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YESUS DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICE
COMMISSION (EECMY-DASSC) AND NORWEGIAN
LUTHERAN MISSION (NLM)**

**FILTU FOOD SECURITY PROEJCT 2014 -2016 MID-TERM
MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT**

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Table of Content

Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. Introduction/Background	5
3. Objectives of Evaluation.....	8
4. Methodology used during monitoring.....	8
5. Major Findings of the Mid-term Evaluation	9
6. Analysis/Discussion.....	20
7. Conclusion and Recommendations	24

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Filtu woreda is located in Liben zone, Somali regional state, south East of Ethiopia. NLM and EECMY DASSC jointly entered in to this woreda in response to the famine in 2000 and are working in the area since then for more than a decade. So far, the project has completed its three phases of project with main objectives of reducing the risk of future water shortage in Filtu woreda and improving the health condition of the target community. In addition to this the two bridging period projects in the year 2012 and 2013 was signed with concerned line departments of the regional government with the objectives of creating ample time for the long term food security project and handing over of previously built project outputs. So far the objectives of the bridging period projects have been successfully implemented and the new fourth phase project was signed afterwards. The main objective of the new fourth phase “*Filtu Food Security Project 2014 – 2016*” is to contribute for the government endeavor in ensuring household food security through creating access to improved agricultural inputs, dry land farming techniques and improved knowledge on gender and nutrition for enhanced quality of life.

Objectives of the Mid-term evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to evaluate the last one year and half 2014-2015 performances of the project, document the output and outcomes, lesson learnt, challenges encountered during the implementation and generally the contribution of the project to community. This mid-term evaluation conducted by a joint technical team from Ethiopian Somali region BoFED, BoLCRD, Liban Zonal DPPB/NGO’S coordinator, Filtu Woreda agriculture office and Filtu water office to monitor or evaluate food security project impact in Filtu woreda of liban zone of Ethiopian Somali Regional state by using document review, focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview according to the standard checklists.

Methods of the final evaluation

While conducting this end term evaluation, the methods pursued were; project document review, bridging period (2012 and 2013) project document evaluation reports reviews, interview with beneficiaries, field visit to see sample project activities, discussion with stake holders.

Major findings:

After careful compilation and analysis of the data, the mid-term evaluation team has found the organization’s achievement in addressing the issue of food security among agro-pastoral

community of Filtu woreda of Liban zone by adapting the different techniques. Hence most of the project activities were found to be focused on food security issues along with nutrition/health and home development. Regarding project intervention area there was positive impact that can be justified as observed by the team.

- Demonstration site at Hayadmitu community kebele administration has used to introduce different techniques dry land agriculture to the community and the evaluation team has observed positive feedbacks from the community.
- Intervention in agricultural activities in messajid, bandhire and hayadimitu peasant associations were successful; establishment of new nursery site at messajid community and demonstration site at Hayadmitu, the distribution of improved seed to agro-pastoral, water pump, vegetable seeds and adaptability trials of different seeds from research centre were done in good manner.
- Nutrition and Health and hygiene training, seed bank cooperatives training, water pump operators and maintenance training has contributed to the community in increasing the basic knowledge.
- The project has done good job in mobilizing the community to own the projects output to make the project sustainable.
- The projects strategy and implemented activities are in accordance to the government Food security policy and strategy.

The weakness of the project

- The project could not perform some activities as per the plan and this needs to be improved in the future
- The need in the community versus the project capacity does not match as the project runs by limited funds from the donor;
- Supervision of distance project sites seems to be challenging from the project sites due to old project vehicles.

- The issues of livestock not addressed in the project document. Since more than 80% of incomes for agro-pastorals come from the sector it needs to be included under food security project.
- The issue of water development has given very little attention. But water is the top priority in the area.

Challenges of the project

- The project is being run by limited fund compared to different activities under implementation.
- As it is mentioned elsewhere in the document and the previous project evaluation reports the project focuses on dry land agriculture in Ethiopian southern Somali areas the project might face challenges as the area is characterized as water scarcity region.
- As many of the agro-pastorals have less experience on the techniques of dry and agriculture their working culture on agriculture is still very low

Recommendations

Finally the monitoring team has come up with recommendations that will help the organization, Regional authority, Zonal and woreda that will assist the organization for Future implementation, because water and sanitation hygiene(WASH) is the most needy ones in Filtu area since the water reservoirs currently existing in the woreda are not sufficient compared to the needy population.

- Activity should be performed as per the plan
- The capacity building tranings, the pilot agricultural activity and the involvement of constructing new birkas in remote villages should be strengthened and continue in the coming phases of the project.

