet. Therefore, development interventions could be initiated by the communities themselves and internal resources could be applied to solve the problem. Besides these, external assistance could also be required to solve problems which are not manageable through only internally owned resources.

Lessons Learnt

A strength approach is a specific method of working cooperatively and resolving problems experienced. It does not attempt to ignore the problems and difficulties. Rather, it tries to identify the positive basis of the challenge and move forward to address their problems (Hammond, 2010, p.3). Findings from FGD participants from teachers revealed that everyone has its own potential and the only remedy for problems is first to look the inside and work on it. Ability to see what is inside will lead to identify resources and opportunities that could be used for transforming life. FGD participants from parents also showed the importance of working and acting together for the betterment of individual life as well as qualifying the education system. Generally the data confirmed that working in partnership; constructive dialogue; motivating, mobilizing and using untapped potentials of the community solves the majority of problems in the community.

Based on the findings from key informants, lessons learnt from the project includes: working on the soft component/thoughts of the community is very important for bringing change. Social accountability project assists the community to realize their capacity, potential,

strength and work upon it. Though it has its own contribution, working only on hard components/infrastructures and applying top down approaches may not help to bring development. Thus, it would be good to invest both on the soft and hard components of the communities to actualize progress.

Conclusion and Social Work Implication

Conclusion

In this section a major findings of the study are concluded in line with the basic research questions and insight will be provided on the contribution of social accountability project towards development through empowering & strengthening the participation of the community. The research focuses on exploring the contribution of the project in Edget Beandenet School where the project has been implemented for fourteen months. It also assessed whether or not the project has assisted the school community to realize its power, resources and capacities to solve its own problems by itself.

In addition, it evaluated the role development actors' should play in the development endeavors considering AFSR. Finally assessment was made on the strength, limitation and lessons learnt from the social accountability project. Appropriate methods and tools of data collection and analysis were combined and employed to respond to the research questions thereby achieving the research objectives.

The following are the major conclusions reached (1) social accountability project employed asset oriented development approach (focusing on the internally available resources) which conceptualizes the principles of asset building by promoting community strengths, (2) the trend highlights the community development which focused on relationship, trust, sharing of resources and information through active public participation and dialogue leading to consensus towards building communities, (3) the project again underlined the responsibility and accountability of development actors to facilitate active participation of community members to attain such development endeavors, and (4) the project reflected values such as justice, human right and dignity which are basic concepts for sustained development .

The assessment of the study showed that the project has contributed to the empowerment of the community & enhanced its participation focusing on internal assets to deal with issues of their concern. Thus, it has helped the community to realize its own potential in economic, social, political, physical as well as psychological terms. The project, with its community score card and community mobilization mechanisms has promoted the bottom up approach which considered as cornerstones for sustaining the development endeavor of the communities.

The result social accountability project has recorded at Edget Beandenet School clearly showed its relevance and appropriateness in enhancing the quality of education. The study results confirmed that the approach is successful in addressing the problems of the school community with effective use of internal resources as well as searching external resources for those which may not handled with only internal resources. According to all key informants due to the project intervention, the school has been able to expand its compound, build extra rooms and enroll large number of students, construct toilets and clean water supply points.

Regarding to the role of development actors, the study reflected on the necessity of facilitation role of development actors. The intervention scheme would also be more effective if the technical knowledge combined with the community practical knowhow solve problems.

Even if the project faced certain challenges, it has achieved promising results in the area of community development. Strengths of the project includes community empowerment, change in attitude and addressing problems mostly in owns capacities. The major lesson obtained from this project is: development depends on the active participation, empowerment, open communication, partnership and relationship based on trust and mobilization of the untapped potential of the community. The major findings of the study were: active participation is a must

to success endeavors of development; role of development actors should be facilitating the development endeavors; change in attitude towards importance of open communication; realization of capacity (internal resources – knowledge, skill, time, etc) are contributing for development. Besides these focusing of internal resources to solve community's problem is a fundamental issue but external resource mobilization is also required to manage problems that are beyond the capacity of the community.

Generally, the initiative should be taken as an excellent opportunity to work on community development issues. Both government as well as civil society organizations should buy the concept, internalize and expand it to enhance the participation of the community towards development.

