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How Non-Governmental Organizations Facilitate the Development of Cooperative Organizations? An Investigation

*¹Meaza Woubishet and ²Dr. R Dayanandan

*¹Executive Director, Joy Development Association, Sidama Region, Ethiopia.

²Professor, Department of Business and Economics, Hawassa University, Ethiopia.

Abstract

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are seen by their proponents as a catalyst for societal change because they are responsive to the needs and problems of their clients, usually the poor, women and children. In an increasingly globalized world, Cooperative organizations are more needed than ever, as a balance to corporate power and as an anchor to the grassroots level of society. The government alone cannot provide a substantial support, (in the form of financial, research, rural infrastructure, technology and so on) for the development of cooperatives to overcome the complexity of the problems. Hence the government allowed and encouraged both national and international NGOs be one of the actors of cooperative development. However, how far the NGOs intervention is succeeded in achieving the objectives of development of cooperatives is unknown due to dearth of studies. Hence this paper focuses on the role of NGOs in development of Cooperatives in the study area. The study employed mixed research design to address the developed objectives. Both primary and secondary data were used and the primary data were collected from Cooperative members and the NGO professionals and the secondary data were obtained from different reports. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample District, Cooperatives, NGOs and the Respondents. To determine the sample size of 235 members, statistical formula forwarded by Poduri (2000) was used. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS (Version 20) software with descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, mean and standard Deviation etc. Further, inferential statistics like paired sample t-test, one sample t-test, and Chi-square test were used to arrive the meaningful results. The research out comes indicate that the contribution of sample NGOs in the development of agricultural cooperative is well acknowledge. They have huge potential to became one of the corner stone in agriculture and economic development especially in rural areas where the united force of farmer can change their own lives and the overall livelihood. Many of the cooperatives were benefited from the development programs under taken by sample NGOs. Further, NGOs project development with the idea of cooperatives, involvement of the government official, in provision of training, and notification of stakeholders about the phase-out strategies enabled the agricultural cooperatives to sustain their productivity. Hence, the role of NGOs in development of Agricultural Cooperatives in the study area is very crucial.

Keywords: Non-government organizations, agricultural cooperatives, development, contribution

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in development remains an area of substantial debate. Neo-liberal economic policies such as the structural adjustment policies of the 1990s backed this approach that directing donors fund through NGOs instead of state. As a result, NGOs have become major players in the field of social, economic and environmental affairs, particularly on issues of poverty eradication. In connection to this, various international development organizations such as United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund consider NGOs as key partners in accomplishing their development programs (UN, 2005) [22]. The increase in donors disbursements/NGOs spending is considered as progress responding to the problem of food insecurity (World Bank, 2006). And there are also considerable interests from scholars in recent years in the ability of NGOs to work with the rural

poor in order to improve their quality of life and economic status.

On the other hand, many criticisms about NGOs and their response to poverty have been given from different sources. Some scholars have questioned the role NGOs play in development process by explaining how the sector has played in affecting the local power capacity (Shurke and Kathina, 2002) [19]. Paul (1996) [18] in an article 'NGOs and World Bank', argues that the move to NGOs sector is a matter of using NGOs to assess the effects of the structural adjustment and poverty eradication programs. The rapid growth and expansion of NGOs worldwide attest to their growing critical role in the development process. At the international level, NGOs are perceived as vehicles for providing democratization and economic growth in Third World countries. Within Third World countries, NGOs are increasingly considered good substitutes for weak states and

markets in the promotion of economic development and the provision of basic services to most people.

NGOs are seen by their proponents as a catalyst for societal change because they are responsive to the needs and problems of their clients, usually the poor, women and children. Because of targeting and being responsive to marginalized groups in society NGOs are being heralded as important vehicles for empowerment, democratization and economic development. In fact, some NGOs are driven by strong values and interests, geared toward empowering communities that have been traditionally disempowered.

Perhaps the greatest potential NGOs have is to generate self-help solutions to problems of poverty and powerlessness in society. This is based on the view of NGOs as independent, efficient, less bureaucratic, grassroots oriented, participatory and contributing to sustainable development in grassroots communities. But for NGOs to remain independent of donor or elite control and achieve their social and economic goals, they have to work diligently toward capacity building and financial sustainability.

