

FINAL EVALUATION
OF
ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAN CHURCH MEKANE YESUS
ARMACHIHO FOOD SECURITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
/2008-2010G.C./

**Conducted by- stakeholder government organization and the
project office**

**Coordinated & prepared by - North Gondar Zone Department
of Finance and Economic development/ External resource
mobilization & management process/**

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Executive summary

The evaluation report describes the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane yesus Development and social service commission Armachiho Food Security Development Project EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP from 2008-2010. The project had been operational at three specific kebeles,kerker Balegziabher and Ambezo under Lay Armachiho and Sabiya/Sayina through Gondar town administration. It focused on Water shade dev't approach comprising of four major components. Agriculture, Natural resource conservation and management, Income generating schemes, Water Sanitation and Hygiene and Capacity Building, Gender, HIV/AIDS & Reproductive Health as a cross-cutting issue.

The final evaluation had been carried out by gathering primary data sources through physical observation, interviews and reflections of the stake holders and secondary data sources were obtained from quarter , annual and mid term evaluation reports. The evaluation team comprises of stake holders, concerned Government line ministries of the zonal and wereda offices, EECMY/DASSC and NCA/Eth.

As per the overall assessments made, though the numbers of beneficiaries were few in number, relatively promising results had been observed and achieved in all planned components. However, under this particular project evaluation, we have observed that, it highly requires the initiation and collaboration of all concerned body for the overall achievements of the development activities in reference to the stated lessons and recommendations.

At a time of final evaluation, technically recommended mechanisms in relation to mobilization and resource utilization had been thoroughly cross checked and encouraged. The project utilized about 3,635,268 Eth.birr for both administrative and direct cost as per the duly signed document.

During the implementation process, the project to some extent has tried to involve all stakeholders in their relevant tasks. Like wise, we have cross-checked the smooth relationship, cooperative and collaborative spirit among all development partners at each and every steps of implementation process.

Notably, in this evaluation document we have tried to mention the findings in detail with regard to the overall fiscal and financial achievements and the way how we go through the evaluation processes.

Introduction/back ground

More than 55 ongoing NGO projects and programs are found being operational in the Amhara National Regional state specifically in North Gondar Zone. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane yesus Development and Social Service Commission Armachiho food security development project EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP is among those that contribute its own part consistently with the national development policy of the country. It targets in three rural kebeles of Lay Armachiho and Gondar town administration with a plan to benefit about 4128 households within the three years project life.

Planned activities were implemented in close contact and transparency with all partners from zonal to wereda level. Basically, in the project life span, the core strategies for the overall implementation were, focusing on integrated water shade development approach.

In order to easily transfer new technologies like high land fruit production, the project select and recruit the model farmers together with the concerned line offices. While for activities like IGA, the basic criteria followed were poorest of the poor specially focusing on vulnerable women headed house hold. Most importantly, in order to avoid inappropriate ways of selection, local administrators, development agents and woreda experts were fully involved and finally were examined by members of community as a whole during holy days; then passes to the wereda concerned office for legal confirmation and finalized through service cooperative for smooth implementation taking in to account the case of revolving fund.

In this project evaluation we found some best practices, in the contrary failures were mentioned and taken as a lesson that helps to correct and /scale up/ by the next project period. For instance issues like proper monitoring systems of beneficiaries so as to create additional model farmers with better income and make a difference. On the other side, failures observed on some farmers or watersheds should be given special attention for the mismanaged individual high land fruit sites. Others like, access in creating market channels and /or organizing through cooperatives for the current high land fruit producers, following the regional revolving fund strategies were among the major issues raised and strongly emphasized ones to be improved for the coming project period.

EECMY-DASSC began its operation since 1993 G.C. at different kebeles of Armachiho woreda. The areas that the projects intervene were selected by identifying and prioritizing the core problems following conventional techniques of planning; multidisciplinary teams from regional to zonal level and the larger population.

During the past phase, the project had been implementing its activities at two kebeles of Lay Armachiho namely kerker Bale-egzeabhair, Chira Ambezo and Sabiya Sayina under the Gondar town administration.

Evaluation team members

For this specific project evaluation concerned zonal and government sectors were invited on behalf of their regional bureaus while, Woreda government offices represents their offices and other stakeholders respectively.