2. Introduction/Background

The Ethiopian Somali region as many pastoral community of the country has been hardest hit by recurrent drought and flooding which caused different impacts to the community living in Liban

zone. Infact today there is a change compared to previous years, however its past history of events have remained a challenge of chronic crisis by imposing serious food in security and water scarcity. During the famine happened in 2000 approximately 75% of livestock died and large number of the population become dependent on external food aid and water rationing activity by humanitarian organizations.

The poor living conditions of the community and scarcity of very important recourse makes them susceptible to easily preventable disease and water shortages. As a result the mentioned crisis and the need for humanitarian assistance , the area was opened for external aid and support for many years along with government developmental effort in improving the life of the population at all levels . EECMY DASSC with its back donor NLM is one of the developmental organizations currently operating in Filtu woreda of Liban zone for intervention of food security and wash activities to the susceptible people since 2000.

In the new phase of the project “Filtu Food Security project 2014 - 2016” document was signed with concerned line departments of the Somali regional state (BoFED, BoLCRD) which intended to benefit agro-pastoralist found in four peasant association namely Messajid, Hayadimitu, Bandihere and Kalajhah. The total population living in these peasant associations is 18,571 people and out of this 8508 is female. The direct beneficiaries of the project are expected to reach up to 700 households.

The expected out puts of the project under each project objectives are listed below:

Agro pastoral community has got improved agricultural inputs

- 50 quintal of melkassa seed variety of maize/sorghum/sesame distributed and sown on 200 hectares of land
- 50 KG of vegetable seed purchased and distributed to established cooperative with 50% of down payment
- Households have grown vegetable crops
- Well organised and operational seed bank women cooperative strengthened at Hayadimitu and Messajid kebeles,

Transfer of knowledge and skill on dry land agriculture

- Established two demonstration site one on irrigation and rain fed agriculture area
- Develop guide Manual

- Good practices seen in the community and project staffs for future agriculture activities
- Number of workshops and farmers field day conducted

Introduction of fruits and vegetables

- functional and well looked nursery site
- More than 16,000 tree are planted
- 5 heactar of land received from the local community and fenced by locally available materials

Women empowerment and household management

- Two gridding mill installed and operational
- 320 beneficiaries trained and received certificate, fire wood saving stove introduced and being adapted

Improved water quality

- Six barakad covered by corrugated iron sheets
- Water management refreshment trainings

Capacity building for community, district experts and project staffs

- Number of staff trained and well aquatinted project staffs
- Number of training give for the concerned project stakeholders

During this assessment period the project has been found working towards achieving the above mentioned project outputs since the project starts its operation of the new project in the district in January 2014. Therefore; the regional assessment team strongly believes that this is high time to conduct the final evaluation with pertinent local government organizations and beneficiaries. As per the project agreement, the evaluation is conducted to use the findings, conclusion and recommendations to inform the donor, the implementing organization, pertinent Somali regional state sector offices and the beneficiaries to improve the project performance in the future.

As the evaluation team has observed during the field visit and document review this project has intended to be implemented in Filtu woreda through collaboration of EEMY DASSC, NLM and government line departments in order to implement the project as per the regional agreement and the evaluation team has confirmed that there is no gaps seen between the government line department and the implementing organization.

3. Objectives of Evaluation

The main purpose of this mid-term evaluation in general is to document the output and outcomes of the previous one and half years project interventions, lesson learnt and challenges encountered during the implementation of the project. Further, the evaluation aims in identifying the contribution of FFSP implementation to the target community in improving the food security status in target areas where the project has been implemented in partnership with District agriculture, health and water offices.

The following are key specific objectives of this mid-term evaluation:-

- ✚ Assess performance of achieved activities against their plan;
- ✚ Quality of executed activities against their nationally or regionally set standard parameters;
- ✚ Identify key challenges encountered and measures taken during program implementation
- ✚ Lessons learnt will be identified for replicating in other areas and in similar endeavors in the future;
- ✚ Role of community participation at various level of the program will be assessed;
- ✚ To assess whether the project address the right beneficiaries and real need fo the community
- ✚ Projects sustainability issue will be dealt with and service delivery quality of constructed facilities will be evaluated.
- ✚ To produce this monitoring and evaluation feedback report to the all concerns government lines departments for future implementation

4. Methodology used during monitoring

For this particular mid term evaluation a team was organized by the regional government so that they should come up with sound and realistic outcome about the activities being implemented by the organization and its relations with concerned stakeholders at the grass root level. As a result of this the evaluations was conducted by a team that consists of people from different bureaus with different background and have relevant knowledge and experience in the project implementing area. The member of the evaluation team was drawn from bureau of Finance and

Economic development, Bureau of Livestock crop and rural development, district agriculture and water office and FFSP.