Cooperatives are one of the key sectors to bring development, in to people's equal economic distribution, to develop democracy and to establish sustainable social and economic community These cooperatives enable to bring agricultural sector rapid growth specially to alleviate rural poverty and by improving the livelihood of the rural community to change modern agriculture and to fulfill the five years transformation and growth plan and to maximize production and productivity by providing the input to the farmers and by adding value with the production and by accessing linkage to farmers (FCA, 2014) ^[9].

In an increasingly globalized world, cooperative organizations are more needed than ever, as a balance to corporate power and as an anchor to the grassroots level of society. Cooperatives hold the potential of being a driving force in the developing world, provided they can operate in a truly democratic environment. For the poor around the world, cooperatives can provide a much-needed opportunity for self-determination and empowerment.

However, cooperatives are facing lot of challenges due to many reasons. According to Bernard *et al.* (2010) ^[2] the challenges of cooperatives are: Tension exists between the rowing roles and responsibilities of cooperatives in economy, and the limited capacity available to manage their roles and responsibilities. A similar tension exists between cooperatives' efforts to develop effective internal governance systems and decision-making processes, and their need to respond to external priorities, market opportunities, and general changes in Ethiopia's wider socio-economic conditions. Other tensions emerge from the efforts to promote cooperatives as an inclusive solution to realizing market opportunities, and the limits on inclusiveness posed by the actual design and function of cooperatives. The discussion below further illuminates why these tensions and challenges exist, particularly why cooperatives have struggled with capacity building and how their constraints are related to other institutions. Cooperative formation often starts from a government initiative through its government structures.

Government also facilitates support from NGOs to cooperatives, in terms of materials finance and training. The formation of cooperative unions is also motivated by the Cooperatives can play an important role in our common efforts to fight poverty and promote democracy. In an increasingly globalized world, cooperative organizations are more needed than ever, as a balance to corporate power and as

an anchor to the grassroots level of society. Cooperatives hold the potential of being a driving force in the developing world, provided they can operate in a truly democratic environment. The government alone cannot provide a substantial support, (in the form of financial, research, rural infrastructure, technology and so on) for the development of cooperatives to overcome the complexity of the problems. Then the point of convergence should be to explore the possibilities of intervention of the NGOs towards cooperative development. Hence the government allowed and encouraged both national and international NGOs be one of the actors of cooperative development. However, how far the NGOs intervention is succeeded in achieving the objectives of development of cooperatives is unknown due to dearth of studies.

2. Specific Objectives

- To assess the contribution of NGOs for the development of Cooperatives in the study area.
- To examine the Impact of NGOs' Contribution on the Livelihood of Cooperative Members
- To investigate sustainability phases out strategy of NGOs in the study area.

3. Materials and Methods

The research has been carried out in Meskan district situated in the Gurage zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State. The qualitative method involves subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior whereas the quantitative method is concerned with the generation of data in numeral form (Kothari, 2012) ^[14]. Qualitative approach to research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to the social problem, whereas, Quantitative research is a means to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2009) ^[7]. Mixed approach is a method that combines both (qualitative and quantitative) approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell, 2009) ^[7]. Therefore, the study employed mixed research design and the quantitative aspects of the study mainly focused on the contribution of NGOs to agricultural cooperatives, information was collected in order to develop and triangulate the presentation of results obtained from quantitative method. To attain the desired objectives, the study depends on the data obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from cooperative members who are involved in agricultural activities, cooperative management bodies, and representative of NGOs by using closed and open-ended questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion and Key informant interviews. Secondary information was gathered from documents, reports, journals, proceedings, bulletins, Internet, periodicals, various books and other relevant materials.

To select the district, villages, Cooperatives and the respondents, multi-stage sampling procedure was followed. For a multistage sampling technique, sample sizes for all the stages should be specified in advance. To determine the size for a planned sample, importance should be given to the required precision, error of estimation, costs of sampling, and the financial resources as well as the time available for the survey (Poduri, 2000).