1. Teklhaimanot Medihin -----project manager
2. Gutema Gezimu ----- NCA/Eh. Office
3. Mr. Dirk Hillerkus -----EECMY/DASSC central office
4. Birihanu Tamalew -----Zonal administrative office head
5. Kassahun Ekubeazgie-----head of N/Gondar Zone dep't of fina. &Eco.dev't
6. Tekeba Tebabal -----head of N/Gondar Zone agricultural dev't depa't.

7. Getasew Atinafu----- Zonal dep't of fina. & Eco.dev't/NGO coordinator.
8. Haile Abireha -----From Zonal health office
9. Bekure Melese -----Zonal agri. Dev't natural resource process owner
10. Yayehiyirad Degif -Zonal agri. Dev't horticultural expert
11. Mullie Alemiye-----From Zonal agri. Deve't dep't.
12. Nega Amibaw -----Gondar town fina. & eco.dev't office.
13. Bekel Asires-----head of Gondar town Agr. Dev't office.
14. Chalachew Ashagre Gondar town agri. Office
15. Adigo Retta ----L/Armachiho Woreda women affair office
16. Kassahun Ashagrie L/Armachiho Woreda HAPCO head
17. Tadila Abuhay L/Armachiho water resource dev't
18. Endawok Woriku----L/Armachiho fina. & Eco. Dev't vice head.
19. Muhamed Nuruhusen Zonal women affair dep't expert
20. Sr. Zebebework Nigatu-----Gondar town health office.
21. Tewodiros Enkuanhone---head of L/armachiho fina. &eco.dev't office
22. Atakilt Aderaw ----L/ Armachiho fina.& eco. Dev't office
23. Osiman Ayenew ----head of L/ Armachiho water resource dev't office
24. Asefa Edimealem ----L/ Armachiho Agr. Dev't office
25. Sr. Worknesh Menigstu-----head of L/ Armachiho health office
26. Lemma Tazebachew-----EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP Agri.& NRM expert
27. Zelalem Bereket-----EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP WASH expert
28. Atikilt Tesifahun -----EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP NRM community facilitator
29. Wagnaw Aweke-----Ambezo kebele beneficiary
30. Manitegibosh Teshager Ambezo kebele- beneficiary
31. Mogess Asemaraw Ambezo kebele beneficiary
32. Endeshaw Yigizaw Ambezo kebele beneficiary
33. Eyayu Ali ----- Sayina sabia ---beneficiary
34. Dessie Alemayehu beneficiary
35. Kassu Mekuaninitie

Project profile

NAME OF ORGANIZATION -/ EECMY/ DASSC Ethiopian Evangelical church Mekane Yesus Developmen & social service commission.

DONOR/DEVELOPMENT PARTNER- NCA/Norwegian Church Aid/Ethiopia office

PROJECT TITLE - Armachiho Food Security Development Project.

PROJECT LOCATION -Lay armachiho woreda and Gondar town.

PROJECT DURATION- Jan1, 2008 to Dec31, 2010

Total project BUDGET- 3,227,217 ETB

NUMBER OF BENEFICIERIES- 4,128 household or 20640 Community members.

SIGNATORIES /partners/- RFSCDPO, BOARD, BOH, BOWRD, EECMY/DASSC and NCA/E.

Evaluation Methodologies

During the evaluation two data sources were employed. Interview, discussion with stakeholders and beneficiaries as a primary data source. The reviewed and signed project document plan, three years physical and financial report and mid term evaluation reports were used as secondary data.

With regard to physical observations made, activities were randomly selected and field visit were carried out respectively.

Finally, the evaluation team forwarded all the relevant points in reference to the physical and financial reports and physical observations.

Development policy, strategy alignment and legality of the organization

Initially, the project plan was designed with the alignment of national development policy. Which directly targets as the main thematic area called food security developments of the area. Its resource allocation had been set based on the government direction of NGO projects i.e. budgeted 30% for administrative cost and 70% for program cost.

It's all steps are going on the basis of the national development strategy guided rules.