Implication to Social Work Practice

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty (NASW Code of Ethics, 1999). There are various approaches, strategies and intervention applied by both government as well as civil society organizations to enhance the wellbeing of these groups of people.

As this study indicates empowerment, strength focused and participatory approaches have high potential to solve the problem of the poor as well as bring development in communities. Thus, Social Workers should organize and conduct trainings on strength based perspectives, appreciative inquiry, and importance of participation, empowerment and related issues for the community as well as those professionals engaged in community development activities. Besides' this, they have to play a facilitation role within the community to make them to realize their power, capacity and resources.

Social Workers working in the community development area should also engage in promoting the accountability and responsiveness of organizations, service providers, communities/service users and other social institutions to individuals' needs and assets. Thus, promote addressing problems though asset mapping and building mechanisms.

Strengths-based approaches to social work practice seek to explore and exploit the strengths and resources of clients and environments to better help them to achieve their goals (Saleebey, 1997 as cited in Rapp, Pettus, & Goscha (2006), p.4). To solve the problems of marginalized and disadvantaged communities, Social Workers, then should promote activities

that are based on the strengths of the community, facilitate condition for the communities to realize their wealth.

In addition to this, Social Workers have to assist the community to define their problem and their assets (both existing as well as required) and applying it to solve own problems, though external resources are searched if the existing problem is not manageable by the existed resources. Thus, Social Workers should intervene to assist the community through appreciating what they have, emphasizing on their strength and facilitating the necessary environment for bringing the sought development in the community. Thus, Social Worker has to conduct asset assessment/asset mapping of the community and develop projects and programs that are based on assets. This, contribute to sustain the intervention. Social Workers have to promote mechanisms such as community mobilization and community score card to empower and boost confidence of the community.

Social Workers should also play as a brokers as well as case managers. As a broker, they should assess the services/issues needed by the community and bring the issues to the service providers and facilitate the activities. And as case managers, they could focus on any cases of the community that needs to be solved together with the development actors, bring the case to the forefront and discuss with the client to reach to the solution.

In addition to these, a community development social worker must play an advocacy role to promote asset based community development approach and strength based perspectives as well as influence civil service organization and government development actors to shift their intervention direction from top down to bottom up strategies. Generally a community development Social Worker has to play role of advocator, facilitator, promoter of asset assessment, case manager as well as active broker.

Policy Implication

For centuries, in Ethiopia, top down trend and need based approaches were mainly applied to bring change in the life of the disadvantaged community. From the researcher experience, opinion and much historical evidence the changes brought through such approaches were not reliable, and satisfactory and there is an urgent need to shift the development approaches.

The World Bank, along with its development partners, governments, and civil societies, recognizes that poverty reduction must address the often complex processes that limit people's capacity to make life-changing choices (World Bank, 2007). Thus, the poverty reduction program of a country should promote overall growth of the nation. Policies and interventions built on the assets of citizens should be developed to make the development interventions effective and .

Ethiopia as a democratic and naturally endowed state should develop programs and strategies that encourage the participation of citizens in every concern related with growth. Policies and strategies that promote enhancement of human capital should also need to be developed to sustain the initiatives started in the country.

Research Implication

Since the project is new, very few evaluation researches conducted to see the importance and potential of social accountability project for bringing development. So projects/programs like social accountability which emphasize on community participation and empowerment should be studied and its impact should be publicized. Despite its own limitations, this study will serve for future researches in as a stepping stone gearing them towards asset based and

strength focused studies; thereby helping communities to build up on its inner resources. The study will also serve as a reference for development actors who might be interested to work on social accountability and community participation.

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Informed Consent

Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide for the Assessment of the Contribution of Social Accountability Project towards Development

(For Executive Director of AFSR)

Good morning. My name is Mekdes Shibu. I am studying the contribution of social accountability project towards for community development. The general objective of the study is to assess the contribution of social accountability project in the study Woreda.

As part of the assessment, I am going to talk to the concerned bodies, including Executive Director of AFSR, School Principal and PTA Leader. I would use the information I generate to full fill the requirement of the MSW degree and to show AFSR its efforts in addressing problems of the community. In addition to this, results of the assessment could be used by other social development actors too to mainstream social accountability project in their organization and facilitate community development that relies on own assets/resources, strength and potentials. The information I collect will not identify you in any way, all information you provide will be kept confidential and there will be no negative consequences for your participation in this study and I request your consent for your willingness.

