

Full length Research Paper

The role of Non-State Actors in Attaining Basic Primary Education in Some Selected Primary Schools of Oromiya Region, Ethiopia

Habtamu Benti^a, Serawit Handiso Melkato^{b*} and Tesfaye Alemu Tenkegna^b

^a Lalo Wanjo School, West Wollega Zone, Lalo Assabi Woreda, Oromiya Regional State, Ethiopia.

^b Addis Ababa University, Department of Microbial, Cellular and Molecular Biology, College of Natural Sciences, Po Box: 1176, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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Corresponding Author

Serawit Handiso

Department of Microbial,
Cellular and Molecular
Biology, College of
Natural Sciences, Addis
Ababa University, Po
Box: 1176, Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia.

Abstract

The current rapid expansions of basic education, coupled with limited engagement from non-state actors are constantly exacerbating the burden on the government. Thus, the current study was initiated to examine the role of non-state actors in attaining universal primary education (UPE) with a focus on reading, writing and numeracy at some selected schools of Oromiya region. The study was carried out by examining non-state actors' roles in the universal primary education activities as compared to the schools supported by the government. Descriptive survey method was used to attain the objective of the study. Purposive sampling; stratified sampling and random sampling technique were employed to select respondents of the study. Students were selected using stratified sampling whereas, teachers, Woreda education head were selected using purposive sampling and random sampling was employed to select cluster supervisors. Quantitative data gathered from the students test achievement were analyzed using F-test one way ANOVA as well as qualitative data was analyzed with themes. As the results of the study revealed, non-state actors role was significant and indicated their roles in universal primary education at the some selected Woredas' primary schools. Among the roles non-state actors played at the Woreda were: schools construction and furnishing with the necessary equipment's, train teachers and students, supported disadvantaged children, constructing latrine and clean water development for schools, support budget for teachers training and girls health training, trained community to promote girls education in particular and primary education in general, and trained Woreda education officials, supervisors, director on teaching learning process and the school management. Based on the result of the study it was recommended that due to the significant role non-state actors played, government should create partnership for further interventions of the non-state actors in the primary school to realize universal primary education.

Key Words: Non-State Actors, Oromiya, Primary Education, Role

Introduction

Achieving universal primary education is not an easy task to the poorest countries like Ethiopia, a country heavily depending on foreign aid for different investments (Learning Generation, 2017). However, Ethiopia has been diligently working on basic education in collaboration with partners to attain universal primary education (EFA) by 2015. As it is stated in the Education Sector Development Program V (ESDP V) 2014/2015-2018/19, free primary education was introduced with the adoption of the new Education and Training Policy in 1994 as a major strategy towards achieving the EFA goals. This major objective of this program is to provide free primary education to attain the universal primary education (MoE, 1994; Meskerem, 2003).

Non-State Actor Sector has been playing key roles in addressing basic education in Ethiopia. Meskerem (2003) indicated "international & local non-state actors are assisting the government in providing non-formal schooling, rehabilitation and refurbishing of old schools and adult non-formal education, in general." This indicates that local and international non-state actors take part to play role in providing basic education expansion by assisting government. Collective effort for addressing the ESDP V is recognized and appraised by government too. According to the Civil Society Contribution towards Achieving the ESDP Vs in the Gambia (2005), it is only through working together that the public, private sector and the non-state actor community can increase the effectiveness of the collective drive towards achieving the ESDP V.

In the universalization of basic education government alone cannot address literacy and numeracy (reading, writing and arithmetic) at primary school rather initiated the partners to take part in universal education. USAID (2003) clearly stated in the Field Study Report on Literacy Policy and Practice in Ethiopia that the. USAID-supported Primary School Support Program (PSSP) and its Beginning

Literacy Program for Malawi worked with communities to help increase children's exposure to text, simply and inexpensively (AIR, 2009b). For example, the PSSP taught teachers how to work with children to develop their own stories and homemade books, and worked with community members to support literacy fairs, reading clubs, and guest reader/storyteller programs. As it can be seen non-state actors are the better partner and innovative institutions in addressing the literacy program by increasing exposure of children in reading program. Mammo (2005) stated some large non-state actors such as World Vision, Action Aid Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus are already serving a large group of children and adults with basic and literacy education some integrated with livelihoods. This demonstrates that many non-state actors have playing significant role in the basic education and literacy program specifically literacy for children. Government's effort would not be realized in addressing literacy and numeracy goals unless other sectors like non-state actors have taken the initiative to support government. Therefore, the intention of this study is to identify role of non-state actors in universal primary education in reading, writing and numeracy as compared to the government roles in some selected primary schools at selected Woredas of Oromiya region.