The evaluation team focused on quantitative and qualitative data to assess the performance as well as the impact of the project among the host community. The process of data collection and analysis were made through the following methods;

To make the monitoring fruitful the team has adopted a mechanism which covered project stakeholders:

- Review of the project activities implemented from January 2014 – June 2015 assessment report and its findings
- Observation through field visit on out puts and outcomes
- Focus group discussion with different groups of project stake holders
- Discussion with/interviews with key informants and government line departments concerning how the Food Security activities has been implemented
- This mid-term evaluation covers Filtu food security project implemented in Filtu woreda of Liban zone by NLM/EEMY DASSC and hence it will assess the project impact out come and out puts on intervened kebeles of the Woreda on food security beneficiaries in light of goals and objectives.
- This mid-term evaluation was jointly conducted by zonal DPPB representative/NGO's coordinator, BoFED, BoLCRD and Filtu woreda agriculture office, Filtu water office and the implementing partners of NLM/EEMYDASSC,

5. Major Findings of the Mid-term Evaluation

The main objectives of “*Filtu Food Security Project*” document is ensure the food security states of the agro-pastorals living in the selected kebeles of the district through increased knowledge and awareness of the community in dry land agricultural practices and provision of improved seed varieties and ultimately improve health states of the community. To this end, the findings of the evaluation were many and varied according to the questioners and feedbacks from the host community along with what has been observed from the field during the field visit by the team.

The team of this mid-evaluation has categorized the major findings and thoroughly discussed on the possible ways that these findings may serve as an input for the future project intervention in the area. Details of the feedbacks are listed under the table which depicts the implemented activities as per plan and the shortcomings of the project under each activity.

Analysis of the General Findings

Planned Activity by the project	The Evaluation team comment
Activity	Comment
<p>Objective one: Target agro pastoral community has got improved and environmentally sounds agricultural inputs and the total production increased by 50%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
<p>Activity 1.1 Purchase of composite Melkassa improved seed of fifty quintal with 50% of down payment</p> <p>Activity 1.2 Purchase and distribution of different vegetable seeds</p> <p>Activity 1.3 Strengthening seed bank cooperative association at hayadimitu and messajid kebeles.</p>	<p>- It is done according to the plan and ongoing</p> <p>- Ongoing</p> <p>- 2 seed bank cooperatives established and ongoing</p>
<p>Objective two: To provide and familiarize agro-pastorals with the necessarily skill and knowledge on dry land farming practices</p>	
<p>Activity 2.1 Establish demonstration sites on both rain fed and irrigation sites</p> <p>Activity 2.2 Develop demonstration site plot management manual</p> <p>Activity 2.3 Recording data collection for various trial and conduct workshop for government and project staffs</p> <p>Activity 2.4 Conduct farmer's day at a field level</p>	<p>- Rain fed demo site established and ongoing</p> <p>- It has started and ongoing with district agriculture and organisation</p> <p>- Ongoing</p> <p>- Ongoing</p>
<p>Objective three: The household nutrition status improved due to the various fruit and forest tree</p>	

plantation	
<p><i>Activities3.1:</i> more than 20,000 forest and fruit tree are developed in the nursery site</p> <p><i>Activity3.2</i> 80% of seedlings planted in the appropriate place with good care</p> <p><i>Activity 3.3</i> Five hectares of land enclosed from livestock and human interference for at least two years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functioning nursery site and ongoing - Sample trees are in good condition and ongoing - 5 heactra fenced with thorn bush and ongoing
<p>Objective four: To strengthen women role in house hold management and enhance availability of nutritionally enriched food for children</p>	
<p>Activity 4.1: Training on nutrition, home management and gender to interested target community and provide graduation certificate for 300 people</p> <p>Activity 4.2: new local fire wood saving stove introduced and other important home handling techniques and rural technology introduced.</p> <p>Activity 4.3: Grinding mill management and maintenance training for 20 people</p> <p>Activity4.4: Two gridding mills purchased and installed in two peasant associations kalajah and Hayadimitu kebeles for 600 households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing - Not done yet - Community mobilisation done but not seen practically at the site - Not yet done
<p>Objective five: Improved availability of less contaminated water for household consumption.</p>	
<p>Activity 5.1 purchase of corrugated iron sheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 birkas covered in 2014 and it is

and other materials Activity 5.2 six barakad covered by corrugated iron sheet so that the birkas serves the community as reliable water sources.	ongoing - Ongoing
Objective six: The capacity of the community is scaled up and necessarily skills, knowledge and agricultural practices improved through networking, field visits, farmer’s day etc,	
Activity 6.1: woreda and project staff training on dry land agriculture techniques Activity 6.2: woreda and project staff training on nursery site management and irrigation water management techniques Activity 6.3: training on pest control and management for woreda experts and project staffs Activity 6.4: post harvest and seed storage techniques training Activity 6.5: Water operator training in bandier for beneficiaries up there Activity 6.6: Filled visit to 90 handpicked agro-pastoralists to similar agro-ecological zone farming system Activity 6.7 networking with relevant research centres and universities	- 6 people trained in 2014 at research centre - 1 nursery site management training in 2014 - Ongoing - 1 training in 2014 conducted and ongoing - 2 training in 2014 and 2015 each year one and ongoing - Visit made in 2014 for 12 agro-pastoral and district experts