Thank You in advance for agreeing to be part of this study.

General

1. Name of the organization: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Telephone/Fax: _____
4. E-Mail: _____
5. Position: _____

Part One: About AFSR and its program

1. What is AFSR's overall organizational goal?
2. In what kind of interventions that AFSR involved in its target areas, why and since when?

Part Two: About social accountability project

1. What are the objectives of social accountability project?
2. What were the strategies/approaches and activities used in the project?
3. Did the project reach its objectives/goal? Is yes, what are the indicators? If no, why it did not achieve the goal?
4. What was the role of AFSR & other stakeholders?
5. What are the main strength as well as limitation of the project?
6. What lessons did AFSR learnt from this project?
7. What are the contributions of social accountability project in promoting active community participation?
8. What change/impact does social accountability brings in the lives of the communities?

Part Three: About community participation and empowerment

1. What were the mechanisms used to sensitize the community about the project?
2. Did community come face to face and communicate with the project/program personnel?
If yes, how?
3. What was the responsibility of the community in the social accountability project?
4. What were the actions of social accountability project that leads to empowerment of members of the community?
5. What community empowerment results were achieved by the social accountability project?

Probe: - voicing for demand, asset identification, etc

6. Did social accountability project assist the community members to realize their capacity, power and resources? If yes, how?

Questionnaire B**Informed Consent****Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide for the Assessment of the Contribution of
Social Accountability Project towards Development****(For School Principal and PTA Leader)**

Good morning. My name is Mekdes Shibu. I am studying the contribution of social accountability project towards for community development. The general objective of the study is to assess the contribution of social accountability project in the study Woreda.

As part of the assessment, I am going to talk to the concerned bodies, including Executive Director of AFSR, School Principal and PTA Leader. I would use the information I generate to full fill the requirement of the MSW degree and to show AFSR its efforts in addressing problems of the community. In addition to this, results of the assessment could be used by other social development actors too to mainstream social accountability project in their organization and facilitate community development that relies on own assets/resources, strength and potentials. The information I collect will not identify you in any way, all information you provide will be kept confidential and there will be no negative consequences for your participation in this study and I request your consent for your willingness.

Thank You in advance for agreeing to be part of this study.

General

1. Name of the School : _____
2. Address: _____
3. Telephone/Fax: _____
4. E-Mail: _____
5. Year of establishment: _____

Part One: About Social Accountability Project

1. What do you know about AFSR?
2. What were the objectives of social accountability project?
3. How do members of target community responded to the social accountability project?
4. Did the project have any contribution for the community? If yes, what? And do the communities recognize it?
5. Did the project facilitate for the community to realize their own strength? If yes, what are the strengths?
6. What was the role of the school/PTA and how did it involved in the implementation process of the social accountability project?
7. What are the main strength as well as limitation of the project?
8. What lessons are learnt from this project?

Part Two: About community participation and empowerment

1. Did social accountability project contribute for active citizen involvement in the development process?
2. How do you perceived the effectiveness of social accountability tools and approach?
Probe:- to bring change
3. What is the extent of community participation in the social accountability project?
4. Did the project encourage community participation as well as empowerment? If yes, how? And if no, why?
5. Does the community gain knowledge from the social accountability project? If yes, what? If no, why not?
6. Do the communities currently use the social accountability tools after phasing out of the project?
7. What are the success/strengths as well as limitation of the project from your perspective?
8. What are the lessons learnt from AFSR's social accountability project that other implementation agency as well as the community can use in their development endeavors?

Informed Consent**Focus Group Discussion Guide for the Assessment of the Contribution of Social
Accountability Project towards Development****(For Parents/Community Members, Teachers and Students)**

Date of FGD _____

Venue _____

Age range of participants' _____

Sex of participants' _____

Time FGD started _____

Time FGD ended _____

My name is Mekdes Shibru. And I am gathering information on the contribution of social accountability project towards promoting participation, empowerment and community based development. The objective of the assessment is to review the project towards the above mentioned issued and assess the change brought due to the intervention. I would use the information I generate to full fill the requirement of the MSW degree and to show AFSR's effort in addressing problems of the community. In addition to this, results of the assessment could be used by other social development actors too to mainstream social accountability project in their

organization to facilitate community developments that relies on own assets/resources, strength and potentials. The information I collect will not identify you in any way and there will be no problems for associated with your participation in this study.

