

EECMY-DASSC/WBS-BO



Raayituu Community Development Project (2011-2013)

(Raayituu District)

Mid-term Evaluation

Final Report

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Raayituu

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Acronyms

CBT	Capacity Building Training
DASSC	Development and Social Service Commission
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EECMY-IBS	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus-Ilubabor Bethel Synod
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
NFAE	Non-formal Adult Education
NLM	Norwegian Lutheran Mission
PCDP	Pastoral Community Development Project
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation
RCDP	Raayituu Community Development Project
REFLECT	Regenerated Frererian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques

1. Executive Summary

The current phase (2011-2013) of the Raayituu Community Development Project (RCDP) has been planned and implemented in 8 ganda¹s (5 new and 3 old intervention areas) of Raayituu district in Baalee zone of Oromia national regional state. Water development, education, and gender and development are the project's major components. In its old intervention gandas, this phase of the project makes one-time investments or slight follow-up supports.

This third phase RCDP mid-term evaluation was conducted in early January 2013. However, the evaluation exercise covers only the first half of the 3 year project period, that is, fiscal year 2011 and the first half of fiscal year 2012. The evaluation's full-time team was composed of representatives from EECMY/DASSC-WBS, key RCDP staff, 2 community representatives (a male and a female), 4 most relevant government offices, and the consultant.

Both primary and secondary data were collected during the evaluation process. Qualitative participatory evaluation methods were used for primary data collection. Primary data were collected from groups of the target community (men, women, and youth), government experts of adequate participation in the project's implementation, project staff, and physical observations. Three gandas of qualitatively adequate representation to the project area were visited for community discussions and observations. The selected gandas were Dhaddacha Ballaa and Jaarraa Torbii from the newly incepted in area, and Hara Adii from old target areas. Secondary data pertaining to the project were also reviewed.

The evaluation has come up with the following general findings:

- All project components were relevant to the area's development needs and potentials on one hand, and to the project's objectives on the other hand, with the exception of one capacity building training to government staff.
- The majority of project activities were timely implemented as per plan, with the exception of some constructional activities that experienced delays as a result of unusual rise in the cost of construction inputs, and also due to rainfall shortages.
- The impacts and/or impact prospects of such components as non formal education (particularly the work on reflect groups) and water development were found to be uniquely outshining. On the other hand, the gender and development component has been given too little attention by design.
- The project holder is widely respected and praised by both community and government partners, for having respectfully and closely working with its partners.
- The project has achieved remarkable levels of community participation at all stages of the project cycle, thereby achieving far more results than would normally be expected of the project's mere financial budget.

Below are the major short-term and long-term recommendations forwarded based on findings. These are:

- WBS and its partner NLM are advised to have continued moral obligation for more predictable and financially strong presence in the area, at least for 3 reasons: the district's development needs are very grave that even basic strategic needs like education are considered luxury

¹ *Ganda (Kebele in Amharic)* represents the lowest administrative structure in the hierarchy of the government's political administration.

needs; the RCDP is the only development initiative of tangible result in the district, as even some very popular and nationally launched development programs meant for remote areas like the district have little or no presence in the area; and, with this project, WBS and NLM are currently situated at a stage where they have better understood the problems, have designed and showed what preferred courses of action could address the problems, and have achieved some foundational or temporary results, but no partners or mechanisms to sustain, replicate, or lead similar efforts at their absence.

- Design and implement a program, not a project, approach for a stronger and more comprehensive intervention.
- Design and implement projects/activities that help publicize the area's complex needs to attract more international resources and partners.
- Conduct a baseline analysis of the actual scale and impacts of the problem, and offer it a project status for better strategic attention.
- Integrate washing basins to pond schemes, both as part of its pond maintenance and new pond construction efforts.
- Strengthen pond management committees for more strategic and impactful community mobilization and participation in the management of pond resources.
- Bring the district's government on board and help it adopt and implement the PHAST strategy, particularly in gandas not covered by the project.
- Make additional strategic investments that help improve school participation, particularly of female students, beyond primary level education. Options may include single-sex town-based shelters/housing for poor rural students that cannot afford the financial requirements of meeting town-based student living.
- Make strong and intentional efforts at ending single-sex non formal education classes and IGA groups.
- The project provides 1 and 2 goat and chicken, respectively, per target individual, as part of its IGA effort. Imagining the opportunity cost of a target individual investing its entire time keeping a single goat, any one could easily agree that the effort is just a disengagement from other more economically advantageous pursuits. This reminds the project of how much meaningful and rewarding it will be if the number of goats given per individual increases to at least four, to justify the time spent and the other economic advantages forgone by a target individual.
- The project is advised to follow through the relative academic competence of its former non formal education students in the current formal schools, and use related case studies for fund-raising.
- The project is advised to make its own independent effort of establishing and empowering community committees, instead of depending on local structures that are inherently gender insensitive.
- Considering the project area's hardship (harsh climate and location) on the one hand, and the job market on the other hand, the nature of staff salary and benefits currently paid by the project does not guarantee adequate staff motivation. Therefore, the project should rethink and implement better salary and benefit packages to its entire staff.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Background to the project

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is a national Church, which grew out of the works of the Lutheran missions and indigenous evangelists who preached the Gospel in Ethiopia beginning from the 1860s, thereby finally being formally established on January 21, 1959. It has since been increasingly participated in the country's socio-economic development, side by side with the spiritual sphere. The DASSC was eventually established to deal with its socio-economic development roles. The WBS DASSC is part of the national EECMY-DASSC system that intervenes in parts of south eastern Oromia.

As part of the national effort of contributing to the country's socio-economic development in general and improving the socio-economic life of the project area in particular, the EECMY/DASSC-WBS has been implementing a development project entitled Rayitu Community Development Project in Rayitu district of Bale zone. The project is currently in its third phase (2011-2013), directly targeting 8 gandas (5 new and 3 old intervention areas) with such major project activities as clean water supply, education, gender, and stakeholder capacity building. In the old intervention gandas, this phase of the project makes one-time investments (such as grinding mill purchase and supply) or slight follow-up supports (such as follow-up of cooperative societies).

2.2 Project goal and objectives

The project's major/development goal is to ensure the possibility of reducing the vulnerability of the target population and enhance their existing capacity in the effort of improving livelihood. The corresponding specific objectives are:

- to improve access to safe water for human and livestock consumption, and thereby increase coverage by 50%;
- to create opportunity of getting access to education for school age children and adults in the target PAs;
- to bring about behavioural change on WEGE; and
- To enhance capacity of government institutions, project and DASSC-WBS staff for better implementation of the project activities.

3. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

Evaluation objectives

The major objective of this mid-term evaluation was to assess the project's progress, covering such aspects of the project's implementation as planned versus implemented activities and their contributions to the set objectives, major challenges encountered and lessons learned, and to identify key opportunities and recommendations to improve the implementation for the remaining part of the project. To that end, the evaluation exercise focused on the following items, being framed by the evaluation's terms of reference:

- ✦ to assess that the activities are carried out with in their activity calendar, and the inputs are provided adequately and were to the required quality;
- ✦ to assess the extent to which financial resources are effectively and efficiently utilized;
- ✦ to assess the level of achievement of expected results and also look into available indications about project's impact on the livelihood of the target community;
- ✦ to assess the extent to which women empowerment and gender equality issues are effectively addressed by the project;
- ✦ to assess the extent to which the project's right holders and duty bearers (that is the community) have been empowered and engaged in its implementation and management;
- ✦ to assess the significance of community participation in the project activities where management and physical structures are seen;
- ✦ to assess the nature and level of cooperation established and maintained with relevant government offices, NGOs, and the community;
- ✦ to assess the extent to which the project has the appropriate organizational set up and staffing, and the capacity to efficiently plan and implement it;
- ✦ to examine existing and potential opportunities, challenges, and threats vis-a-vis the project's implementation;
- ✦ to assess the impact and sustainability of project outputs; and
- ✦ To identify and forward strategic recommendations that help sustain project outcomes.

Evaluation approach and methodology

A multi-stakeholder participatory approach was used for the evaluation exercise. Directed by ToR and associated technical proposal, the right-holding community, the WBS-DASSC, and pertinent government offices, and the donor were given the opportunity to take part in the exercise, although no donor representative was available. The evaluation exercise involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources. Basically relating to the ToR, the following methodological elements were used to gather the required data/ information. These are:

Desk review of relevant documents: Project proposal and plan documents, progress reports (including 2011 annual report and the first six monthly report of the out-going fiscal year), and audit reports were reviewed.