Materials and methods

Research Design

Survey research design was employed for this research. Both quantitative method and qualitative approach was used for data gathering for this particular study.

Participants

Teachers, students, school managers, Woreda education office heads and education cluster supervisors are the population considered for this study. Eight primary schools of some selected Woredas of West Hararghe, East shoa, West Arsi, and West Wollaga Zones of Oromia region were considered for this research. Based on the objective of the study, four schools supported by non-state actors and four schools supported by government were selected using purposive sampling technique. Pilot test for reading, writing and mathematics administered at Lalo Wanjo primary school. Non-State Actor-aided and government –supported schools were selected for this study. Out of 70 students of grade four in the selected schools, 30 students were selected using stratified sampling techniques. In the selected schools 13 were girls and 17 were boys and all are grade four students.

Instruments

Interview guiding questions, achievement tests and observation checklist were the major instruments employed for this study. Achievement test was preferred to assess the difference between students in government school and students in the NSA school in reading, writing and mathematics achievement. Math test was prepared by Afan Oromo language because Afan Oromo is the medium of instruction for the subject. Seven survey type interview guiding questions were prepared for teachers, school managers, Woreda education office heads and education cluster supervisors of selected Woredas. Totally, 14 teachers, one Woreda education supervisors' head, seven school directors and four Kebele cluster supervisors were interviewed. The interview was interpreted and presented descriptively. In addition, a checklist was prepared for the classroom observation and library observation with yes or no alternatives.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the test was established by the pilot or pretest that was administered. Using the SPSS, reliability was examined and the instruments credibility was established based on the result of the Cronbach's alpha 0.71 and 0.8 for English and Math respectively. After the pilot study was carried out the instruments reliability was tested using the SPSS Version 20.0 and based on the result of the tests Cronbache's alpha, 25 item were selected from each subjects for the final test and the final test for English and math were administered at eight primary schools of grade four students. Observation was carried out at eight schools of the selected zones, 4 schools supported by non-state actors and 4 schools supported by government.

Method of Data Analysis

Depending on the nature of the problem and the data collected, different statistical methods were employed in the study for data analysis and interpretation. Tests were used to examine if there is significant difference between students who are learning in non-state school and students who are attending in the school supported by the government in terms of reading, writing and arithmetical achievement. The tests were coded and entered to SPSS and statistically analyzed and independent t-test was computed. Using percentages, mean, standard deviations, the data were analyzed, interpreted and presented. The data obtained through interview were narrated to substantiate the test result and the observations made at schools. The observation data was interpreted and presented in table.

Results

Characteristics of Key Informants

The characteristics and background of key informants were examined in terms of sex, age, educational background and years of experiences. The data for this study was obtained from experts of some selected Woreda and education heads, supervisors, teachers, school principals and grade four students of the eight schools.

Table 1. Key informants by Sex, Age and Service Years

Demographic Characteristics	Item	Admins & Principals		Teachers		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sex	Male	13	87	8	75	21	80.77
	Female	1	13	4	25	5	19.23
	Total	14	100	12	100	26	100.00
Age	<= 25	4	29	-	-	4	29.00
	26-30	6	43	4	25	10	38.46
	31- 40	4	29	8	75	12	46.15
	>= 41	0	0	-	-	-	-
	Total	14	100	12	100	26	100.00
Service years	<= 5 years	3	21	8	75	11	42.31
	6-10 years	6	43	4	25	10	38.46
	11-20 years	5	36	-	-	5	19.23
	>= 21	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	14	100	12	100	26	100
Educational Qualification	12+TTI	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Diploma	2	8	8	75	2	7.69
	BA/BSC	12	92	4	25	12	46.15
	MA/MSC	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	14	100	12	100	26	100

As indicated in the above table, 80.77 % of the key informants were males while 19.23 % of the interviewees were females. It was shown that 8 teachers are male and 4 of them are female teachers. Again, 4 administrators and school principals are age below 25 years, 6 teachers are age between 26 and 30 years and the rest 4 teachers' age are between 31 and 40 years. Of all 12 teachers, three-fourth of them had Diploma and none of them have 12 +TTI in qualification. School leadership and Woreda education cluster supervisors are 14 in number; all respondents 13 of them are male , four are between 31-40 years of age and none of the supervisor is above 41 years old. Around 92 % of them have BA degree and the rest 8% had Diploma in qualification. Regarding their service years and qualifications, 42.31 % of the respondents had less than 5 years of work experience. Key informants who served between 6-10 years were 38.46%. From the administrators and school leadership, only 21%, 43% and 36% had served for less or equal to five years, 6-10 years and 11-20 years of services. Three-fourth of them had diploma while quarter of them had BA degree in qualification. The data gathered from different sources analyzed and discussed here based on the research questions of this study.