Description of the field visit analysis

This evaluation was made after the evaluation team has conducted the first meeting with the project manages and staff at the project office. The project manger has presented to the evaluation team about the field visit schedule that contains the selected sample projects outputs to be visited by the evaluation team. Following this, the evaluation team discussed and selected

the projects output to be visited by the team and approved to comply with the schedule. After the field visit the team has come with different ideas from each corner and each individual within the group has brought his/her ideas to the round table discussions and to reach on certain consensus.

In short after document review, key informant interview and focus group discussion and observation made by the monitoring team it was found that the mentioned below activities seen/visited. In addition to that the team has come up with identified goals that may contribute the project to be successful and create trust between the organization and the concerns government's lines departments and the stake holders as well.

In our review the regional NGO guidelines and project agreement document at the region emphasis the importance of communication and information sharing among stake holders for better achievement of results and in addressing target beneficiaries need and service satisfaction. In addition transparency and coordination among stake holders are the main essential elements of partnership these were clearly indicated in memorandum of understanding and other guidelines. The practical observation of the working relationships between the organization and the district administration as well as the target community seems to be very normal and the evaluation team has not come up with findings of such gaps.

Distribution of seed:

The project has distributed seeds to the community in the year 2014 up to mid of 2015 project period. During our field visit in Messajid and Hayadimitu farmers expressed their gratitude and feelings towards these improved seed varieties and happy with the performances of the seed during the two rainy seasons with in the year. Melkass 4 and Melkass 2 composite seed varieties were given to selected farmers and it has perform well in the field per hectare up to 45 to 60 quintals has been collected. However, the evaluation team has seen that this seed distribution was made to limited number of farmers and there is still huge need in the community and the project has to increase the amount and varieties of the seed to be distributed to the community during the next rainy season. The evaluation team has strong concern that in target area there are many agro-pastorals but the project is providing improved seed to limited number of farmers. In the long term this will create a sort of conflict, therefore the project has to plan to address more farmers during seed distribution.

Seed Bank Cooperatives:

During this evaluation period the evaluation team has visited women seed bank cooperatives that are established in Hayadmitu and Messajid kebele administration. The women are collecting all the seed that has brought to the community by the project and selling it back to the community with fair price. The women cooperatives were established following the formal cooperative establishment guideline by the woreda agriculture office. The women cooperatives lack training and experiences to cope up with the needs of the community yet they are trying to accommodate to the level of their knowledge. However, during our field observation the women have performed not according to the initial plan and it needs to be strengthened by different trainings and field visits to other areas. We have observed some seed at the store even after the rain has gone this has to be improved for the next.

Demonstration site:

The project has managed to establish dry land agriculture practical learning site as a demonstration for the agro-pastorals living in the area. The site is located at Hayadmitu kebele administration and the evaluation team has observed the site. Inside the demonstration different activities has been performed just for teaching and learning purpose. The major activities done inside the demonstration site are water harvesting structures (small ponds and half moon structures), dimba garden, traditional Somali hut with its garden and main field for maize and other adaptable crops to the area to be tested at the field.

Water harvesting structures are done very well and the evaluation team has appreciated the idea of harvesting water inside the field and the feelings among community members towards this are very good. This activity has to be strengthened and in relation to the objectives of dry land farming the project is doing very well.

Dimba garden is also done in a way it convey a strong message to community by constructing small well as a water reservoir in the middle and doing different sort of activities around the well. The evaluation team also appreciated the idea and it is done very well in relation to its objectives of teaching the community.

Somali hut with its backyard/garden is also in the plan of the demonstration site and the team has also observed it inside the demonstration site. However, the house is constructed in the middle of the farm and during the rainy season it makes living difficult according to the guard who informed the team. The project has to change the location of the house to higher ground. And generally speaking more effort has to be made to beautify the compound of Somali hut with its backyard since this is the point where the community grasps good local knowledge from the project activities.