Participatory discussion and reflection: At the outset of the field work, an evaluation team composed of WBS-DASSC, RCDP, relevant government offices, and the consultant was formed. For the participatory discussion and reflections, the evaluation team selected three gandas that were able to qualitatively represent the different characteristics of the project gandas. The relevant variables used for the disaggregation and selection of the three gandas were project inception time (old vs new gandas), project components, road access/distance, settlement pattern, location (rural vs urban), and presence or absence of other interventions. The selected gandas were Dhaddacha Ballaa, Jaarraa Torbii, and Hara Adii.

Specific methods used under this methodology include general and focused group discussions with the right-holder community; key informants' interview with influential sources of

information from the DASSC-WBS, the community, and governmental offices; and final consultation/debriefing meeting with key project staff.

Observation of project sites and/or physical characteristics: The evaluation team did also make efforts to capture specific and rather detailed information on some project activities, to help understand their operation and success.

4. Project Holder Analysis

Project organization and management

The EECMY/WBS DASSC is the project's implementing body. At field level, the project's immediate implementation and management is handled by a Project Manager and other pertinent staff as follows. Two donor-assigned project advisors based at the project site do also provide technical and advisory services to the project's management.

Table 1: Project Staff

S/N	Position	Education	Quantity
1	Project Manager	BA in Development Management	1
2	Education Officer	BA in Education	1
3	Water Unit Coordinator	Diploma in Water Supply and Sanitation	1
4	Gender and Development Officer	Diploma in Agriculture	1
5	Credit and Saving Officer	BA in Development Management	1
6	Accountant	BA in Accounting	1
7	Cashier	Grade 12 graduate	1
8	Store Keeper	TTI Certificate	1
9	Guards	Read and Write	3
10	Drivers	12 th complete and Diploma in Teaching	2
11	Facilitators	Certificates and Diploma in different fields	10

The store keeper also covers cleaning needs for the office, based on top-up payment. This is because the project originally planned for only one person to handle the role of accountant/cashier. But the donor insisted to have separate staff for each position. The project, instead of requesting additional budget, used cleaner's budget for one of them. To the knowledge of the current manager, the project did not push on the donor/synod for additional budget to employ a cleaner. In any case, the project managed to implement its store keeping and office cleaning services without any significant obstacle. However, the consultant was able to witness the impact this challenge has already had on the project camp's management. The old guest house in the project's camp where the consultant stationed was not given adequate attention in terms of both its general sanitary conditions/maintenance and day-to-day cleaning services.

Project assets

The RCDP has a very spacious office compound with adequate rooms for office and residential purposes. Because of the area's underdevelopment, however, the office lacks basic facilities such

as hydroelectric power and dependable drinking water supply. The office is equipped with basic furniture and equipment including computers, tables, chairs and shelves.

The project has planned and purchased the following items as planned: 1 vehicle (Toyota pick-up), 2 lap top computers, a copier, and a projector. On the other hand, the project has planned to purchase one printer, but purchased 3. 1 Motor bike was planned, but the project completely reallocated the budget to grinding mill purchase, because of unexpectedly high price inflation in the latter.

Generally, the project's implementation has not faced any facility/equipment shortage during the phase under discussion.

Finance and administration

To ensure adequate administrative transparency, the project has put in place mechanisms for follow-up and staff participation in the project administration. These include project management committee meetings, senior staff weekly information sharing and discussion, and regular staff meetings (weekly, monthly, and quarterly). The project's purchasing committee operation is another major mechanism used to ensuring financial transparency. The project's manager and project accountant are mandatory members to the committee, with other staff rotating in rounds to ensure more transparency and participation.

The project accountant handles basic financial transactions, whereas the project's manager is obviously the final approving authority. The project has experienced delays in financial release during 2011 fiscal year. No similar challenge was faced during the first half of 2012's fiscal year. The major factor contributing to delayed financial release in the first year was delay in the signing of project agreement. Budget shortage challenges were also encountered, particularly in the areas of staff travel, fuel and vehicle maintenance, and also grinding mill purchase. Whereas part of the problem is attributed to price inflation, the major reason for budgetary shortage is inadequate perfection in budgetary planning. For instance, the project did not have additional fuel and maintenance budget for its new vehicle.

5. Project Strategies and Accomplishments

5.1 Implementation strategies

Below are the major implementation strategies practically used during project implementation, presented by major project components.

5.1.1 Water development

Based on the area's potential and need, the project has provided support to the construction and maintenance of traditional ponds, cisterns, pond structures (including stair cases and cattle trough) and associated local capacity building. The project has clearly planned and benefited from a community participation based on real commitment. Key project implementation strategies are briefly highlighted below by major activity.

a) Pond construction

Before the beginning of any physical work, the project determined what the roles of RCDP and the community should be, based on detailed contextualized discussions with each respective participant community. According to the partnership norm so set in Jaarraa Torbii, for instance, below are some of the responsibilities of the beneficiary community in pond construction.

- Pond digging (free community labour with some financial incentive): the project has paid 20 birr per M³ of pond digging. The rate was eventually raised to birr 30. This is just an incentive because the government (that is, the Pastoral Community Development Project) has been paying Birr 40-50 for the same piece of work accomplished.
- Pond fencing and management
- Pond maintenance

b) Cistern construction

Community members have contributed in the form of the supply of all available local inputs (such as sand, stone, and water) and labor. However, the project would pay for the transportation cost of those inputs, and also for water if the particular vicinity under discussion happened to be deficient in those resources. In areas where local resources such as water, sand and stone were not readily available, the project covered the gap. However, target communities with such resources adequately available were responsible to contribute.

c) Hand-over of water supply schemes

Up on completion of a pond construction tasks, the project handed the finalized schemes over to the target community and the district's Water Desk. The responsibility transfer act was marked by a tripartite agreement signing between the RCDP, the community, and the Water Desk.

d) Pond resources management

As per the project's original plan, pond resources have been designed to be managed by respective community management committees at each site. Practically, however, only individual guards have managed each pond scheme. The role of managing and directing community members on required aspects of pond utilization has entirely been left to such individuals, who also guard the resources. They are paid cash incentives on monthly basis. However, the community's high need and value for water supply has enabled an adequate management of the resources, as easily and in compliance with the directions of pond guards. This has ensured a viable level of guarantee to the proper management and sustainability of ponds and associated schemes. Below are some of the major responsibilities a beneficiary household is required to discharge vis-à-vis ponds:

- Fetch water only every two days
- Pay Birr 5 per month to contribute to guard salary/incentive (a guard is paid a maximum of birr 200 per month)
- Digging the pond to an average volume of 1 M3 every time one fetches water, keep widening the pond's carrying capacity

e) Training on water, hygiene and sanitation

This component of the project is entirely embraced under the approach referred to as Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST). The PHAST covers training on a

range of water, sanitation, and hygiene issues. Adopted from an experience in Somalia region, the PHAST is a seven-stepped approach. Environmental hygiene and sanitation, pit latrines, personal hygiene, and pond site sanitation are among the development issues the project has been promoted with in the PHAST approach. The strategy has helped the project achieve the majority of its households in old target villages dig and use pit latrines. This gives hope to the huge possibilities of future achievement available to the project for its current target gandas. However, the transitory nature of the area's households has hindered the project from achieving the full potential of its effort and the PHAST strategy.

5.1.2 Education

Literacy shelter construction

The shelter construction process begins with initial ganda level community discussion to determine which garee/village it should be located in. Similar discussions also identify and determine project and community roles/contributions, based on particular resources availability conditions in each target area. In most cases, the target community makes such contributions as site clearing, supply of wooden inputs, mud plastering, and fetching water. At sites where the required type and quantity of construction inputs is not available, the project resorts to purchasing. The project's typical roles in shelter construction are covering contractor's pay and also of factory materials.

Non formal education

Until a literacy shelter is handed over to government to be used as a formal school, it is used to provide non-formal basic child education and non-formal adult education, based on best feasible time schedule for each group.

The school would be handed over to government at the end of 2013, when the children would be in level 3.

The project has implemented some strategies to ensure the quality of education delivered at the center: provision of regular capacity building trainings to facilitators; and provision of close follow-up and supervisory support from the project's education officer and relevant staff from the district's education office, quarterly.

The center holds different sessions of non formal adult education for men and for women. The sole reason is that female participants are too shy to engage in discussion at the presence of male participants, because topics of discussion also include issues as sensitive as sexual matters. The limitation this strategy may have is to keep that traditional rift to remain between male and female, when adult education effort should equally target dealing with such attitudes. This same problem is reflected in reflect group establishment.