At the first stage among 13 woredas in Gurage Zone, Meskan Woreda was selected purposively because of high intervention by NGOs towards agricultural cooperatives and geographical proximity. In the second stage, three NGOs

namely Self-elp Africa, SOS SAHEL and Agri-Service Ethiopia were selected purposively because these NGOs have been supporting large number of agricultural cooperatives and have better experience in their activities. In the third stage, three agricultural cooperatives among 10 cooperatives from Self Help Africa, two agricultural cooperatives among six cooperatives from SOS SAHEL and one among four agricultural cooperatives from Agri-Service Ethiopia were selected by using simple random sampling technique. In the fourth stage, Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling technique was applied to get the proportional sample size of respondents from each selected agricultural cooperatives. According to the data from Woreda Administration Information Office, the total cooperative members in six selected cooperatives functioning in the woreda are 1949. In order to draw sample size from the whole population statistical formula forwarded by Poduri (2000) was used. The formula is:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 \alpha/2}{Z^2 \alpha/2 + 4(N-1)e^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size; N = Population Size and e = Precision error; $Z_{\alpha/2}$ = The standard normal distribution at 6% level

$$n = \frac{1949(1.96)^2}{(1.96)^2 + 4(1949-1)0.06^2} \approx 235$$

In the last stage, individual respondents from each selected agricultural cooperatives were selected using systematic random sampling technique.

Both open and closed ended questionnaire was prepared, pre-tested, modified and administered to the sample members of agricultural cooperatives through directive interview method. The questionnaire was designed to gather data pertaining to demographic characteristics, the contribution of NGOs regarding Asset Building, Farm Input Service, Education and training, Market Development Services and Health services, the impact of NGOs contribution, Factors influencing the contribution of NGOs, and Sustainable phase-out strategy of NGOs. In addition, key informant interview also carried out among cooperative managers from selected cooperatives, Meskan district agricultural office head, two agricultural development agents, and six NGO employees.

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) [17], data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. The data collected through questionnaire was edited, coded and entered into a computer software using SPSS (version 20). The analysis was performed using descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation etc. Further, inferential statistics like binomial test, paired sample t-test, one sample t-test, and Chi-square test were used to see the contribution of NGOs on agricultural cooperative development in the study area. Data collected through interviews and focus group discussants were analyzed qualitatively using narrative for triangulation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Background Characteristics of Respondents

Analyzing background characteristics of the respondents is important to understand the profile of the respondents included in the study. Accordingly, in this sub section, cooperative members' sex, age, educational level, marital

status and household size have been assessed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Agricultural cooperatives tend to be relevant to a road way of the community including both male and female household heads. Accordingly, sex wise distributions of the sample respondents were assessed and the results found that, 90.2% of cooperative members are male and 9.8% of them are female. This shows that the number of female agricultural cooperative members are less than that of male. This is due to the practice of holding the land in the name of male headed households and they join cooperatives to avail the benefit to develop their farm activities. Also, since women are engaged in household activities, they might not have adequate time to participate in the cooperative affairs which discourage them to be a member of cooperatives which needs attention from the responsible bodies to have equal participation.

Age of the cooperative members has been classified in four categories, i.e. 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64. The majority (63.8%) of sample members are in the range of 35-44 years. Another category, 25-34 represents about 25.5%, the cooperative members with the range of 45-54 years accounts for 9.4% and finally insignificant number of cooperative members, i.e. only 1.3% fall under the age range of 55 and above. Since age is a continuous variable and measure in years, the average age of the cooperative members is manipulated and found to be 40.63 years old. This shows that almost all sample respondents are in the productive age group, which is a good sign of cooperative development.

Table 1: Background Characteristics of Sample Respondents

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Mean
Sex			
Male	212	90.2	
Female	23	9.8	
Total	235	100	
Age			
25-34	60	25.5	
35-44	150	63.8	40.63
45-54	22	9.4	
55-64	03	1.3	
Total	235	100	
Marital Status			
Single	04	1.7	
Married	231	88.5	
Widowed	23	9.8	
Total	235	100	
Education Level			
Did not attend formal education	60	25.5	
Primary first cycle(1-4)	149	63.4	
Primary second cycle (5-8)	19	8.1	
Secondary and above	07	3.0	
Total	235	100	
Household Size			
1-4	32	13.6	
5-8	159	67.7	6.21
9-12	44	18.7	
Total	235	100	

Source: Survey data

As far as marital status is concerned, among the sample agricultural cooperative members, about 88.5% were married, 9.8% are widowed and remaining 1.7% are not married. This is because women are recognized as a household head only when their husbands are passed away. Following this, widowed women are considered as household heads and become a member of a cooperative.

As represented in the Table 1, information on cooperative members' literacy status was also selected to understand the capacity of education to push farmers towards agricultural cooperatives. Among the total respondents about 63.4% of them have attended grade 1-4, 8.1% reached at the range of

grade 5-8 and only 3.0% went up to secondary and above. Another significant sample member (25.5%) has not attended formal education, which is also responsible for their vulnerability status.