The **main field** where the maize and other crops are being tested is well planned. During the evaluation period the team has observed good standing maize and beans in the field. And the method used to make a comparison between the local varieties with traditional sowing practices against improved seed sown in row convey strong message to the community. The evaluation team has appreciated the idea and to be more realistic such activities has to be done on the farmer's field rather than only focusing in the project demonstration sites. For the next season the team strongly recommends to take practical action to work on farmer's field along the project demonstration site.

Nursery site:

The nursery site in messajid community is one of the activities carried out by the project during 2014 – 2015 project periods accomplishment. Interviewed farmer said that the site is functional for many years and it is producing different types of fruit and forest trees two times a year. The evaluation team has also observed the different types of seedling growing in different parts of the target community. The evaluation team has also assessed the demand for the trees grown in the nursery site and many responded that in unlike the previous phases this time the project is growing and distributing types of trees that have demand in the community.

According to the observation of the team most of the distributed seedlings were fruit and shade trees. The evaluation team has also observed this from sample farmers' field that seedlings are growing on their farm. The evaluation team appreciated the effort made by the project to introduce different types of fruit trees to the community and most of this fruit trees are performing well in the communities' farm. However, the effort of strengthening the nursery site has to be rechecked and the team has agreed that there are still some gaps between the site and

the offices which are located far and there should be system of monitoring and follow up regularly.

Area closure:

Area closure is one of the ideas in the project document with the objective of teaching the community on rehabilitation of bare lands and improving pastures for their cattle's and other livestock's. To this end the project has done good job in fencing a total of five hectares of land in Hayadmitu kebele administration and the enclosed areas are fenced by thorny bush very well and it is protected from the entrance of livestock's in the community. The interviewed agro-pastoral in the community has good feelings towards protecting the area and the community mobilization work has been done very well. The evaluation team has also observed the inside of the enclosed areas and different water harvesting structures are also being made inside of it. For the future the project has to plan different types of trees and grass to improve soil fertility and pasture.

Women empowerment and home management

Nutrition and health hygiene trainings: the evaluation team has visited the sites where the project has conducted trainings in the community. The training of health and nutrition was organized by the project and woreda health office. The team has come to know that there was close cooperation with woreda health office in organizing the trainings. During the discussion with Hayadmitu and Messajid kebele administrators the participants were mostly female. The evaluation team has also assessed the relevance of training topics to the community and most of the community members are very much interested with the training method and areas of the training topic covers. However, most of the interviewed community members were dissatisfied with the accommodations of the project. When the community members come to the training the project is just preparing meal during the training without paying any form of incentives to the community. The evaluation team has also confirmed from the project that community level trainings are conducted without any form of fees but in special occasions for community members who have come traveling long distances some form of payment should be made to motivate the participants.

Grinding mill: during the new phase Filtu Food Security project it was planned to establish two grinding mill sites one in rain fed agriculture practicing community and the other in irrigation

agriculture area. The plan for purchasing the mill and commencing the work was the second quarter of the second year according to the annual action plan of the project. As the evaluation team has visited the site the community mobilization work has been done very well. The interviewed community members have informed the team that grinding mill was their immediate need and they have also participated in the planning of the project document. However, the team has observed some sorts of delaying in implementing according to the annual plan. The evaluation team strongly advises the organisation to take in to serious consideration the issue of bringing and installing the grinding mill as per the plan as the community members are waiting it before the harvest in the field.

Roofing of previously built water points:

In the previous phases the project was highly engaged in constructing underground water reservoirs in different parts of the district and most of the constructed reservoirs were not covered. As observation made by the evaluation team during the field visit most of the water reservoirs are holding contaminated water for human health especially for small children and pregnant women. According to the interviewed people in the community sometimes big animals like hyenas found dead inside the reservoirs. To this end the project has made a plan to cover two water points annually that were built by the project in the previous phases.

In the year 2014 the project has done the roofing of two water points in separate kebeles as per the plan and the construction quality was also good. For the year 2015 the project annual plan suggested to construct two of the birikas roof in September and so far the community mobilization work is done good. However; the plan of the organisation to make roofing for Birkas and the demand in the community is not matching. Therefore, the project has to devise a ways where it can cover more birkas in the next phases as many of the water points are standing without roofing. Generally speaking the roofing of birkas was done in good working relations and cooperation with woerda water office and respective kebele administration.

Capacity Building trainings:

Dry land agriculture techniques training: According to the project objectives which is ensuring the food security status of the household in target community the right knowledge of dry land agriculture is so essential. The project has planned and organised this training in collaboration with “*Ethiopian institute of agricultural research Melkassa research centre*” for five people from the project and district agriculture office experts. The district agriculture office

participants have told the evaluation team the training was so helpful in boosting their implementation capacity. However, the project has planned the training only for few people at office level but for the future the project has to extend its plan to include more people from the farmers and the development agents (DA's) working under each kebeles assigned by the government.