- ✓ **Legality:** previously the organization had got NGO license / certificate/ by the ministry of justices and an operation agreement from DPPC which was effective for every specific project periods. However, recently after the reorganization of charity organization & association agency on the basis of the new legislation re-registered on time.

Results /major performance/

1. Highland fruit adaptation

Different varieties of highland fruits were introduced and began to disseminate by the previous project phase. However, by preparing seedling from its nursery site and on individual farm lands more farmers which account about 112 households are benefited in this project period. Different varieties of apple /high land fruits/ are available in its project area.

Initially those different varieties of seedlings came from **Spain** in high price with the cost of exchange rate incurred from foreign currency. While to minimize these disadvantages, recently the project locally prepares the seedlings by capacitating technical personnel and model beneficiary farmers through training and experience sharing. Moreover, beneficiary farmers have also earned additional income from seedling sale.

In this duration, the project strengthened the former phase beneficiaries beside the new entrants and enabled to offer them more benefit so as to ensure the sustainability of project activities and to create sense of ownership. Because of this currently they harvest twice a year and averagely have got from 2000 birr to 5000 birr per one harvesting time.

2. Natural resource conservation

This component is one of the major parts of the project which also done in the project areas water shades. There preferred and utilized jointly or selectively among the different soil & water conservation methods/physical and biological/.

Thus, at Kerker balegziabher Kebele Fahina water shade. activities like loose stone check dam 1048m³, Gabion check dam 272m³, cutoff drain 3.02km, planting multipurpose trees and grasses 2.3km, have been carried out and treated using gabion and loose stone check dam respectively. The project tries to follow the integrated water shade dev't approach as implementing strategy for all the activities. Especially, in this component communities were participating in the process. They supplied local material for each specific activities while the project provides only industrial materials /gabion, cement, seedlings etc/. The selected strategy helps them to implement and perform in good manner multi activities within a given water shade and households. During the implementation some cost is covered by the community.

3. Income generating activity- by its nature this part of the project emphasized on or stands to benefit along with enhancing the livelihood of those economically poor and not accessed to job opportunity groups of the target areas community.

194 women were offered and got a chance to be accessed on loan basis in small animal production such as sheep, goat and bee /apiculture/.

1000 birr which was planned to purchase 3 female and 1 male sheep/goats on the basis of recommended ratio of male to female sheep/goat and for 18 modern bee hives on loan basis whereas 54 transitional bee hives have been prepared by the beneficiaries relatively with less interest rate and one year loan repayment relief period for individual beneficiary. Before the provision of loan target groups were selected with the participation of kebele administrators, development agents, woreda experts as well verified by the community.

4. WATSAN

The project had well experience on this specific component from its previous phases. Thus, there has been strong community participation, procedural handovering systems and takeovering for a wise use of water points by the community and in creating sense of belongingness. For these reasons it would ensure its sustainability.

Within this project life water points like; which are 3 springs and 4 hand dug well were constructed.

In this component related activities such as personal and environmental hygiene has been carried out. Based on the water shade management approach 92 households had prepared private dry pit latrine are in use. In addition, target groups exercised improved home managements.

5. HIV/AIDS prevention & control, Gender development and capacity building

The project has mainstreamed these issues. However, it tries to implement in a narrow scope.

It supports continuously to strengthen 6 community conversation groups. Here the project provides inputs through woreda HAPCO offices which has been carried out in a form of tea/coffee ceremony as per the regional approach. Concerning the gender disparity the project tries to engage women in some activities.

✓ Capacity building

It is understood that capacity building is key to implement any activities. In especial emphasis capacitating beneficiaries, CBOs is crucial for the sustainability of projects.

Interestingly, this project has made capacity building accordingly in each project components. It performed through training and experience sharing within and out of the project areas.

1248 framers, 70 government offices, 25 project staffs(at different periods) took trainings on various disciplines including experience sharing programmes.

As beneficiaries said, the training titles are related with areas of its significance and had carried out two or three times according to the activity. As a result, some activities are going in a resultant situation.

However, mostly government staffs had left the area after they are being trained on various disciplines. Hence, to give consistent support for beneficiaries they were enforced to train the newly appointed expert.