Literacy shelter management

Literacy shelters are managed by literacy shelter management committees. Committee members consist of local community members and project facilitators, the largest part of community committee members being from different local government structures. In the case of Dhaddacha Ballaa's shelter that was constructed in fiscal year 2011, the school management committee

comprised the ganda's administration head, a male elder, a religious leader, women affairs head, 2 project facilitators (both male), and 1 male member from among the community. In the teaching-learning process, shelter management committees have such roles as mobilizing parents to send their children to school, working on minimizing student dropout, shelter maintenance and compound safeguarding, and preparation of assistance applications/proposals for their respective shelters.

The committee's gender composition is entirely biased against female participation, as it has only one female member, the women affairs head. Under normal circumstances, such committees have not had regular meetings during the period, partly attributed to the transitory nature of the area's community; it only met based on particular assignments that necessitated their meeting, such as the identification of committee members for a particular training. In that respect, they could more broadly be viewed as a development committee.

Support to reflect

The reflect program is part of adult education that is based on action; it is both theoretical and practical. It is a forum for the community to discuss a wide range of issues relevant to their daily life, agree on preferred lines of action or change, setting of priorities for action, and action taking. The same program includes an opportunity for self-reflection on their actions. Although the major part of reflect group discussions/reflections are conducted in the premise of literacy shelters as part of adult education, no specific venue is needed as it could be conducted anywhere where concerned community members are at work.

RCDP has the experience of working with groups constituting both sexes. However, sometimes the project establishes single sex groups, based on the nature of REFLECT circles it establishes. The major reason underlying the establishment of such single sex groups is mainly to conform to the area's rigid traditional gender related norms. It is undisputable that the establishment of single-sex saving and credit groups complies with the area's religious (influenced by the sharia'ah law) norm of maintaining the gender based social dichotomization between men and women. The persistence of such norms imposes clear limitations on the area's socio-economic progress. According to project and government key informants, there is a future plan to promote the formation of groups with both sexes. One of the strategies being considered is through implementing membership increment plans in the currently established groups. As a practical step to implementing the new strategy, the district's cooperative office had sent direct letters suggesting to each group to let in members of the opposite sex.

5.1.3 Gender and development

A lot of very important social issues of vital meaning to the area's all rounded development are sandwiched together under this component. Gender, HTPs, and HIV/AIDS are the major intervention areas included under the component. The two major intervention strategies/components planned and implemented by the project are WEGE capacity building trainings/experience sharing visits and the promotion of income generation opportunities.

As a general strategy for the capacity building part, the project follows a stepped training/experience sharing approach whereby a first round of training/experience-sharing opportunity is given to selected community members, who are then entrusted to

training/orienting remaining members of their respective communities/gandas. The skill/knowledge transfer process was accomplished through a 5-member community committee established in each ganda.

For the IGA promotion component, the project uses the adult non-formal education as a medium of initial awareness-raising, IGA targets screening, organization, and training. The venue has indeed proved successful in enabling a gradual awareness-raising, mutual trust building, and organization for potential IGA members.

5.2 Project Achievements

Table 2 below provides a summary of plan versus implementation performance for the period covered under evaluation (2011 to mid 2012). Plan versus implementation statuses of major project activities are discussed below by component.

Table-2: Activity and Plan versus Implementation Template

S/N	List of activities by component	Unit	Project life	Year 2011	Accomplishment		2012 half	Accomplishment	
					Qty	%		Qty	%
I	Capacity building								
1	Water Development								
1.1	Community training on hygiene and sanitation	No	120	40	49	123			
1.1.1	Government staff training	No	30	10	19	190	10	-	-
2	Education								
2.1	NFE literacy facilitators (10) salary benefits and incentives	No	10	10	10	100	10	10	100
2.2	Support REFLECT group	No	8	4	3	75	-		
2.3	Education materials	Ls	LS	LS	LS	101	LS	LS	90
2.4	Reference materials	Ls	LS	LS	LS	98	LS	LS	41
2.5	Furniture for schools	Ls	LS	LS	LS	100	-		
2.6	Government teachers training	No	60	20	38	190	-		
2.7	Community training	No	120	40	42	105	40	14	350
2.8	Literacy facilitators training	No	10	10	34	340	-		
3	Gender and Development								
3.1	WEGE capacity building training								
3.1.1	Community WEGE awareness	No				183		72	

S/N	List of activities by component	Unit	Project life	Year 2011	Accomplishment		2012 half	Accomplishment	
					Qty	%		Qty	%
	raising		90	30	55		30		240
3.1.2	Community training on HTP and HIV/AIDS	No	90	30	32	107			
3.1.3	Experience sharing on gender and development	No	60	20	12	60	-	-	
3.1.4	Stakeholders WEGE awareness training	No	60	20	20	33	20	18	90
3.2	IGA opportunity promotion								
3.2.1	Grinding mill purchase	NO	2	2	2	100	-		
3.2.2	Credit provision	LS	LS	LS	LS	51	LS	-	-
3.2.3	Community technical skill development training	NO	60	20	32	53	20	-	-
4	Institutional Capacity Building								
4.1	Line department CBT	No	60	20	31	155	20	-	-
4.2	Project staff CBT	NO	60	20	23	115		-	
4.3	Project staff on job training	NO	6	2			4		
4.4	Cooperative CBT	NO	120	40	99	248	20	-	-
4.5	Networking (NLM,NMS and DCA) project	NO	45	15		53			
4.6	Health center capacity building	NO	20	10	58	580	10	-	-
5	Monitoring and Evaluation								
5.1	DASSC monitoring accounting& financial reporting	NO	12	4	4	100	2	?	?
5.2	Evaluation (mid &final)	RO UN D	2	-					
	Capital item	RO UN D							
6	Vehicle Related								
6.1	Car purchase		1	1	1				
6.2	Motor bike purchase	NO	1	1	-	0			
6.3	Fuel and maintenance	NO	LS	LS	LS	100	LS	LS	148
6.4	Vehicle insurance	LS	LS	LS	LS	100	LS	?	?
7	Project Base								

S/N	List of activities by component	Unit	Project life	Year 2011	Accomplishment		2012 half	Accomplishment	
					Qty	%		Qty	%
7.1	Energy supply	Ls	LS	LS	LS	87	LS	LS	55
7.2	Maintenance	LS	1	1	1	89	LS		74
7.3	Computer (lap top)	LS	1	1	1	100			
7.4	Projector	No	1	1	1	100			
7.5	Printer	No	1	1	1	100			
7.6	Copy machine	No	1	1	1	100			
7.7	Office supplies	No	LS	LS	LS	110	LS		
II	Constructional/physical activities								
1	Water Development								
1.1	New pond construction	No	3	1	1	0	1	1	1
1.2	Pond maintenance	No	3	1	1	0	1		
1.3	Structure for pounds construction	No	3	1	1	100			
1.4	Cistern construction	No	3	1	1	100			
2	Education	No							
2.1	Literacy shelter construction	No	2	1	2	100	-	-	-
2.2	Low cost facilitators house construction	No			2	100			
2.3	School renovation	No	2	2	1	100	2	1	50
3	Gender and Development								
3.1	IGA opportunity promotion	No	4	1					
3.2	Factory materials supply for grinding mill house construction	No	2	2	2	100	1	-	
3.3	Office and store construction for cooperatives	No	3	1	1	100	-		

Source: Project Office

5.2.1 Water development

Water shortage is one of the project area's major development problems, for both human and livestock consumption. Through the construction and maintenance of different water harvesting

structures (traditional ponds and cisterns), the project has been exerting its share of the solution. Based on the area's potentials, the project has implemented different activities that helped harvest rain water. The project's water development efforts aim to reduce water fetching workloads via reducing time and distance, to reduce school drop out arising from water shortages at school, and to reduce migration that results from water shortage, and to reduce water borne diseases through the PHAST approach.

To that end, the project has constructed 2 new ponds (100%) maintained 2 ponds (100% of planned), and constructed 1 cistern (100%), executed the construction of pond structures, and conducted associated trainings during this first half of the third phase.

a) New pond construction

Two new ponds have been constructed in Jaarraa Torbii and in Arda Nagayaa. Originally planned for the construction work to begin and end in 2011, the task was actually finalized late in 2012, beyond end of the mid-term period. The overriding reason responsible for the delay is water shortages that caused community migration, and hence lower-than-expected community participation in the digging work. The pond in Ardaa Nagayaa has not yet been handed over to the target community. This is because of non-completion of the construction process, owing to lack of rainfall. The construction process was eventually finalized at the end of fiscal year 2012, beyond the planned completion duration.