Nursery site management training: Bandhire community is located at about 120 km from the project base the training was organised for them to prepare their own min nursery site in their locality so that they can grow whatever trees they want instead of transporting seedlings long distances. The evaluation team has appreciated the idea of establishing min nursery site at that remote place. But the project should also put in place proper monitoring and supervision plan since it has been monitored only few times from the project.

Water pump operator trainings: the project has also planned to conduct this training for cooperatives and individuals in Bandhire who has water pumps. The evaluation team found that such trainings are very crucial for community living in Bandhire since most of the water pumps are getting damaged. But from the project side only providing training will equip them with technical knowledge yet they lack basic maintenance equipments. The project has to think about providing tools with the training that will enable them to be more functional.

Pest control and post harvesting trainings: these trainings were planned for agro-pastoral living in rain fed agricultural and the training was planned in close consultation with district agriculture office and kebele administration. The interviewed participants of the training have confirmed that the training is so helpful for their agricultural activities on their own field. The evaluation team has assessed the training materials and it was organised and conducted by the experts from agriculture office and it was more practical training. In order to attain its objectives the project has to increase such kinds of training in its future project plan to include more kebeles and frequencies of the training as it is planned only once in the year for selected agro-pastoral. That is seen to be not matching with the needs in the community as most of the farmers have less experience in agriculture as they have lived their lives as pastorals for decades.

Field visit and experience sharing: Farmer's field visit is one of the project components in the new project document. During the year 2014 the project has managed to take 15 people from three

kebele administration /Hayadmitu, Messajid and Bandhire/ and district agriculture office. The field visit was made to the areas that have the same climate condition with Filtu district and most of the interviewed participants of experience sharing have good reflections about it. The evaluation team has also observed significant change in two of farmer's field who has motivated with what they have seen in other area. More importantly this kind of farmers field visit has to be strengthened and more people has to join the visit. The project has to scale up its plan for the next farmers field visit.

Project management at the field;

The management capacity of a project is evaluated based on planning, implementing and community mobilization capacity of the project office. In this regard, as it has been observed in various sites of the intervention area the evaluation team convinced that the project has good planning, implementing and community mobilization capacity with very limited staffs compared to the very work load and distant project sites both in terms of human resource and logistic supply management. As a result of these, the project could produce the planned outputs and achieve the project objectives. For this it can be said that the project management of the project office is good.

Sustainability issues:

As observed from the field visit and project document reviews at the office level the project sustainability seems very sounding to the evaluation team. This is so, community mobilization and participation of the community under each project component with their free labor is there. With the dry land agricultural practices; the establishment of demonstration site, the farmers field visit, establishment of seed bank cooperatives are all contributing to prolonged use of the project outputs both in terms of physical and psychological aspects of it. Likewise the distribution of different types of multi-purpose forest and fruit tree seedlings in the long term will have a positive impact of sustaining the project outputs as the fruit trees will attract the farmers and positively affects the work nature of the community in ensuring sustainability of the outcomes. However, more community mobilization and increasing the number of community participation and beneficiaries need to be done by the project. Further, the evaluation team has observed that though the project is doing good job but it is in a very small amount compared to the need in the community even in selected target villages.

Compliance with government policy

In the Ethiopian government Poverty Reduction Paper Health/Nutrition and food security issues are the top priorities that the government is now doing. With the food security projects; developing local ownership capacity of the project outputs and management autonomy to the lowest possible level, promoting involvement of all stakeholders, gradual full cost recovery methods of distributing improved seeds and integrating planning for Nutrition/Health and hygiene with food security issues are the pillars. In this regard the project is doing its best.

6. Analysis/Discussion

The midterm evaluation team has visited different project sites for four days and afterwards the team discussed on issues they observed during the field visit time. The aim of this discussion is to identify the strengths of the project, problem or changes encountered by the project, lesson learnt and to draw possible recommendations to improve the performance of the project in the remaining one and half years. Most importantly the team hopes that the project will improve itself by tackling the shortcomings by active and genuine participation of all stakeholders.

What is good in the project;

During this evaluation period the team composed from Somali regional state BoFED, BoLCRD, Liben Zone DPB, filtu worda Livestock crop rural development, water office and project office has conducted discussion on various issues and identified some of the points as the strengths of the office which enabled them accomplish the above stated outputs of the project;

- a) The evaluation team has observed that, during the year 2014 - 2015 the project has maintained good working relationships with woreda and zonal pertinent line department. In most cases participatory planning and decision making has been identified by the project, target community and sector offices at the district.
- b) Introduction of fruit and multipurpose trees in the community is now becoming common in most villages of the project. Banana fruit tree in Bandhire is now very common and cooperatives engaged in planting the fruit is benefiting from it. Likewise papaya and guava trees are also performing very well in Messajig kebele administration. The introduction of these fruit and multipurpose trees are becoming more common and it has contributed for the participation of more farmers in to the agricultural activities.