Sample households with 1-4 members is 13.6%, significant portion of the households (67.7%) were reported to have members ranging from 5-8 and about 44 (18.7%) cooperative members have the family members from 9-12 which is large in number. Furthermore, the average household size is 6.21 which is higher than regional average of 4.9 members (DHS, 2011) which needs attention.

Table 2: Membership Duration and Means of Information about NGOs Activities

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Mean
Membership Duration in Years			
1-3	09	3.8	
4-6	146	62.1	5.96
7-9	76	32.3	
Above 9	04	1.7	
Total	235	100	
Source of Information about NGOs Activities			
Radio	74	31.5	
Cooperative	203	86.4	
NGOs	53	22.6	
Friend/Relative	85	36.2	
DA	92	39.1	
Total	235	100	

Duration of stay in the cooperative indicates the members experience and trust towards cooperatives and the benefit needed and acquired for their agricultural development. Hence, sample members were asked about their membership duration and the result (Table 2) shows that the average engagement of a household in cooperative membership is 5.96 years and majority of them (62.1%) are in the cooperatives for 4-6 years. The focus group discussants informed that some of them were included lately and there are also households that are not included in any agricultural cooperatives in the study area. This is the other aspect to justify that cooperative development in the region is at infant stage. Key informants were also supporting this idea by mentioning that the main reason for such a trend is the community has lack of knowledge about the objectives of cooperatives. This result also consistent with other study conducted by Tagay (2013) [21]. According to his finding, there are many people who still not formed as membership in cooperative but do their routine tasks on the basis of simple cooperation, such as; *dego*, *iddir* and *ikub*. This shows that still the promotion of cooperative is not at all enough.

Information plays a greater role in every aspect of life. As a pulling factor it raises one's interest up towards particular action. As it is found from the result of FGD and KII, due to lack of knowledge about the importance of cooperatives many of the households have not become the member of agricultural cooperatives. Moreover, to develop the agricultural and getting benefit out of it, the farmers need variety of information about newly developed technology, weather condition as well as market condition. Also, they need information regarding the stakeholders who are working on their development. As shown in Table 4.2, the majority (86.4%) of agricultural cooperative members get information

about NGOs activity from their cooperatives followed by DA (18.1%)

4.2. Contribution of NGOs for Cooperatives Development

Agriculture and rural development is the oldest, yet still the most important area of NGOs involvement (Desalegn, Akalewold & Yoseph, 2008). The absence of social and economic institutions that promote and protect the interests of agricultural and rural population attracts NGOs (Lekorwe & Mpabanga, 2007). NGOs provide support by arranging experience sharing program among cooperatives, which helps the cooperatives to widen their perspectives. They also engage in asset building activities, supplying farm input services, giving education through short-term training especially for cooperative members in different themes, including: crop production, livestock production, market development and health service. Among the wide variety of NGOs contributions, the following were identified as common in the study area:

4.2.1. Asset Building: According to Sheffrin (2003), anything tangible or intangible that is capable of being owned or controlled to produce value and that is held to have positive economic value is considered as an asset. It is expected that the sample NGOs are supposed to involve in asset building in the cooperatives and the members as well. Hence an assessment has been made in this research on asset building support of NGOs to agricultural cooperatives and the arrived results are presented in Table 3. As seen from the Table 3, majority (75.7%) of respondents agreed that due to the NGOs support cooperatives could build storing facilities which helpful to the members to store the products so that they can wait up

to getting fair price in the market, 48.9% of them reported that NGOs supported the farmers by increasing irrigation source for cultivation so that they could overcome the problem of irrigation for their crops. In addition, 33.2% of respondents acknowledge that NGOs supported them to purchase agricultural machineries which facilitate them in cultivation and

only 19.2% of respondents replied that they have got support from NGOs to purchase livestock assets. However, it is observed that except storing facilities, the sample NGOs were not able to cover most of the sample farmers in other types of services. The data were further tested for checking the representativeness of the data by using one-sample binomial test.

Table 3: Contribution of NGOs in Asset Building (n=235)

Variables	No. of Respondents	%	Test Prop.	p-value
Building Store			0.5	0.000*
Yes	178	75.7		
No	57	24.3		
Improved Irrigation Source for Cultivation			0.5	0.794
Yes	120	951.1		
No	115	48.95		
Purchased Agricultural Machineries			0.5	0.000*
Yes	78	33.2		
No	157	66.8		
Purchased Livestock Asset			0.5	0.000*
Yes	45	19.2		
No		80.8		

Source: Survey data

Note: * Significant at 1% level

Accordingly, building store has shown positive significance at $p < 0.001$ which confirm the solid support got from NGOs by majority of the respondents. Store service is more useful for red paper cultivators so that the farmers can dry the red chilly properly and protect it safely. However, the store is not suited to store other types of vegetables since the store is not standard.