1. What do you know about AFSR and its social accountability project?
2. For how long that the social accountability project implemented in your school/community?
3. Is the project allow community members to identify its resources and use it to solve own problems?
4. What are the benefits that the school gets from the social accountability project?

Probe:

- At individual level, collectively
 - Economic, social
 - In terms of voicing out problems, making decisions, etc
5. Do you think that social accountability project is the best alternative to look inside and solve own challenges? If yes, how?
 6. What was the role of AFSR, the school, teachers, PTAs and students during the implementation of the social accountability project?
 7. What are the strengths, limitation and lessons learnt from the project?
 8. Are there any other comments that anyone of you would like to make about the social accountability project relevance and AFSR development endeavor in general?

ሰራሰን መቻል ድርጅት (ራ.መ.ድ) ዋና ዳይሬክተር የተዘጋጀ ቃለ-መጠይቅ

ክፍል አንድ - ስለ ሰራሰን መቻል ድርጅት (ራ.መ.ድ) እና ፕሮግራሞቹ

1. ሰራሰን መቻል ድርጅት መቼ ነው የተመሰረተው? እንዲሁም ጠቅላላ ያለ ድርጅታዊ አላማው/ድርጅቱ የተመሰረተበት ዋና አላማ ምንድን ነው?
2. ራ.መ.ድ ምን አይነት ልማታዊ ስራዎችን እየሰራ ይገኛል? ለምን በነዚህ ስራዎች ላይ ተሰማራ? ከመቼ ጀምሮ ነው እነዚህን ስራዎች መስራት የጀመረው?

ክፍል ሁለት - ስለ ማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት

1. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት አላማዎች ምንድን ናቸው?
2. በፕሮጀክቱ ውስጥ የነበሩ የትግበራ ዘዴዎች/ስትራቴጂዎች እና ስራዎች/ተግባራት ምን ምን ነበሩ?
3. ፕሮጀክቱ ግቡን/አላማውን መቷል? መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ፤ አላማውን ለመምታቱ፤ የሚያመላክቱ ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው? መልሱ አልመታም ከሆነ፤ ለምንድን ነው ግቡን ሊመታ ያልቻለው?
4. በፕሮጀክቱ ውስጥ የራ.መ.ድ እንዲሁም የሌሎች ባለ ድርሻ አካላት (ህብረተሰቡ፣ክፍለ-ከተማው፣ትምህርት ቤት.....) ተግባር/ሀላፊነት ምን ነበር?
5. የፕሮጀክቱ ዋና ዋና ጠንካራ/አዎንታዊ ጎኖች እንዲሁም ተግዳሮቶቹ ምንድን ነበሩ?
6. ከዚህ ፕሮጀክት ራ.መ.ድ ያገኘው ትምህርት/ተሞክሮ/አውቀት ምንድን ነው?
7. ማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት የነቃ የማህበረሰብ ተሳትፎን ከማስረጃ እንዲሁም ከማዳበር አንጻር የነበረው አስተዋፅኦ ምንድን ነው?
8. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት በህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ያመጣው ተጨባጭ ለውጥ ምንድን ነው?