- c) Inside the demonstration site the evaluation team has seen that the different technique, approaches and adaptability trials for varieties of seeds both in the demonstration site and farmers field. The demonstration site is serving as mini research centre for the project and some good results has been observed from it. Water harvesting structures (*half moon, semi-circular bend, water collecting well lined with plastic sheet*) introduced in the demonstration site for teaching of the target community has caught the attentions of many agro-pastorals. The “*Dimba Garden*” and traditional Somali hut with its backyards are planned in a way it conveys a very local and convenient knowledge to the target community in growing fruit and vegetables by using water from the wells and animal manure as a fertilizer. The evaluation team has agreed that the project endeavors in implementing the planned activities in the community is very well and needs to be strengthened.
- d) Farmer’s field visit to other areas with similar climatic condition and dry land agricultural techniques trainings organized by the project has attracted all the participants due to the importance of the activities. And the project has been using this opportunities to introduce its activities with less resistance as the farmers who have participated in the visit are willing to take the role of pioneers.
- e) As indicated in the report and field visit, the participation of the community members in the different activities of the project and commitment of the project staffs are very high. Though the project has limited staff the implementing capacity and project management skill of the staff is also high. This in turn indicates that the project has good relationships with the community members and is able to mobilize the society towards achieving the projects objectives. Further, in most villages where the evaluation team has visited the project is very well recognized by ordinarily person among the community and that has built good reputation of the project interventions.

Short comings of the project

During the field visit the evaluation team has observes certain issues that are not coping up with the project document agreement signed at the region and regional NGO guidelines. As a result of this the evaluation team after its discussion based on what has been seen in the field has raised the following very crucial issues in the project which are labeled as short comings. As explained under this for some issues raised by the evaluation team the focal person for the

project and other staffs presented their reason behind it and the team has decided to present the whole idea as it mentioned here after.

a) Delays in the implementation of activities

During the midterm evaluation of “*Filtu Food Security project 2014-2016*” the project evaluation team has visited different sites in the community and also review of all the necessarily documents at the office including project performance reports were done. As a result of intensive review of the project activities by the team some of underlying delays has been observed with certain activities. For instance the installation of grinding mill at Hayadmy and Bandhere community is one of the points raised from interviewed agro-pastorals living in the area. The annual plan for such activities were the first and second quarter of 2015 but so far less activities being done at the ground. Likewise, nutrition/home management trainings planned for the first and second quarter of the year were not done according to the annual plan of schedule. For this concerns the project manager and other staff responded like this;

Observed delays by the evaluation team are true but the causes of this are many and wide. The critical problem here is that the project is running its activities by very old vehicles and in most cases the vehicle stays either in the compound or local garages for maintenance. Further, the purchases of such big items are administered through the central office located in Addis Ababa and due to the long distance between the project and head office such delays has happened. But at the moment the issue is being solved and the purchasing committee has already bought the item it will be transported soon.

b) The need in the community versus the project;

During the field visit to the different sites of the project, the evaluation team has interviewed different community members on the various intervention areas of the project. And the community members raised their concern that the project is doing good job, but the number of beneficiaries they are targeting for capacity building training, farmers field visit and seed distribution are very limited. In addition to this, the evaluation team has observed that the need for agricultural tools for agro-pastoral is big but the provision of such item to the community is very limited. The project has to re-think on those issues raised above here on the next plan for the remaining one year and half till the end of the project agreement period.

c) Supervision of distance project sites

It is mentioned in the project document that proper monitoring and supervision of activities should be made on regular bases so that the project examines its performances ahead of time and re adjust itself. The evaluation team has find that for the project activities located at the irrigation site around 120 km from the base monitoring of activities has been done less frequently compared to other project activities. The team strongly suggests supervision of activities has to be done by the project as per the plan at least once in the quarter. However, the project focal person and staffs agree on the comment and also they raised the challenges that the project is facing with vehicle or other transportation. Since the works in those kebeles are so encouraging and significant results are also observed.

d) The issues of livestock not addressed

The existing data from the district agriculture office reveals that filtu district population in general earns above 80% of their income from the livestock sector. As most of the community leads a pastoral life style; omitting such big issue in food security project seems unlikely. The evaluation team strongly advises the project to work on the inclusion of livestock component in to the project. The data from the district agriculture office shows that still there is huge gap in the livestock sector in the district and the project has to take in to consideration this area in to the next project phase on in to the remaining one year and half period.