4.2.2. Farm Input Service: It is obvious that farm inputs services in any form are basic requirements for

agriculture development. Raising the productivity of the crops, vegetables, trees, and livestock is depends on the farm inputs and services (Bairwa, Kushwaha & Bairwa, 2011). If the farmers get adequate input for the farm they can use the idle land for cultivation which contribute their employment and income for their enhancement of livelihood. Therefore, NGOs contribution in terms of farm input services in the study area was assessed and presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Contribution of NGOs by providing Farm Input Service (n=235)

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Test Prop.	p-value
Crop Loan Supply			0.5	0.000***
Yes	78	33.2		
No	157	66.8		
Seed Distribution			0.5	0.000***
Yes	187	79.6		
No	48	20.4		
Fertilizer Distribution			0.5	0.000***
Yes	86	36.6		
No	149	63.4		
Pesticide Distribution			0.5	0.000***
Yes	149	63.4		
No	86	36.6		
Production Technology			0.5	0.000***
Yes	225	95.7		
No	10	4.3		

Source: Survey data

Note: *** Significant at 1% level

Regarding NGOs contribution on farm input services, it is found from the survey results, about 33.2% of sample members were received crop loan, majority (79.6%) received seeds such as wheat and maize from NGOs and 36.6%

respondents availed manure/fertilizer from NGOs which are working in the study area. Tangible number respondents (63.4% and 95.7%) were got pesticides and agricultural production technology from the NGOs. Thus, it is inferred

that due to the intervention of the NGOs most of the sample members could get benefit of input services which helped them to enhance their farm production. The results were further tested by using one-sample binomial test and found that seed distribution, pesticide distribution and production technology through cooperatives which helps the members for their agricultural developments and it has shown positive significance at $P < 0.001$. Key informants also confirmed that NGOs provide different agricultural inputs like water pump, manual cultivator, seed moisture meter, small lab equipments, scale, and fertilizers twice a year depends on their product which is very important to improve production quality.

4.2.3. Education and Training: Many NGOs in the study area have involved in public awareness creation activities as part of their intervention through education. The training given by NGOs supports institutional capacity building and has helped create a more stable and functional environment for cooperative unions (Bezabih, 2009) [3]. Supporting the farmers through education and training enhance their knowledge on farm management and contribute to enhance their production and productivity. Hence an

assessment was made in this research regarding the contribution of selected NGOs in providing education and training to the cooperative members and the results are portrayed in Table 5.

There are different types of training provided by sample NGOs to the cooperative members. As table 5 shows, out of the total sample respondents, majority of the cooperative members had got training on input application (97.9%), cultivation method (99.1%) and post-harvest handling (97.0%). On the other hand, below 50% of sample cooperative members had got training on forage seed multiplication and seed management (45.1%), and water lifting technology (44.7%). Regarding livestock production, majority (above 59.1%) of the respondents had got adequate training on fattening, poultry, breeding/rearing, feed management and dairying. However, few cooperative members had got adequate training on sustainable forage development. This indicates that the selected NGOs have been involving in scaling up the capacity of the farmers so as to increase their production and productivity of on farm and of farm activities ultimately improves their welfare status.

Table 5: Contribution of NGOs in providing Education and Training (n=235)

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Training on Crop Production		
Input application	230	97.9
Post-harvest handling	228	97.0
Cultivation method	233	99.1
Water lifting technology	105	44.7
Forage seed multiplication and seed management	106	45.1
Training on Livestock Production		
Sustainable forage development	60	25.5
Dairying Farming	109	46.4
Poultry Farming	149	63.4
Breeding/rearing	148	63.0
Feed meal management	139	59.1
Fattening of Cattle	151	64.3

Source: Survey data

The key informants from SOS Sahel informed that experts were invited from Addis Ababa to give training for red paper producer cooperatives regarding suitable size, shape and color of the red pepper which yield more. Other trainings related to irrigation methods helped the cooperative members to move away from their reliance on rain-fed agriculture and increase the number of vegetables harvests possible per year.