ክፍል ሶስት - ስለ ማህበረሰብ ተሳትፎ እና አቅም ግንባታ

1. ድርጅቱ ፕሮጀክቱን ለህብረተሰቡ ለማስተዋወቅ ይጠቀምባቸው የነበሩት ዘዴዎች ምንድን ነበሩ?
2. የህብረተሰቡ አባላት/ፕሮጀክቱ የተተገበረበት አካባቢ ነዋሪዎች ከፕሮጀክቱ ሰራተኞች ጋር ግልፅ በሆነ መልኩ የሚፈልጉት ነገሮች ላይ (ችግሮቻቸው፣ መደረግ ስላለበት ሁኔታ፣.....) ውይይት ያደርጉ ነበር? መልሶ አዎ ከሆነ እንዴት ነበር ውይይቱን የሚያደርጉት?
3. በማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ውስጥ የህብረተሰቡ ሀላፊነት ምንድን ነበር?
4. በማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ውስጥ የነበሩ ተግባራት፣ የማህበረሰቡን አቅም የገነቡ/ያጎለበቱት፣ የራስን እሴት ወደ ማወቅ ያስኬዱት ተግባሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
5. በማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት፣ ምን አይነት የአቅም ግንባታ ውጤቶች ናቸው የተገኙት/ህብረተሰቡን እራሱን ከማስቻል አንጻር የተገኙ ውጤቶች ምንድን ናቸው? (ያላቸውን እሴቶች ከማወቅ አንጻር፣ የሚያስፈልጋቸውን ነገር ከመጠየቅ አንጻር)
6. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ህብረተሰቡ ያለውን እምቅ ችሎታ፣ ሀይል እና እሴት/ሀብት እንዲያውቅ አግዞታል? መልሶ አዎ ከሆነ እንዴት?

ይህን መጠይቅ ለመሙላት ስለተባበሩኝ እና ጊዜዎትን ስለሰጡኝ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ!!!

ለትምህርት ቤት ዳይሬክተር እና የወላጅ ኮሚቴ አመራር የተዘጋጀ ቃለ-መጠይቅ

ክፍል አንድ - ስለ ማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት

1. ስለ ራ.መ.ድ የሚያውቁትን ነገር ቢገልፁልን?
2. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት አላማዎች ምንድን ነበሩ?
3. የማህበረሰቡ አባላት ለማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት የነበራቸው ግብረ መልስ ምንድን ነው?
4. ፕሮጀክቱ ለማህበረሰቡ ያበረከተው አስተዋፅኦ አለ? መልሶ አዎ ከሆነ ምንድን ነው? ማህበረሰቡ በፕሮጀክቱ ምክንያት የተገኘውን አስተዋፅኦ ተገንዝቦታል?
5. ፕሮጀክቱ ህብረተሰቡን አዎንታዊ/ጠንካራ ጎኑን እንዲያውቅ አግዞታል? መልሶ አዎ ከሆነ ህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ያሉ አዎንታዊ ጎኖች በፕሮጀክቱ መተግበር ምክንያት ጠርተው የወጡ ምንድን ናቸው?
6. ትምህርት ቤቱ እንዲሁም የወላጅ ኮሚቴው በፕሮጀክት ትግበራው ውስጥ የነበረው ድርሻ/ሀላፊነት ምንድን ነበር?
7. የፕሮጀክቱ ዋና ዋና ጠንካራ ጎኖች እንዲሁም ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ነበሩ?
8. ከዚህ ፕሮጀክት የተገኘው እና ለወደፊቱ ሊጠቅም የሚችል ጠቅላል ያለ ትምህርት/ተሞክሮ ምንድን ነው?

ክፍል ሁለት - ስለማህበረሰብ ተሳትፎ እና አቅም ግንባታ

1. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ህብረተሰቡን በልማት ሂደት ውስጥ በንቃት እንዲሳተፍ አስተዋፅኦ አድርጓል?

2. በማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ውስጥ ያሉ የትግበራ ዘዴዎች/ስልጠናዎች/መሳሪያዎች ብቃት እንዴት ያዩታል? ማህበረሰቡን ከማሳተፍ፣ ለውጥ ከማምጣት፣ የራስን ችሎታ፣ እሴት/ሀብት ከማወቅ አንፃር?
3. በፕሮጀክቱ ውስጥ የህብረተሰቡ ተሳትፎ ደረጃ እስከ ምን ድረስ ነበር?
4. ፕሮጀክቱ የህብረተሰቡን ተሳትፎ እና አቅም ግንባታ (በራስ የመወሰንን/የራሱን ብቃት እንዲያውቅ) አበረታቷል? መልሶ አዎ ከሆነ እንዴት? አይ ከሆነ ደግሞ ለምን?
5. ህብረተሰቡ ከማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ያገኘው እውቀት/ክህሎት አለ? ካለ ምንድን ነው? ካላገኘስ ለምንድን ነው ያላገኘው?
6. ፕሮጀክቱ ከተጠናቀቀ በኋላ፣ ህብረተሰቡ ፕሮጀክቱ ውስጥ የነበሩትን ዘዴዎች/መሳሪያዎች የራሱ አድርጎ አሁን እየተጠቀመበት ይገኛል?
7. በእርሶ እይታ የፕሮጀክቱ ጠንካራ ጎን/ በጎ ተሞክሮዎች እንዲሁም ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው?
8. ከማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት የተገኙ ትምህርቶች ሌላው የልማት አካል እና ህብረተሰቡ በልማት ሂደት ውስጥ ሊጠቀሙበት የሚችሉት ተሞክሮዎች/አመለካከቶች ምንድን ናቸው?