I. Community participation

In some extent communities especially assumed as direct beneficiary within the water shades/the project areas. They had participated in a certain activities especially in WATSAN & soil & water conservation and fully involved in IGS and HIV/AIDS prevention and control conversation.

During the selection process of project beneficiaries within the water shades/areas the whole community members and government structures had vital a role. In this case their emphasis was not only on the vulnerable groups of the society. Rather beneficiaries or target groups selected in accordance with the nature of placed project components.

This means for technology adaptation and dissemination motivated and early adopters farmers were selected for the purpose of easily adaptation and demonstration, while for others like IGS the poorest of the poor were getting the priority and as per the set objectives of the project. Here, stakeholder's signatory and non signatory concerned government structure staff members such as, development agents, local administrators, and other likes were fully participated.

II. Communication and development partnership

From the very nature of the signed agreement of the project and the organizational structure of the project office; particularly signatory government offices had plaid vital role in the project implementation processes. That allocated and provided the needy resources as well as it monitored the ongoing processes.

The project office had timely sent annual plan quarterly progress reports and other relevant information to all concerned sectors from regional to wereda level.

III. Resource mobilization & uses

Resources such as financial & material which had been promised from donors were flown timely to the project area through the project office. Even though, almost of it utilized in accordance with the signed agreement. The planned amount were about 3,227,217birr, whereas 3,635,268 birr is utilized. The excess amount of expenditure comes from exchange rate earning that helps to compensate inflation cost. For further information we have attached as annex its three years financial report which is prepared and submitted by the project.

IV. Strength

The mechanism that the project had been employing helped to select the intervention area or for gap identification so as to directly touch the overall project objective by the end of the day. Even if the number of beneficiaries are few, most of them were effectively benefited. We have seen as an example some beneficiary's improvements or advantages. According to the beneficiaries saying, they started earning income from highland fruit on average from 2000-5000 birr per one harvesting period (they harvest twice per annum). On the other hand those benefited from IGA have got on average up to 26kg honey per hive, and also others earn from sheep and goat which helps for their livelihood progress.

Good target group identification strategy. Their beneficiary focuses are not as others it depends on the nature of project component they select early adopters for technology adaptation & poorest of the poor for income generating schemes.

They use good implementation strategy i.e. they try to follow integrated water shade approach. It was useful to engage the target groups in multiple activities and in an integrated way.

The community had developed sense of ownership more on water points. Which held by the community and used in a wise manner. Here, we can understand this had been achieved as a result of the concern of the project and the wereda water office on the significance of community participation.

VII. Limitations

Less government offices attention in planning, scaling up of best experiences as well as lack of ownership in some activities that may contribute for losing sustainability.

Low level of monitoring and evaluation had been observed and also less provision of extension service from the project & concerned government sectors sides.

Which in turn results in some activities past phase beneficiary farmers within and out of the catchment areas didn't have similar experience and advantages from highland fruit /apple production and other IGA etc). Even some of the beneficiaries who were involved on Income generating activities were not fully aware of on the revolving loan they offered.

Gaps had been assessed on identifying and selecting the suitable fruit varieties on different altitude (due to this reason, some farm lands or plants in a given area of plantation fruitless trees were observed)

Observable Changes

Beneficiaries targeted for highland fruit and IGS are able to improve their livelihood. Those who are benefited well began to be able to cover the full and related expenses of their children like school fee. There is also an improvement to access on primary needs i.e. clothing, food etc.

Under natural resource or soil and water conservation large gullies that had been difficult to people and animals movement within and across the water shade were treated. As of the intended impact of the treated gullies households begin to produce vegetables through irrigation.

We have also observed the unintended impact as serving to pass from one place to the other. In the project areas the demand on highland fruit, shows the growth of people's awareness on the advantages of seedlings. Moreover, the preparation of seedling on project level as well as in individual level would have its own contribution for being cost effective and ecological advantages/ comfort ability to easily adaptation.

Beneficiary's expression

Here we tried to state some of the beneficiary's direct translations about the project and the benefits they owned.