4.2.4. Market Development Service: Marketing activities are often managed and evaluated in the same way as other development activities. Within the fair-trade arena, the role and the marketing channels used by NGOs also varies. Some organizations take a direct marketing role by acting as wholesalers, with the producers acting as subcontractors and others involved in giving Market information, Grading/standardization, Transportation, Marketing linkage, Marketing promotion and Credit service (Kindness & Gordon, 2001).

Agricultural cooperatives are expected to involve in output marketing activities to the members so as to get fair price to their products and to increase the bargaining power. However,

most the cooperatives do not have sufficient capital to facilitate marketing activities and failed in their objectives. In this situation, if NGOs and other agencies come forward to support the cooperatives, they can perform well in their perspectives. With this background it is necessary to see how the sample NGOs playing a vital role in facilitating the marketing activities of selected cooperatives.

Table 6: Contribution of NGOs in Marketing Services (n=235)

Market Development Activities	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Market information	195	83.0
Grading/standardization	148	63.0
Transportation	101	43.0
Marketing linkage	213	90.6
Marketing promotion	230	97.9
Credit service	197	83.8

Source: Survey data

Based on the survey findings, majority of sample cooperative members has got credit services (83.3%), marketing linkage

services (90.6%), market information (83%), standardization (63%) and market promotional (97.9%) services etc. However, most of them are not satisfied with the transport services provided by the NGOs through cooperatives. From this it can be inferred that the selected NGOs are doing their best to support the cooperative activities. The key informants also informed that NGOs are playing a great role in marketing promotion. For the products they facilitate market place especially in Bazar including Dubai Bazar (for red paper).

4.2.5. Health Service: The health policy of Ethiopia gives more emphasis on prevention and resolves most health problems of the population. The main futures of this policy encouraging partnerships with private and non-governmental health care services. Hence NGOs are encouraged to involve in health services. But in the study area it is observed that NGOs are involving health services through cooperatives to reach the masses effectively. Hence it is essential to know how the cooperative members are benefited out of this service.

Table 7: Contribution of NGOs in Health Services (n=235)

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Health Services		
Primary health care	05	2.1
Medicine supply	18	7.7
Water and sanitation education	22	9.4
Awareness creation on HIV AIDS	228	97.0
Condom distribution	02	0.9
Maternal and child health education	30	12.8

Source: Survey data

As it can be seen in table 7 results, as high as 97.0% of the respondents replied that they got awareness creation on HIV/AIDS, and the other health services provided by the Non-Governmental Organizations. But other services such as primary health care, supply of essential medicines, education on water and sanitation, maternal and health education, the NGOs were not able to satisfy most of the sample respondents. However, though the sample NGOs are not able to provide all type of health services they are dominant in health aspects of the cooperative members by creating awareness about the killing diseases and the curing mechanisms.

4.3. Impact of NGOs' Contribution on the Livelihood of Cooperative Members

The social and economic growth of Ethiopia depends on the performance of rural sector, which dominate by smallholder producer (CIDA, 2005) [6]. NGOs performance can be measured by the magnitude of its contribution and beneficiary's livelihood improvement (www.ngoperformance.org). In this section the impact of NGOs contribution to its beneficiary's livelihood improvement in terms of livestock production and crop production were assessed and discussed in the proceeding section.

4.3.1. Impact of NGOs' Contribution on Livestock Production

Livestock are critical to the wellbeing of rural households in terms of income, savings, food security and employment. The sector is also important to the national economy, contributing sixteen percent of total GDP, one-third of agricultural GDP, and eight percent of export earnings. However, the sector has been hampered by different natural and institutional problems (Elleni, 2007) [8].

Table 8: Respondents with their Livestock (in TLU) before and after the intervention of NGOs (n=235)

Livestock (TLU)	Before NGOs Intervention		After NGOs Intervention		t-test
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	
Less than 2	6	2.8	2	0.9	
2.00-7	76	35.5	17	7.9	
7.01-12	92	43.0	52	24.3	31.51***
12.01-17	28	13.1	72	33.6	
17.01-22	12	5.6	49	22.9	
22 and above	0	2.8	22	10.3	
Total	214	100	214	100	

Source: Survey data

*Note: *** Significant at 1% level*

Therefore, NGOs were involving in the area to improve the sector, and the table 8 results shows how the intervention of NGOs towards the livestock production in the study area. Out of 235 sample cooperative members surveyed, 214 (91.1%) have their own livestock. The livestock includes goat, cow and chicken. It is observed from the survey results (Table 8) there is a significant improvement of livestock rearing has been observed after the intervention. Also Paired sample t-test was carried out to see the significance improvement of livestock amount among the sample cooperative members after intervention by the NGOs. The results of paired t-test (t-value=31.51, p<0.001) revealed that there is statistically significant difference between the average TLUs before and after the intervention of NGOs among the cooperatives members' livestock assets. Hence, it is possible to conclude

that the cooperative members were increased their TLUs due to the NGOs intervention which paves the way for improving their livelihood status.