ይህን መጠይቅ ለመሙላት ስለተባበሩኝ እና ጊዜዎትን ስለሰጡኝ ከልብ አመሰግናሁ!!!

ሰቡድን ውይይት ተሳታፊዎች የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ

(ለህብረተሰብ/ወላጆች፣ አስተማሪዎች እና ተማሪዎች)

1. ስለ ራ.መ.ድ እንዲሁም ስለ ማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክቱ የምታውቁትን ነገሮች ዘርዘር አድርጋችሁ ብትገልጹልኝ?
2. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት በትምህርት ቤት ውስጥ/በህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ነው የተተገበረው?
3. ፕሮጀክቱ የህብረተሰቡን አባላት ያላቸውን እሴት/ሀብት እንዲያውቁ፣ እንዲለዩ እንዲሁም ለራሳቸው ችግር መፍቻ አድርገው እንዲጠቀሙበት አግኝቷል?
4. ትምህርት ቤቱ/ማህበረሰቡ ከማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ያገኘው ጥቅም ምንድን ነው? በግለሰብ፣ በማህበረሰብ እንዲሁም በቡድን ደረጃ.....፣
ማህበራዊ፣ኢኮኖሚያዊ፣ፖለቲካዊ (ውሳኔ መስጠት፣ ችግርን መናገር፣ መፍትሄውንም ማስቀመጥ.....)
5. የማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ውስጥን ለማየት እና የራስን ችግር በራስ ከመፍታት አንጻር ጥሩ አማራጭ ይመስላችኋል? ከሆነስ እንዴት?
6. በማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት ትግበራ ውስጥ የትምህርት ቤቱ፣ የአስተማሪዎች፣ የወላጆች እንዲሁም የተማሪዎች ድርሻ/ሀላፊነት ምንድን ነበር?
7. ፕሮጀክቱ ምን ጠንካራ ጎኖች እንዲሁም ተግዳሮቶች ነበሩት? ከፕሮጀክቱስ የተገኘው ትምህርት ምንድን ነው?
8. ስለ ማህበራዊ ተጠያቂነት ፕሮጀክት እንዲሁም ስለ ራ.መ.ድ የልማት እንቅስቃሴ ጠቅለል ያለ ማንኛውንም አስተያየት ካለ ብትነግሩኝሁ?

ይህን መጠይቅ ለመሙላት አብራችሁኝ ስለሆናችሁና ጊዜያችሁን ስለሰጣችሁኝ ክልብ አመሰግናሁ!!

Declaration

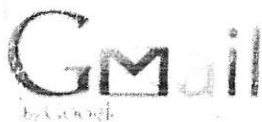
I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, has never been presented in this or any other university, and that all resources and materials used herein, have been duly acknowledge.

Name: Mekdes Shibus

Signature: _____

Place: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Date of submission: _____



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Thesis approval

1 message

Wassie Kebede <wassiek7@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 9, 2014 at 1:12 AM

To: mengistu_legesse <mengistu_legesse@yahoo.com>

Cc: Mekdes Shibru Teklegiorgis <mekdiwube@gmail.com>

Dr. Mengistu Legesse,
Head, School of Social Work

Dear. Dr. Mengistu,

This is to inform you that I have approved Mekdes Shibiru's Thesis for review and defense as her adviser. Would you please consider this email communication as my official approval of the thesis for defense?

With regards,

Wassie Kebede
Post Doctoral Fellow
North-West University
South Africa