The project employed a community facilitator for better community mobilization in the digging work, on top of its own facilitator that oversaw the overall progress. Community participation was very high as they took part right from site selection to management. Traditionally, it is only the community who understands what particular site is feasible for pond construction, from experience. According to community information, RCDP's pond construction has been more successful than that of Pastoral Community Development Program (PCDP). That is mainly so because although the PCDP invests many more folds of budget on pond digging, many of its ponds have been out of use because of low community participation and inadequate feelings of community ownership for pond resources.

b) Pond maintenance

The project's plan of maintaining one pond during the first half of this third phase has been fully accomplished at Ruufaa site of Jaarraa Torbii. As in the case of the new pond construction works and for the same reason, the maintenance work was completed later than planned.

c) Pond management follow-up

The project has deployed facilitators at site level, responsible for every aspect of project implementation. As part of that, they make close follow-up of project implementation progresses along with respective community members, thereby enabling strong project progress follow-up. Senior project staff also supervises pond sites on regular basis.

Pond impact: It may be too early to conduct an impact assessment of what the project has achieved at this time. However, some of the interventions cater to addressing the community's day-to-day life. Below are some indications of how the intervention has already positively changed the community's life:

- It has saved target communities the requirement of investing long time and corresponding labour to travel to long distances in search of water from far away rivers (for example, residents in Jaarraa Torbii spent about 7 hours to get water on the average, as a round trip and a waiting time).
- Easier access to water than before: the river water some communities previously depended on was based on digging down through sand deposits, to get to water level. In connection with this, therefore, the pond has saved community members from that extra work of digging, every time one has to fetch water.
- When the river was the source of household water, users had to stay longer (than the 7-hour average stated above) hours away from home to wash and dry-up their clothing. That is to avoid the additional burden of transporting water to home for the same purposes.
- As a result of the inherent short distance in the location of ponds from villages, even able children and the elderly have now become able to share in the responsibility of water fetching; hence, water sharing is no more the exclusive responsibility of women.
- As a result of saved labour and time compared to the requirements of travelling long distances and time to rivers for water fetching, the project area's women have become able to have break time and more productive time investment. However, the assessment team did not get any evidence of women investing their saved times on any special chores or particularly productive investments so far.

What the community would like to see accomplished before project phase out:

- Broadening the pond so as to increase its carrying capacity: even at the time of evaluation, the pond in Jaarraa Torbbii was near dry-out, because of rainfall absence. Both community members and survey team members estimated that the pond would run out only with in one week if rainfall absence persisted.
- Constructing washing basins as part of pond structures: the project's pond digging effort has not yet included the requirement of enabling community members to wash their clothing at pond sites, which would help them avoid investing additional time and energy to transport water for washing their clothing.
- One of the project's best practices is that pond construction site selection is conducted by the community, as they are best knowledgeable about where to have a pond that might have high water retention ability. However, group discussant community members in Jaarraa Torbi still would want to have their ponds get plastic layers to avoid any amount of water leakage, based on the experience in the area of ponds constructed by government. According to the project holder, however, the project might not have the capacity to cover ponds with plastic sheets, but would rather encourage the community to do so.

d) Cistern construction and maintenance

The project had the plan of constructing one new cistern at a literacy shelter in Arda Nagayaa, in fiscal year 2011. The plan was fully accomplished in a timely manner. Its plan of maintaining one cistern in Hara Adii in the same fiscal year was also fully accomplished timely. Water supply and excavation of water collection area were the major physical works accomplished by

the community's free labor. Both cisterns have been put to use, regardless of challenges related to shortage of rainfall.

e) Structure for ponds

The project has planned and executed one staircase and one cattle trough at Ellee site of Qarree Xulee. The work on the structures was timely accomplished as planned in 2011. The cattle trough was put to use on timely manner, because it was not dependent on any environmental conditions like rainfall that usually delayed other construction/maintenance works. The tasks accomplished through community contribution were water fetching, excavation work, stone loading/unloading, and site clearing.

f) Community training on water, hygiene and sanitation

As per the project's plan, two rounds of community training workshops were conducted on the stated subject, for 2 and 3 days in 2011 and in 2012, respectively. The training workshop did mainly focus on the what-and-how of addressing water management problems. The main issues covered were sources and uses of water, water borne diseases, pollution and pollutants, water management system, hygiene and sanitation (PHAST), and ownership and sustainability. Training participants were ganda leaders, local community facilitators, elders, HEWs, project facilitators, DAs, and relevant experts from the district.

As a major training outcome, the participants pledged to put to practice the results of the training workshop at their respective water management sites. The survey team was not able to specifically trace that pledge or its result in the villages. However, its contribution to general community awareness is not to be undermined, particularly in its role of fueling up regular community PHAST discussions at pond sites.

a) Government staff training

As per plan, government staff training was held for 3 days, in the last quarter of 2011. Participants were invited from the district's government offices relevant to the subject. Among the major objectives of the training/discussion was to help the district's government learn and adopt some of the project's interventions/best practices. The major topics of training/discussion covered were rain water harvesting system, sources of water, water pollutant factors, and the need for better collaboration among the stakeholders.

5.2.2 Education

I. General context

School lunch for all students and oil for female students was available in all schools during the recent relief operation in the district. As of the survey period, only 14 schools relatively more needy in the district were under the program. The school lunch and oil program is praised for having greatly increased school enrolment in general and female enrolment in particular. The interrupted program has negatively affected the current motivation and attitude of parents, thereby affecting school participation. Many parents are primarily attracted by the supplementary food services than the future of their kids' education. As a result, some parents

are still sending their children to far way schools with those services than nearby schools lacking the services.

Educational problems:

- Participation problems: the area's community is generally more positively aware and more supportive of children's education than before. Most of current educational problems are practical rather than attitudinal: water shortage and poverty. For instance, girl students are much more proportionally numerous in schools with oil and lunch services than in others, a strategy parents use to draw some amount of economic advantage.
- Little or uncertain educational output: the fact that high school and college graduates are massively unemployed is discouraging the community in two ways: not sending more children to school if one's own child is unemployed; and the entire community deriving bad lessons and negatively deciding on their own kids' educational future.
- As a result of economic problems on the one hand, and low grade 8 national exam passing rate on the other hand, the number of students coming to the district's high school from rural schools is declining each year. According to the district's education office head, no student joined grade 9 from two junior secondary schools (Qarree Xulee and Arbuuca), and only one student joined same grade from Boroolee Junior Secondary school, in the 2012/13 academic year.

II. Project interventions

The project has continued to exert its long-initiated effort on educational development during the period, with the overall aim of creating educational opportunities for school age children and adults in gandas/villages too far from formal learning centers. The major activities planned and accomplished under this major project component are provision of non formal adult and basic child education services, literacy center construction, school renovation, low-cost housing construction for project facilitators, supply of some basic educational materials and school furniture, provision of support to reflect groups, and various capacity building trainings. Below is a brief discussion of the project's accomplishment status for the period.

a) Non-formal education services

Both adult and non-formal basic child education services are conducted at project-constructed literacy shelters, by same project facilitators. At the end of the first half of this third phase, a total of 515 (220 male and 295 female) non formal adult education participants were reported to have been in attendance at all the five centers. The project makes special effort at increasing the number and proportion of female attendants. This component provides a uniquely irreplaceable opportunity to many female participants who would not have other means of access to education in their life times.

Service quality

The literacy shelter in Jaarraa Torbii had 2 facilitators (a male and a female). Both of them hold certificates from teachers training institutes. However, because of the extremely scattered nature of the ganda's villages where the facilitators have to cover, the two are reassigned to be based in

separate villages. As a result, only the female facilitator was left at the school to take care of all project activities in the village. The male facilitator was assigned to more closely facilitate project interventions in the ganda's other major village, Waleenaa, where work on reflect group establishment was very active. The survey team was able to observe that although 2 facilitators have been assigned to work in each of the five new target gandas, the scattered nature of the villages and lack of transportation services have made the facilitators to endure much physical labor in their effort to covering their all-rounded project facilitation responsibilities.