Challenges of the project

The evaluation team has come to agreement that the project challenges could be the following:

- The Evaluation team has reviewed the project document, reports and feedback both from the community and the local authorities. The project is being run by limited fund compared to different activities under implementation and implication towards limited funds run by the project is felt among all project stakeholders this in return hampers the project reputation in the longer term.
- As it is mentioned elsewhere in the document and the previous project evaluation reports the project focuses on dry land agriculture in Ethiopian southern Somali areas the project might face challenges as the area is characterized as water scarcity region. In the rain fed

areas the condition of the rain is in most cases uncertain hence the failure of crops in dry season may discourage the project activities as well as the agro-pastoral.

- As many of the agro-pastorals have less experience on the techniques of dry and agriculture their working culture on agriculture is still very low. Due to the fact that they have less experience and expectations the agro-pastoral might not move with the pace of the project in practical field work, hence the project has to device proper community mobilization tools and mechanisms at the ground to combat a kind of these challenges.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The midterm evaluation team assigned for this particular assignment has observed the different sites of the project and accomplished activities in the area by the project during the first one and half years. Further the mid-term evaluation team has conducted small scale assessment among the target community and interviewed selected community members about their opinions on the project and its outputs. Based on the findings from the project sites, interviewed community members and document review at the office level the evaluation team has come to conclude some of the key points that are listed here after: -

- As a team composed from different sectors review of demonstration site which was done in hayadmitu kebele administration has introduced different new techniques on dry land agricultural practices to the community; hence the evaluation team strongly believes that the right information disseminated from the demonstration site will bring significant change in dry land agricultural practices among interested agro-pastoral in the area.
- The different capacity building trainings organized for agro-pastoral, district agriculture office, and project staffs has significantly increased the capacity of their practices and implementation capacity for the agro-pastoral in relation to the dry land agricultural practices. Most importantly farmers field visits to other areas with the same climate condition has significantly improved the experiences of agro-pastoral and creates a feeling that they can do more by just committing themselves to the work regardless of the water shortage in the area as long as they applied the different techniques they have observed.

- The project has introduced new varieties of maize through the established seed bank cooperatives and the seed has performed very well. Some agro-pastorals have got good result from the field where they produce 45 to 60 quintals per hectare. And the agro-pastorals are using the seed for future though the yield is decreasing from one generation to the next.
- As it has been observed and stated in the previous evaluation report, the farmer's product from agricultural field mainly focuses only in covering the house hold consumption from the field. Surplus for sale in most cases are practically absent for crop/cereals production, as a result agriculture remains general viewed as a means for household subsistence. However, the evaluation team has observed that agro-pastorals in Bandhire area established cooperatives are able to sale bananas to the market.
- The plan for establishing two grinding mill has highly welcomed by the community in both kebele administrations but the implementation of the planned activity has not gone with the pan. The delay in the implementation has affected the community negatively and the project has to stick to the plan for the remaining periods of the project.

Recommendations;

- EEMYDASSC expected to implement more activities in the area than targeting very few community members which does not match the higher need in the community, hence the project has to improve more and commit itself to address more beneficiaries,
- Different capacity building trainings and farmers field visits has increased the implementation capacity of woreda experts, project staffs and agro-pastorals. As a result this has to be strengthened.
- The activities done in the demonstration site are transferring important knowledge in dry land agriculture to the agro-pastoral community. As a result the replications of these activities in other kebeles and sub villages need to be included in the plan.
- The concept of area closure among agro-pastoral community needs more public awareness raising and community mobilization to protect the area from any form of livestock entrance and disturbance by the community members.
- Nursery site is contributing very much towards the protection of the environment from desertification. As many of the trees distributed in the community are performing very

well and the activities of the nursery site has to be strengthened with more drought resistance types of trees.

- Distribution of improved seed through “*Seed bank cooperatives*” has been observed during the field visit by the team. The cooperative needs further capacity building trainings and exposure visits to other areas. And this has to be strengthened.
- Strengthening the existing nursery site to produce various types of fruit and forest trees seedlings are very important since these trees are getting better acceptance from the community and focuses on the long term food security issues.
- The team almost visited all the mentioned/ activities area without any challenges but as observed in different villages’ water is still the top priority of the community.
- The organization should intentional include the WASH component in the project and continue its activities for the drought affected community living in Filtu woreda and to convince the back donor that the major problem within the society is lack of water and to increase water reservoirs in order to minimize the scarcity of water in filtu along with food security component.
- The organization should closely work with the line departments and other concern government bodies.
- The regional team should obey this monitoring report done by the team from region, zonal and woreda line department to avoid overlap monitoring.