In addition, FGD participants added that cooperative members were interested to have livestock population due the training on the management of livestock offered by NGOs. Members began to have hybrid cattle and minimizing the number of cattle to create conducive environment for better management and maximizing their productivity by using paddock system for effective utilization of grazing land, producing and feeding improved forages, taking health care through vaccination and medical treatment whenever their animals falling in sickness. Further, cooperative members also started to practice poultry farming by using hybrid varieties and fattening of oxen, sheep and goat in large amount. In addition,

farmers were initiated to use artificial insemination (AI) in vast to improve their cattle genetic capacity.

4.3.2. Impact of NGOs' Contribution on Crop Production

Agriculture contributes about 43% of the country's Gross Domestic Product and it accounts for about 90% of the export earnings (CIDA, 2005) [6]. However, a mixture of natural and human made factors has hampered its contribution to the country economy. In Ethiopia, agricultural production is not

always a problem in good year; the southern and western Ethiopia can produce adequate cereal and pulses to feed the population. Subsistence agriculture-usually involving farmers working on very small landholding dominated the economy of the country (CIDA, 2005) [6]. According to SNNPR (2005) [20] livelihood profile, the main crops in Gurage zone are maize (most of which is consumed green), teff and wheat. Accordingly, the following tables and the discussions tried to present the change of crop yield in quintal per hectare after the intervention of NGOs.

Table 9: Number of Respondents with their teff in quintal per hectare before and after the intervention of NGOs (n=235)

Teff	Before NGOs Intervention		After NGOs Intervention		t-test
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	
Less than 2	19	20.7	9	9.4	
2.00-7	5	5.4	8	8.3	
7.01-12	11	12.0	3	3.1	15.97***
12.01-17	22	23.9	6	6.3	
17.01-22	21	22.8	10	10.4	
22 and above	14	15.2	56	58.3	
Total	92	100	96	100	

Source: Survey data

Note: *** Significant at 1% level

Out of 235 respondents, 92 (39.1%) of them produced teff and the survey results (Table 9) shows that there is a difference of yield in teff has been observed while comparing before and after NGOs intervention. The paired t-test (t-value = 15.07, $p < 0.001$) revealed that there is statistically significant difference between the average teff production by the sample cooperative members before and after NGOs support through their cooperatives. Thus, it is inferred that due to the intervention of sample NGOs, the cooperative members could increase their production *ceteris paribus*.

Maize is one of the most important cereals grown in Ethiopia and it is used as an important food security measures. As it is

observed from the survey results, 154 (65.5%) of sample respondents produce Maize in the study area. Table 4.9 shows that the maize yield before and after NGO intervention. It is found that there is an increase of production during the said period. The paired t-test (t-value = 10.96, $p < 0.05$) revealed that there is statistically significant difference between the average maize production before and after NGOs intervention. Thus, it can be concluded that the sample NGOs play a vital role in increasing the production of maize by providing various essential services to increase the productivity.

Table 10: Respondents with their Maize yield in quintal per hectare before and after the intervention of NGOs (n=235)

Maize	Before NGOs Intervention		After NGOs Intervention		t-test
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	
Less than 2	76	49.4	64	41.6	10.96***
2.00-7	4	2.6	12	7.8	
7.01-12	6	3.9	1	0.6	
12.01-17	22	14.3	4	2.6	
17.01-22	27	17.5	6	3.9	
22 and above	19	12.3	67	43.5	
Total	154	100	154	100	

Source: Survey data

Note: *** Significant at 1% level

Just like maize, wheat is also one of the important crops cultivated by 192 (81.7%) of sample cooperative members. From the results (Table 11) it is found that there is a difference of production before and after the support of NGOs. The paired t-test (t-value = 15.07, $p < 0.001$) revealed that there is statistically significant difference between the average wheat production by the cooperative members. As it was discussed in the previous sections, since the farmers getting different input and other agriculture related services, they are able to increase the productivity of different cereals.