However, the project did not have any information shading light on the relative academic competence of its former students in formal schools. Unlike formal school where the proportion of female students is normally lower than their male counterparts, female students in non-formal education centers are more numerous, mainly because of the flexible class schedule.

b) Literacy shelter construction

Two literacy shelters have been planned and constructed in Arda Nagayaa and Jaarraa Torbii gandas. Both constructions were completed late in 2012, although the plan was to finalize the work in 2011. As in the case of all other physical works, it was the community that selected in which village or at what sites the shelters should be located, based on comparison and ranking of practical differences in the needs of each ganda's many villages. The major contributions made by the community towards the construction work include provision of available wood for construction, harvesting/collection of sand and stone, and water fetching. As a direct outcome of the two construction works, 128 and 78 children have gotten access to non formal basic child education services.

c) School renovation

The project has planned and renovated a total of four blocks of literacy shelter, two each at Qarree Tullee and at Halloo Coomaa non formal schools. Water fetching, grass and soil provision, and sand and stone harvesting were the major community contributions provided to the task. The achievement is reported to have improved the success of the teaching-learning process in general and children appetite for education in particular.

d) Low-cost facilitators' house construction

In remote areas like the project area where there is neither a means of public transportation or rental houses, a dependable option for housing the project facilitators is a near prerequisite to the project's implementation. Two housings were constructed of local materials at the two literacy shelters in Arda Nagayaa and Jaarraa Torbii gandas. Project facilitators have been using the houses.

e) Material support

Needed educational materials and school furniture have been provided to the literacy shelters. The materials provided include stationery materials, hand bags, bicycle spare parts, and umbrella for consumption by project facilitators/teachers. Shelves, desks, tables, and black boards are the major school furniture provided to newly constructed literacy shelters. Moreover, reference books were provided to formalized old literacy shelters, based on specific applications from the district's education office.

f) Support to reflect groups

During the period under discussion, reflect groups in Qarree Xulee, Wicroo, and Jaarraa Torbii have submitted credit requests/applications to the project. However, only the applicants in Qarree Xulee and in Jaarraa Torbii have succeeded to receive a credit support of Birr 15000 altogether, because of the relative strength of their applications, as measured by the amount of their own initial savings and other selection criteria of utmost significance for their success. The groups' plan was to purchase and fatten oxen and goats. On top of the financial assistance, the project did also assist each group's cooperative committees in the actual livestock purchasing task.

The following case study in box 1 explains how a reflect group discussion grew to a saving and credit group. The survey team talked with a reflect group in Waleenaa village/garee in Jaarraa Torbii, to shed light on the experience of such groups in this phase.

Box-1: The Performance of a Reflect Group in Waleenaa Village in Jaarraa Torbii

Established early in the 2011 fiscal year, the Waleenaa reflect group has not had any female member. The group members' first point of mutual contact was the project's adult education service, after which the project's facilitator (Hussien) assisted them to discuss saving. Accordingly, each of the group's initial 15 members started saving Birr 85 per month for 5 months. They then initiated limited fattening activity before requesting any credit service from any institution. Whereas only 2 of them had prior fattening experience, all of them practiced farming and livestock husbandry as their means of livelihood.

Oriented by the project's facilitator, the group requested the project for credit assistance, and secured a total of Birr 10,000 in response. Before the financing, the project education officer provided adequate orientation to group members, on terms and conditions of the credit service. Some of the items the group members remembered to have been included are: that the money is not to be used outside of business operation; that it shall not be individually spent even for business purposes; and that it has quarterly repayment requirements. Attracted by the nature of progress and motivation experienced by group members, potential members have been applying for membership. However, the group remained closed to such requests, although it was considering future possibilities of letting in new members. Being financially strengthened by the credit service, the group purchased 4 oxen, 3 goats, and 1 camel for a total of Birr 7300. In the future, the group plans to initiate larger scale long distance livestock trading.

The group also practices extra business self-help efforts such as labor sharing and free labor assistance in all areas of life, particularly agricultural activities. One of the major limitations about the group is that it does not include female members. Some of the reasons why female members are not included are: that men in the area don't want to send their wives along with other men; and because individuals don't feel free to talk their minds at the presence of individuals of opposite sex.

Generally, the project works in close cooperation with the district's cooperative promotion office, in the establishment and gradual organization of such groups in to formal cooperatives.

g) Capacity building trainings

The following three capacity building trainings were implemented during the period. These are:

- **Community training:** A 3-day community training was planned and conducted under the facilitation of the district's education office. The major objective of the training was to build the participants' capacities to better mobilize community members to benefit from the non formal education services. The training's focus areas were meaning and essence of NFAE and ABE and the strategy of organizing adult education and the reflect approach. The training participants were 25 literacy shelter committees from the 5 centers, 11 project staff, 5 DAs, and 2 education officer experts.
- **Literacy facilitators' training:** Based on project facilitators' practical skill gaps, a three-day refresher training was conducted on the reflect approach. The objective was to help strengthen cooperation among the different stakeholders working on the subject. A total of 34 (24 male and 10 female) people took part on the training, involving project facilitators, DAs, HEWs, and education office experts. As a major outcome of the training, training participants pledged to work together in cooperation, to improve on what had been understood as inadequate cooperation among them before the training.

5.2.3 Gender and development

The main objectives of this component are to raise awareness of the community and other stakeholders on gender issues, to fight discriminatory and violent attitudes against women, to fight HTPs, and to enhance women's economic empowerment through IGA support. Activities planned and implemented under this component could be categorized in to two main sub-components: capacity building trainings and IGA opportunity promotion.

a) Gender and development capacity building trainings

Below are the training activities planned and implemented during the period:

Community WEGE awareness-raising training: Among the training's major objectives are easing women's workload and empowering women in different areas of socio-economic life. The training was provided to 55 (40 male, 15 female) and 72 (44 male, 28 female) community representatives in 2011 and in 2012 fiscal years, respectively. Facilitated by the district's WCAO and the Justice Office, the training covered such topics as gender and development, gender equality, ways of empowering women and children, and child rights. Based on the training's original intent, the participants organized associated orientation programs in their respective gandas. In the 2011 fiscal year for which data were available, a total of 864 (427 female, 437 male) community members were reported to have been reached with the orientation programs.

WEGE stakeholders awareness raising training: This training was conducted in two rounds, that is, in 2011 and in 2012, both at Hawassa town of the SNNPRS. The 2011's training was aimed at improving synod-level cooperation among projects supported by different donor agencies (DCA, NLM, Health Unlimited, and KNH). Accordingly, participants included the synod's senior project staff, officials/leaders, including RCDP's senior staff. The training

covered gender and development, effective project implementation, and poverty and development. The cost of the training was shared among the partaking projects funded by different donor agencies. The sister training held in 2012 engaged government staff as well, on top of the participants just mentioned for the first training. The topics of training/discussion covered were gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and education, women empowerment and health, women empowerment and economy, women empowerment and politics, women empowerment and development, and postmodernism and development.

Community training on HTP and HIV/AIDS: Selected community members, health extension workers, and RCDP facilitators took part in two-day training. Training topics included was of mitigating HTPs, major HTPs in the area, role of religious leaders in HTP mitigation, and ways of preventing and controlling HIV/AIDS. A total of 32 (15 female and 17 male) participants took part in the training. Participants were given a free debating environment on legal and religious views on HTP. The most important outcome achieved from the training was that the participants have reached at a unanimous understanding that no religious doctrine/law encourages HTPs, and that they would do their part in fighting HTPs. Annual reports claim that the agreement resulted in the orientation of a total of 914 (457 female and 457 male) community members in the target gandas. In the gandas the survey team visited, however, no group discussant or key informant community member approved of having benefited from that orientation.

Experience-sharing visit on gender and development: In 2011, the project organized an experience-sharing visit to the popular self-modernizing Awuramba community in Gondar zone. Participants were drawn from the community and relevant government offices. The community's gender equality and fair labor division was well attended to by the experience-sharing visitors. On the same trip, the group also paid similar visit to a model community group in Hadiya zone of the SNNPRS. The group was reported to have oriented the gained experience to community members back home.

Impact assessment

The survey team has asked members of men and women focused group discussants about whether they would prefer to see different HTPs be stopped or continued. The data were collected from 5 women and 10 men discussants in Dhaddacha Bal'aa ganda, the district's capital. The data don't have any statistical meaning, but shade light on a bird's eye view of how the community feels about different HTPs. Based on the data, one can get a rough understanding of the issue: that widow inheritance based on the widow's willingness is viewed desirable by all the participants; that polygamy is alright for nearly half of the participants if the polygamist is resourceful enough to care for all of his family members; and that all men and no women participants favored the continuation of circumcision, pointing to the fact that men are the driving force behind the continued practice of circumcision. The area's men, some of them polygamists, argue that the practice addresses women's sexual over-activism. That is why women group discussants believed that men's change in attitude is the only hope to bring circumcision under control. Encouragingly, all the remaining forms of HTP, that is, early marriage, abduction, rape, and uvulotomy were viewed undesirable and needed to be averted.