1. One beneficiary former lived in kerker Balezabher his name is Ato Kasso Mekouanent. Specifically who dwells at Fana water shade, as he said, I am benefited from highland fruit plants/apple, peach/ and from bee keeping (apiculture) too. He earns about 2500 birr per annum from small farm land/backyard/. This is from its first harvesting period. As he compared this advantage from the previous on similar plot of land, it is an additional source of income for him. Apple plants do not have negative effect with most backyard vegetations that means he can intercropped in between free land except potato. He also expressed as he had been offered relevant trainings.
2. In the same kebele but in other water shade we visit and talk with w/o Zememu Abera. She benefited on IGS that is by sheep rearing. As she said, I came to this project as a beneficiary by the selection criteria that the local or kebele administrator and development agents used. The selection criteria they were used is wealth ranking to give priority for poor households. She has got training on this particular activity (i.e on sheep rearing and management). Thus, one year ago she has taken 1000 birr which is enough to purchase two female & one male sheep by on the credit base.

Currently as we have seen and she said she has 12 sheep. Moreover, she starts to teach her children with full education materials and other necessities by selling sheep.

3. Ato Dessie Alemayhu, he is one of the model farmers to adopt technologies. He is skilled by being offered various trainings by this project in addition to the secular extension package. He is the one benefited starting from the previous phase. But as he said in this specific project phase he is well aware and improved by having technical support and additional refreshment training from this project. He earns 10,500birr per one harvesting period or 18,000 birr per year from 17 apple trees planted on his backyard. As we observed he is enabled to prepare highland seedlings/multiply root stock and propagating/ in his plot of land and in the future he will get additional income from sale of seedling.

Lessons learned

Highland fruit have produced in a good manner but producers have desired extensive market linkage. So that, to benefit them highly and from the basis of future production growth, it gives us an assignment to form market chain either by establishing cooperative or by using other better alternative.

Some best results are going as it exists. But we got the lesson that as they would have to be expanded within and out of the project area. In most cases this part would have been undertaken by relevant government sectors.

As we have understood more emphasis on relevant capacity building on beneficiaries enables them to be well skilled i.e. some farmer's experience of seedling propagation which helps as additional source of income and to fill the additional demand gap. Hence, we should take train farmers on their farm with secular monitoring as a strategy that leads to sustainability.

Problems encountered

In this project life i.e within three years there was some problems faced some are solved and others are still needs emphasis from the government, project management and the beneficiary's sides. Some of them are:-

High partner government sectors experts' turnover. Its disadvantages are, creates information gap for newly comers, in availability of documents concerning the project, incurring high cost to train when new personnel are hired to make them familiar with the project etc.

Inaccessibility of farm tools, which helps for proper management and performance like pruning sheer and budding knife.

Lack of sense of ownership on some activities to maintain, expand, and sustain.

Cost rise on both factory products and labor cost.

High increment of modern heave price due to this reason they are unable to take loan. Due to this reason, the project is urged to revise and re-allocated the budget to other IGS (especially for sheep purchasing).

Recommendations

AS integrated water shade dev't approach is the best and recommended way. The project should further improve and tries to apply the conceptual thoughts and use strongly for further results.

Both stakeholder government sectors and the project office should strengthen their monitoring system. Thus, it helps to perform more and to pull the lagged beneficiaries.

Attentively maintain the constructed natural resource conservation structure. As much as possible agriculture offices should take over those long life structures. Strengthen and improving gully plantations on gullies.

Best performed components even if, they are from the previous phases have to scale up (extend) by relevant government sectors across the target localities so does by the project also to more individuals within the project Kebles.

The credit system should be formalized or aligned with the government loan procedure. Moreover, income collected from seeding sale should be set out of the project bank account and placed in consultancy with the concerned government office.

Enhance community's sense of ownership as much as possible for all project components in order to fulfill this task, high consideration should be given on capacity building and participation of all stakeholders.

Conclusion

We used the participatory evaluation approach that means by involving major stakeholders and project staff members. From every steps of the evaluation everybody tries to find and cleared on necessary issues. As a result the participants had forward recommendations mostly on things to be improved and identified failurities and good results to take it as a lesson and improve it.

Finally, from the demand of different agents of the target woredas and the beneficiaries the project extension is unquestionable. Thus if it has a possibility to extend by the next phase it recommended to give special emphasis to strengthen the started activities and focus on community capacity building to secure the project's sustainability.