Thus, it is found that NGOs support play an important role in increasing the productivity of wheat in the study area. The results of focus group discussion also revealed that the NGOs helped the cooperative members so that they are able to follow techniques of modern farming, weeding, pest control mechanisms and use appropriate packages of technologies. As a result, they could harvest and store large amount of yields; reduce post-harvest losses and store their product under optimum condition and sell when there is a rise of prices.

Table 11: Respondents with their wheat yield in quintal per hectare before and after the intervention of NGOs (n=235)

Wheat	Before NGOs Intervention		After NGOs Intervention		t-test
	Number of Respondent	Percentage	Number of Respondent	Percentage	
Less than 2	39	20.3	13	6.8	15.07***
2.00-7	36	18.8	32	16.7	
7.01-12	35	18.2	30	15.6	
12.01-17	34	17.7	55	28.6	
17.01-22	28	14.6	25	13.0	
22 and above	20	10.4	37	19.3	
Total	192	100	192	100	

Source: Survey data

Note: *** Significant at 1% level

From the above discussion it can be inferred that the sample NGOs under study are involving different agricultural production services to increase the production and productivity of the member farmers through various input and facilitating services to improve the economic condition of the cooperative members.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

NGOs intervention assumes to bring development in different sector through empowering, innovating and improving the well-being of the community. The research out comes indicate that the contribution of sample NGOs in the development of agricultural cooperative is well. They have huge potential to become one of the corner stone in agricultural and economic development especially in rural areas where the united force of farmer can change their own lives and the overall livelihood. Many of the cooperatives were benefited from the development programs under taken by sample NGOs. Further, NGOs project development with the idea of cooperatives member, involvement of the government officials, in provision of training, and notification of stakeholders about the phase-out strategies enabled the agricultural cooperatives to sustain their productivity. Hence, the role of NGOs in development of Agricultural Cooperatives in the study area is very crucial. Based on the findings, the study suggests the following recommendations to ensure the continuity of NGOs activities for the development of Agricultural cooperatives.

1. Even though the immense contributions of NGOs to agricultural cooperative development in the study area, NGOs need to strengthen the cooperatives with new programs having modern agricultural technology in considering the literacy of farmers and the language they understand.
2. It is known that good production start with quality seed. In seed multiplication especially Self-help Africa achieve in wheat production. There is a lot of different between the improved seed and local seed product. But the NGO working on only in wheat production, though the NGOs need start working on other varieties.
3. There is no fish production in the woreda. Some part of the woreda has adequate water for fish production. NGO need provide training and skill to cooperatives to start fish production.
4. There is some activities in value chain, value addition and market linkage only for Chillil. The NGOs need extend the same activities to other products like maize and teff.
5. Government collaboration is the main aspect that enables NGOs to contribute the cooperatives in the area. It

provides opportunities for mutual learning, identifying appropriate development initiatives, generating learning resources, improving coordination and cooperation with local government, harmonizing approaches to development, and pursuing effective local advocacy. Therefore, government better work with NGOs by giving the necessary information and following up their activities.

6. The researchers notice that, there is quality seed multiplication cooperatives and union, but they can't sell outside the region because of regional government restriction. It need be disseminated all over the country even export to other African country. Though both government and NGOs need to work collaborate.
7. Women participation is found to be less in the sample cooperatives. So NGOs need to give special attention to encourage and create awareness among women to enable participate in agricultural cooperatives.
8. NGO policy which is 30/70 (30% for Administration cost and 70% for Program cost), should revised in selected activity. For example, training cost, field expertise and fuel need to incorporate in program cost.
9. NGOs need to improve their activities on health service to agricultural cooperatives member especially on Primary healthcare such as health promotion, illness prevention, care of the risk and advocacy. It used where most members need advice for staying healthy and receive treatment for their health needs. Over a time a strong primary health care system reduces demand for hospital-based care.
10. NGOs cover transportation cost for donkey cart to Agricultural cooperatives member which is not sufficient and appropriate especially vegetables. NGOs needs to be improved way of transportation donkey cart to lorry.
11. Store is not appropriate for vegetables. It needs to be well ventilated and spaced. NGOS need to work on that.
12. Most of the time NGOs provide pesticides to agricultural cooperatives for crops production. According to Agricultural cooperatives member tomato's pesticides is very expensive and hard to gate. NGOs need to give special attention in this area.

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