Table 3: Views of Dhaddacha Ballaa focused group discussants on the continuation of different HTPs

Type of HTP	Should the practise be continued?					
	Men (n=5)		Women (n=10)		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Circumcision	5	0	0	10	5	10
Polygamy (if capable)	3	2	5	5	8	7
Early Marriage	0	5	0	10	0	15
Widow inheritance (if willing)	5	0	10	0	15	0
Abduction	0	5	0	10	0	15
Rape	0	5	0	10	0	15
Uvulotomy	0	5	0	10	0	15

Source: Mid-term evaluation group discussion

The current phase's impact is too early to assess at this mid-term level. However, an encouraging result has been achieved as a result of the synod's general intervention so far. For instance, all development stakeholders believe that the prevalence of female circumcision has become less bodily damaging in some cases, as a gradual transition from mutilation to partial cutting has been achieved, particularly in old intervention gandas. What has changed about female circumcision?

- Some changes have been achieved from the normally Somali-originated experience of mutilation and fastening to partial cutting. On their day of first sexual experience, women normally suffered a lot as their fastened body is cut with knife to fully open up the female organ. Male group discussants in Dhaddacha Ballaa were able to name two girls that faced that painful experience during the last 4 months, only in the ganda.
- It is no more ceremonial, as it is practiced silently and in secrete.
- Community members in Jaarraa Torbii were hopeful that the circumcision challenge could be significantly addressed if current efforts would continue.

b) Promotion of IGA opportunities

The following activities were planned and accomplished under this project component.

Grinding mill support: This aims to empower women economically and also reduce workload. The project has planned to purchase and provide three grinding mills to three corresponding cooperatives in Hara Dube, Hara Adii, and Hallochoma gandas. However, only two mills have been delivered. The mills were delivered late, for two reasons: delays in financial release to the project, and a rise in the price of good quality grinding mills on the market. The mills were provided to the coops in Hara Dube and Hara Adii. The project has also provided factory materials like cement, and locally unavailable inputs such as sand and stone for the mills'

installation. As a result, a total of 69 cooperative members (47male, 22 female) have benefited from this activity.

The survey team had the opportunity to visit a grinding mill beneficiary cooperative in Hara Adii (named Tulluu Diimtuu Cooperative). The group was initially organized some 9 years ago by the project, their initial point of contact being the non formal education center, particularly the reflect group. However, it was formally established as a cooperative group just five years ago. Over the years, the group has received different capacity building supports from the project. As of the mid term evaluation period, it had a total of 31 members (21 male and 10 female), a small shop, and a grinding mill. Below are some important notes captured with discussion held with the group:

- The group had a total asset value estimated at Birr 200,000, including its new 12,000 Birr value grinding mill it freshly received from the project; although the group was initially requested to prepare a 20% Birr down payment for the grinding mill, it has been paid the amount back.
- It had the plan of replacing its old mill early enough, with its own savings
- The group has employed four of its members (all male) as guards, grinding mill operators, and shop keeper. According to the group, female members have not been given employment opportunities because their husbands would not let them commit their times away from home. It pays a total of Birr 1600 monthly to the four staff.
- As a direct challenge of the area's gender inequality, the group did not have any female member in its management committee. More surprisingly, no female member attended the group's pre-planned discussion with the survey team.
- Some of the group's operational challenges related to the grinding mill include the gradual rise of individually owned grinding mill services in nearby gandas, posing a new competition challenge to the group's services; and frequent crop failure that has resulted in the community's dependence on purchased grain, which they grind just in the town, not with the group back in the rural area.

Cooperative office and store construction: Based on prior requests, and to help the cooperatives better organize their activities, the project has supported a cooperative society at Calcal site in its office/store construction. Whereas the project provided all factory materials and locally unavailable construction inputs like wood, the cooperative group did everything else. As a result, a total of 32 cooperative members (4 male, 28 female) have benefited from this activity.

Credit provision: During the period under discussion, the project has reached a total of 164 (114 female, 50 male) people in the 5 newly targeted gandas with goat or chicken credit: 97 (70 female, 27 male) people received goats, whereas the remaining 67 (44 female, 23 male) received chicken. The number of livestock credit given per person was 1 and 2 for goat and for chicken, respectively. Accordingly, the project has distributed a total of 107 goats and 169 chicken to the beneficiaries. The project has already linked the activity with the government. Accordingly, the government is responsible to collect and revolve it in the community. Through discussion with the project steering committee, it was decided to give the collected money (19,717.50 from goat credit and 4,674 from chicken credit) to cooperatives that will be established from the credit clients. The money will not be simply given but will be saved in to the cooperative accounts.

5.2.4 Institutional capacity building

Under this component, the project has made efforts at contributing to institutional capacity building to its own office/staff as well as to the district's government. Below is a brief summary of the activities accomplished under the component.

Capacity building training to government line offices: The project organized a three-day training workshop to 31 (29 male, 2 female) government staff/officials from the district's line offices on good governance and development, sustainable development and the role of stakeholders, and balanced scorecard (BSC) and automation. However, most of the training topics indicated above are all key elements of the government's own overly publicized tools. Therefore, the government has its own means and ways of disseminating to its staff what it considers to be its development and political tools, through direct training/orientation or even through administrative procedures. From the point of view of resource allocation for this training, the consultant would suggest that this training is at least not a priority for the project.

Capacity building training to project staff: In collaboration with the WBS-DASSC, the project has conducted a two-day orientation workshop to its staff members. The participants received orientation on work discipline, organizational guiding principles, and rights and obligations of the employees and the employer. The project has also arranged an on-the-job educational upgrading opportunity for 3 of its staff members, one for masters and two for diploma level education. Two of the beneficiaries (one masters and 1 diploma) have already been enrolled, with that of the third beneficiary also believed to start in 2013.

Networking capacity building training: As indicated under above sections, WBS leaders, DASSC higher officials, and senior WBS-DASSC project staff working on projects funded by different donor agencies took part in a 3-day networking and performance improvement training workshop conducted at Hawasa. Eight RCDP staff members (6male and 2 female) were in attendance.

Cooperative capacity building training and experience-sharing: The project supported the local government to provide capacity building training to cooperative societies established by the project and by the government. A total of 79 (24 female, 55 male) participants drawn from – cooperatives attended the training. As a build-up on of this training, a cooperative experience sharing opportunity was conducted for some cooperatives. Such training/experience sharing opportunities are very helpful in interbreeding government and RCDP oriented experiences for improved performance by the cooperatives societies.

Capacity building training to the district's health center: Although later than planned, the project has conducted a training of significant contribution to the district's maternal and child health. It was attended by the district's health center staff, topics covered being maternal mortality and antenatal care, family planning emergency obstetric care, and normal delivery. Although without plan, another training having a supportive contribution to that first training was provided to the district's health office staff on service improvement and strengthening of evidence-based practice.

5.3 SLOT analysis

Under this section, effort is made to present some of the major strengths, limitations, opportunities, and threats experienced in the project's implementation and management. The analysis is presented as general and by major project components.

A. General

Strength

- Project staff show more sincere respect to the community, compared to all other institutional stakeholders. As a result, project staff and the community have worked together very closely, thereby developing mutual respect and recognition for one another.
- The project has established and maintained a magnificent level of friendliness and cooperation with the district's relevant government offices. At times, it was difficult to see institutional boundaries between the project's management and the different offices. The consultant was able to witness for himself that the project could request the offices' help at anytime (including none working hours) and achieve positive responses.
- As of the evaluation time, a friendly atmosphere and high team spirit prevailed among the staff in general, and between the project's management and the remaining staff in particular.
- Both community and institutional stakeholders praise the project for having unconditionally targeting remote gandas/villages, regardless of road accessibility. For instance, the government's HEWs and DAs don't have presence in Jaarraa Torbii, because of remoteness.
- High involvement of community and government stakeholders in all aspects of the project's implementation and management.
- Each element of the project's intervention is highly valued by the target community and the district's government alike, because they address the community's priority needs.

Limitations

- Inadequate budget in the face of highly complicated development problems
- Inadequate payment and benefits to project facilitators, compared to government staff: Government DAs and HEWs receive annual salary increments and educational and positional advancements. None of these advantages are available to project facilitators, although their salary rates are not better than that of government staff. This is so mainly because the synod's operation is influenced by donor policies, especially for project/contractual workers. However, the project could still compensate its staff through better payment.
- Very low salary and benefits payment to regular staff
- Continuous government meetings that delayed the implementation of some project activities

Opportunities

- In the context of the currently maintained friendly atmosphere among the project's staff, camp-based staff life fosters unity, and is in turn an extra asset for staff commitment. Harness
- NLM's financial flexibility will continue to enable needed budgetary reallocation and revision
- The warm relationships and good working cooperation established with the community and the district government has foundational significance for success in project implementation and sustainability.

Threat

- Recurrent rainfall shortage and famine:
- Boarder conflict that usually arises during rainfall shortage and famine: The frequent and accidental boarder conflict between the Oromo and the Somali has become a major obstacle to targeting few remote border-line gandas, not only for the synod, but also for the district's government. The district's government claims to have provided the necessary peace and road infrastructure. However, anything beyond the district's jurisdiction is not under its control, and hence conflicts could arise anytime.
- The government's new 70-30 budget policy is negatively affecting project implementation. Administrative spending is too difficult to be kept with in the 30% threshold policy requirement, especially for low-budgeted projects like that of RCDP.
- Inadequate development fund/commitment: The project area is among the most developmentally disadvantaged districts in the country. Most of the area's constraining needs are very basic and primary. However, even some of the basic government development programs that have been launched and relaunched in the country's remote districts (such as the nationally under way Rural Water and Sanitation Program) are not committed to the district. Moreover, national government-run pastoralist development programs such as the Pastoral Community Development Program (PCDP) are known to have engaged in and achieved core infrastructural (such as road and social services) developments in the district's they target. In the case of Raayituu, however, the survey team heard of PCDP's name mentioned only in association with some failed hugely expensive ponds and few rural road accesses created. Even the district's capital, the only part of the district where one can access piped water source, is not adequately supplied with drinking water supply. Given the long-list of unmet basic infrastructural needs in the district, development needs like education could fairly be considered luxury needs for the district. In the context of these needs, the project is the only development agent implementing activities of significance to the community's basic needs. However, it is highly constrained by current budget shortages and future financial uncertainties.

B. Water development

Strength

- The community's high need and value for water supply has manifested itself in their relentless commitment and participation. Pond resources have been adequately managed with mere direction of pond guards, owing to the community's unconditional support. This is an evidence of a strong strategy that targets the community's most important priorities.
- According to the target community's own testimony, their strong participation has enabled the project to achieve much better results with smaller budgets compared to governmental interventions.
- Comparing the project's concrete-made cistern with the government's plastic-made tanker, the community mentioned at least two advantages: firstly, the concrete tanker keeps water cool in an area that is hot and dry; secondly, the concrete tanker is much more voluminous and hence carries more water.
- Some of the project's interventions target physically remote areas where the government's intervention has not reached with tangible development interventions.

Limitations

- The non inclusion of washing basin as part of ponds has led to a laborious cloth washing task in the community. Community members have to carry water to their respective homes to carryout a washing task.
- The project has planned and established pond committees for the planning, implementation, and management of planned pond construction activities. Such committees have been established early enough as to coordinate the successful implementation of those activities. However, the committee's role and strength in the management aspect of pond resources was observed to be little or none at least in the case of the pond constructed in Jaarraa Torbii. The role of managing and directing community members on required aspects of pond utilization has entirely been left to pond guards referred to as *Abbaa Haraa* (literally meaning pond owner). The unconditionally warm community participation and commitment observed in the project's implementation would have achieved more unexpected results had there been strong management committees for more strategic and wider community and mobilization and coordination.
- The transitory nature of the area's households has hindered the project from achieving the full potential of its effort, particularly that of the PHAST strategy in general and pit latrine digging and utilization, in particular.
- Rainfall shortage that hinders pond development

Opportunities

- The presence of high need for water on the one hand, and community commitment for the project's implementation on the other hand, will continue to favour the success of this component.
- The experience in the district of covering pond surfaces with plastic bags could be adopted to address part of the problem associated with water shortage and leakage.

C. Education

Strength

The non-formal education is irreplaceably relevant for the following reasons.

- Non-formal education is the only educational opportunity for adults.
- Due to its flexible schedule and geographic proximity, it is the only educational option for children who are too busy with household chores (particularly livestock keeping) to spend their day times on education. Unlike in formal schools where the proportion of female students is normally lower than their male counterparts, female students in non-formal education centres are more numerous, because of the just mentioned uniqueness elements.
- It has served as the only educational opportunity for poor children whose life is based on wage labour.

Limitations

- Adult education classes are separately organized for men and for women, which the project claims to be to avoid women's shyness at the presence of men. The limitation this strategy is clearly having is keeping that traditional rift to remain between male and female members of the community. This same problem is reflected in reflect group establishment, as groups are sexually exclusive.
- The project area is characterized by extreme female subordination in all areas of life, owing to the almost intact traditional/religious norms that give women little room for socio-economic independence and progress. When the project puts together a community committee, it normally looks for representatives of different community structures as members of the committee. Such structures are usually male-only, a reflection of the situation in the wider community, thereby causing the project-established committee to be male-only at worst or any number of male plus one female, at best. The one female member is possible because of the presence of the women affairs structure at ganda level. A good example of this challenge is easily visible in the composition of the project's literacy shelter management committees.
- The project did not have any information shading light on the relative academic competence of its former non formal students in the current formal schools.

Opportunity:

- Education, particularly female education, is still at an early stage in the district. Shortage of schools, poverty, road inaccessibility, and gender inequality are among the major obstacles that keep children away from educational opportunities. In this context, the non formal education with its unique design will continue to have a room wide open to change many lives for many years to come.
- As in the case of other project components, the area's community has demonstrated its unwavering commitment in the construction and management of non formal schools.

D. Gender and development

Strength

- Although not yet functional, the project's effort of following a stepped approach for the training/orientation activities under this component is a key seed for sustainability of similar efforts.

Limitations

- Reluctance among religious figures towards gender and HTP: For instance, an influential religious leader that had previously been featured in the project's 2011 annual progress report as a model to depend did unfortunately end up supporting the continuation of FGM, as part of a male group discussion for this evaluation. This is a shocking experience that shows that the project needs to rethink the depth and strength of its work on gender and HTP.
- Social issues like HTP and gender empowerment are given too little attention by the project, by design: the attention granted to the issues does not much the central role addressing these issues would have on the general transformation of the area's society. For instance, the impact of female circumcision is still forcing some women to undergo horrifying experiences of virginal operation at first sex. In the project area, female education is generally considered unnecessary and a life priority only second to marriage.

6. Summary/Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Summary/Conclusion

A summary of major findings and implications of the evaluation exercise is presented below, by major thematic areas:

6.1.1 Relevance and priority hood

According to both community and government sources, all of the project's components and activities were generally found to be responsive to the area's development needs and priorities in general and the project objectives in particular. The project's water development and non formal education efforts all target the community's desperate needs. Of no less relevance and priority hood to the area's development needs is the contribution of the project's IGA activities. The only project activity found to be of little weight measured against priority hood _ given resource shortages _ is the project's government staff capacity building training held on balanced scorecard (BSC) and automation.

6.1.2 Project strategies and achievements

The project's implementation strategy has been designed in such a way that both community and government stakeholders are highly empowered and involved at all stages of the project's cycle. Below are some key strategy issues by major project components.

A. General

At the most general level, the project is praised for having carefully chosen and realized such strategic achievements as genuine respect for the target area's community, friendly and constructive interaction and cooperation with all stakeholders, high team spirit among project staff, and high degree of community participation that helped the project achieve far greater than could be expected from its scanty financial resources. Inadequate budget, poor staff remuneration, and a series of continuous government meetings _ project implementation experienced some delays as a result _ were among the general limitations/challenges identified.

The evaluation team has identified some factors that could fairly be considered threats to the area's development in general and the project's success in particular. These are recurrent rainfall shortage and consequent famine that constitutes the sole push factor for seasonal migration, frequent Oromia-Somale border conflict that has been directly affecting the district and lack of any comprehensive solution to the problem, the incompatibility of the government's new 70-30 budget policy for low-budgeted projects like that of RCDP, and shortage of development fund to address the district's basic and all-faceted development needs.

B. Component specific findings

Water development

Some of the specific strength of the project in this regard include a project design based on real community needs priority, significantly high level of community interest and participation in the component's planning and implementation (site selection, partner role identification, and implementation), the subsequent result of achieving far greater than what the project's mere actual budget would have enabled, and strong community participation in its management, mainly under pond guards direction alone. Moreover, the community also mentioned at least two points in which the RCDP's concrete-made water storage tanker excels the equivalent government-implemented plastic tanker: that the concrete tanker keeps much more volume of water, and that it keeps it cool enough to enjoy the water for drinking purposes.

Some of the challenges identified in relation to water development include recurrent rainfall shortage challenges that usually either delay the accomplishment of pond structures or render constructed schemes store less than their actual carrying capacities; the absence of washing basins as part of pond structures and the consequent additional burden of water transportation for cloth washing; inadequate pond committee involvement in the management of pond structures; and the transitory nature of the area's community that hindered the project's PHAST approach from offering its full potential of changing the community's water, sanitation and hygiene practices.

Educational development

The project's non formal education development effort is praised for many irreplaceable benefits to the community. Among others, it has served as the only educational opportunity for adults, for children in poor households that are forced to engage in agricultural (and livestock keeping) responsibilities during the day, and for poor children/youth who are engaged in daily wage labor. Its flexible schedule represents the key difference maker compared to the formal education system. The component has also had unintended positive social impact on the community's life. The most important social impact mentioned was that it has created additional social interaction opportunities among members of different villages who would have little or no interaction opportunities otherwise, thereby opening up additional marriage opportunities among the youth in those villages. For instance, community group discussants and key

informants in Jaarraa Torbii were able to cite examples of marriage bonds formed as a result of the additional interaction opportunities.

The major limitations seeking the project's future attention include: that adult non formal education classes are separately held for male and female members of the community, thereby fueling up the already rampant sex-based dichotomization among male and female members of the community; that literacy shelter community committees are far from being gender-balanced both in design and in practice; and that the project is not adequately aware of the relative academic performance of its previous non formal education students in the current formal schools.

Gender and development

Under this component, the project did not allocated adequate budget and priority in the current phase, and hence has not had much to demonstrate. However, its stepped training approach, although it has not yet manifested itself in terms of results, is praiseworthy. Of no less significance is the components IGA efforts. Some of the component's limitations include that even some model individuals the project had long featured in its reports to have been changed were found to have still siding with the continuation of female circumcision; and that the quantity/value per target individual of the project's livestock credit subcomponent was too insignificant to change target individuals' economic life, as, for instance, an individual was given only one goat, which in effect means being disengaged from other most likely more rewarding livelihood options available to the individual.

Project administration and management

The project's administration and management was characterized by high team spirit and positive interaction among the project staff in general and between the project's management and other staff in particular. On top of that, the project staff's camp-based residence has given the management the additional gain of enabling more friendly and positive interaction that has been well made use of in the project's administration and management. Moreover, the project has planned and implemented regular follow-up meetings among staff members for timely review and correction of possible project implementation challenges and deviations.

The single most important challenge/limitation reiteratedly raised by both regular and casual staff was that the project's salary and benefits package was not remunerative enough to give them confidence and satisfaction. Comparing with government staff of comparable levels, the staff members rated their employments less advantageous both in terms of promotion and material advantages.

6.2 Recommendations

Below are major recommendations drawn based on evaluation findings. The recommendation points are grouped in to two sections: a general note that reminds why WBS and its partner NLM should aspire to continue to invest more in the area, and specific long and short-term recommendations.

6.2.1 More predictable and financially strong presence in the area

The WBS and its partner NLM should be pleased for having positively impacted the lives of the target community in that forgotten part of the country. At least three factors place continued moral responsibilities on WBS and the NLM for their continued presence and effort in the area.

- Firstly, the district's development needs are rarely common to other areas because they are very basic and decisive even to the physical wellbeing and survival of the community and its members. Let's recall some. As a result of FGM, women undergo painful vaginal operation

with local knives and at the hands of ordinary community members, the same night they have their first doubly painful (marital) sex, notwithstanding those that risk going back to their parents² either if they fail to satisfy their husbands as a result, or if they prefer to avoid the operation. The majority of the project area's girls are either not entirely enrolled or do drop-out of, for both practical and attitudinal reasons. For all purposes including drinking, the most fortunate community members depend on pond/flood water which is very thick and dark with soil.

- Secondly, the fact that the RCDP is the only development initiative of tangible outcomes in the district, and that the WBS is the only visible development partner in the area is another challenge. As is stated in the SLOT analysis section, even the very basic world-bank-funded and government-run infrastructural programs like the PCDP³ and PSNP don't have total or real presence in the area, although such are normally for remote areas like the district.
- Thirdly, all the encouraging efforts the project has so far made have not yet brought any final solutions to the area's endless needs. They only constitute a litmus paper that tested whether the needs are real and basic, whether the community and the local government are committed to investing their best in the project-led effort to addressing the problems, and whether change is possible through such concerted efforts. The test has given a *yes* response to each of those questions. For instance, at least a decade long of RCDP and partners' intervention on HTP is believed to have reduced the prevalence of the worst forms of female circumcision, although no one could still escape the painful fate of being generally circumcised. As a traditional society that is still significantly influenced by the views of and directions set by elders, the attitudes and positions of traditional elders cannot be taken lightly. For instance, the very most influential elders entrusted (by the project) to changing the community still support the continuity of female circumcision when they are given a free environment to speak their minds. Therefore, with this project, WBS and NLM are currently situated at a stage where they have better understood the problems, have designed and showed what preferred courses of action could address the problems, and have achieved some foundational or temporary results, but no partners or mechanisms to sustain, replicate, or lead similar efforts at their absence.

6.2.2 Specific recommendations

I. Long-term recommendations

Not only are WBS and the NLM the only development partners with deep knowledge of the area's complex development needs, but they are also the ones most entrusted to addressing them, according to

² In late 2012, the daughter of one of the guards of the RCDP project office was forced to return to her family, only after few weeks of marriage, fleeing the horrifying experience of being knife-operated. The area's FGM involved fastening vaginal opening together, to leave only a very narrow opening for urination. It is that opening that has to be cut with knife, to enable sexual activity. In deciding not to undergo the operation, the above victim is technically declared ineligible for sex.

³ PCDP: Although this program has intervened in the area, its interventions are highly limited and meager, and hence have had little practical significance.

the views of local partners. The survey team would like to advise the partners to consider the following strategic options:

- Design and implement a program, not a project, approach for a stronger and more comprehensive intervention that brings about a sustainable solution to the area's development problems, while also adequately building the strategic capacities of local stakeholders to take-over and sustain intervention initiatives and results.
- As part of the program approach, design and implement projects/activities that help publicize the area's complex needs to attract more international resources and partners, particularly for a strategic and large scale response to water shortage, education, border conflict, and road infrastructure.
- The impact of gender inequality and HTPs is wide-ranging on the area's social progress in general and that of female community members in particular. WBS and NLM are advised to conduct a baseline analysis of the actual scale and impacts of the problem, and offer it a project status for better strategic attention and financial allocation.

II. Component-specific recommendations

Water development

- Because of lack of washing basins as part of ponds, community members have to carry water to their respective homes for cloth washing. Therefore, the project is advised to integrate washing basins to pond schemes, both as part of its pond maintenance and new pond construction efforts.
- The project is advised to work on strengthening pond management committees for more strategic and impactful community mobilization and participation in the management of pond resources.
- The survey team was able to witness that the newly targeted project gandas lack basic sanitation and hygiene awareness and practice. While it is clear that the current RCDP phase was yet to bring about any significantly visible change in the behaviours of community members on the subject, the team learned that the local government was nearly silent on the issue. Therefore, the project is advised to bring the district's government on board and help it adopt and implement the PHAST strategy, particularly in gandas not covered by the project.

Education and gender

- Based on a detailed analysis, the project is advised to make additional strategic investments that help improve school participation, particularly of female students, beyond primary level education. Options may include single-sex town-based shelters/housing for poor rural students that cannot afford the financial requirements of meeting town-based student living.
- The pattern of gender inequality and dichotomization traditionally experienced in the project area has significantly dictated the project's implementation strategy. The challenge is clearly evident in the way adult non-formal education classes and most reflect groups are organized. To change the traditional pattern and address existing

gender inequality, the project needs to make strong and intentional efforts at ending single-sex non formal education classes and IGA groups.

- The project is advised to follow the relative academic competence of its former non formal education students in the current formal schools, and use case studies for fund-raising.
- The project provides 1 and 2 goat and chicken, respectively, per target individual, as part of its IGA effort. Imagining the opportunity cost of a target individual investing its entire time keeping a single goat, any one could easily agree that the effort is just a disengagement from other more economically advantageous pursuits. This reminds the project of how much meaningful and rewarding it will be if the number of goats given per individual increases to at least four, to justify the time spent and the other economic advantages forgone by a target individual.
- The project should ensure that the task of promoting gender equality is well mainstreamed throughout its entire project implementation and management effort. The nature and gender composition of community project committees should reflect that determination. The project has not succeeded in that effort, because it largely depended on existing local structures that are already inherently gender insensitive. This, therefore, calls for the project to make its own independent effort of establishing and empowering community committees.

Project staff salary and benefits

- Considering the project area's hardship (harsh climate and location) on the one hand, and the job market on the other hand, the nature of staff salary and benefits currently paid by the project does not guarantee adequate staff motivation. Therefore, the project should rethink and implement better salary and benefit packages to its entire staff.