Analysis of the students achievement test result of schools supported by non-state actors and schools supported by government

Table 2. Mean difference in mathematics achievement between schools supported by non-state actors and school supported by government

Schools	Respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
School supported by non-state actors	26	10.23	3.62	0.44
Schools supported by Government	26	9.74	4.31	

As it is indicated in table there was no significant difference in the scores for non-state actor schools students ($X = 10, \sigma = 4$) and government schools ($X = 10.13, \sigma = 3.73$) conditions; $t(26) = 0.44, p = .201$. Even though the mean difference between non-state actor schools and schools supported by government shows no significant difference the interview respondents responded students who are attending in the non-state actors' school are better in math and English than students attending in the schools supported by the government.

Table 3. Mean difference in English test achievement of schools supported by non-state actors and schools supported by government

ITEM	Respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P
School supported by non-state actors	26	11.36	5.62	0.16	0.18
Schools supported by government	26	10.99	5.71		9

As it is shown in the table there is no significant difference in the English scores between students of non-state actors school and government schools. A t-test for independent samples revealed that there is no significant difference in English achievement between students attending in schools supported by non-state actors and the students attending in government schools ($t(26) = 0.16, p > .05$). Non-state actors' school students who participated in English achievement ($X = 11.36, \sigma = 5.62$) reported there is not significantly different to students who attend English test of the government schools ($X = 10.99, \sigma = 5.71$). However, the interview and the observation result showed different result from students test achievement. The education cluster supervisor mentioned that students attending in the schools supported by non-state actor are better achiever in English marks than students who are attending in the government schools as it was observed in the schools under my supervision.

Analysis of students' achievement between schools supported by non-state actors and schools supported by government

Table 4. Differences between eight primary schools which are schools supported by the government and non-state actors in mathematics achievement

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.74	1	0.48	1.39	0.201
Within Groups	19.74	5	0.35		
Total	25.48	6			

The means of the four non-state actors supported schools are significantly different. There are differences in mathematics achievement among the non-state actor schools as the achievement test result shows ($F(3, 69) = 0.48, p > 0.05$). Generally, there are differences in achievement between the four non-state actor schools in mathematics achievement. Teachers qualification, teachers years of experiences in teaching, teaching aids or reference books, skill training or on job trainings of teachers might be the cause for differences between students test achievement.

Interview Analysis

Non-State Actors' roles in universal education in the Woreda

School directors mentioned that, in the universal primary education, non-state actors have played vital roles in constructing schools, upgraded the schools already opened by the government and support the school facilities such as books, tables & chairs for school classroom, train teachers, students, directors on the teaching learning and in general non-state actors created conducive teaching learning environments. They also responded non-state actors supported students with school uniform, educational materials and monitoring students' school attendance to minimize dropouts and follow up and encouraged students through monitoring children at school on the monthly basis. As the Woreda Education Offices head, cluster supervisors responded, non-state actors upgraded schools, constructed additional classrooms, provided clean water, constructed latrines for boys and girls, facilitated schools with the necessary education materials such as reference books, blackboards, stationeries and support girl students by providing training on health education in different Kebeles. As the result of the non-state actor support girls enrolment in particular and children enrolment in general were improved.

Particular Areas of non-state actors' intervention in universal education

Most of them responded that non-state actors' specific contributions in the Woreda are constructing schools, upgrading the existing schools, support children from the poor economic background. They also mentioned that non-state actors provided training; facilitate schools and the school library and support budgets for some schools and mobilize community to create further awareness on education in general and primary education in particular. This shows various effort non-state actors has made in the universal education by working hand in hand with the concerned bodies. Fielmua and Boye (2012) stated that non-state actors also assist in creating or training school committees and/or parent-teacher associations (PTAs).

Observed difference between schools supported by government and non-state actors

In the interview questions presented to the Woreda education head, cluster supervisors, teachers and school directors were asked their observation on the difference between schools supported by non-state actors and schools supported by the government. They mentioned that non-state actors' school condition is different from the government schools; schools constructed by the non-state actors' schools have better facility such as clean water and latrine for girls and boys, and girls' enrollments rate was improved in the schools non-state actors supported sanitary pad for girls. Due to this students in the non-state actors' school are motivated to attend education than government schools. Public schools lack of all these facilities and support whereas schools supported by non-state actors have better educational facility and constructed properly and created conducive teaching learning environment as compared to the schools supported by the government.

Non-State Actors impact on literacy and numeracy

The Woreda education head, cluster supervisors, school directors and teachers responded that non-state actors have made significant difference on literacy, and numeracy by providing training for teachers, tutorial for girls and boys on math and English, supported books (reference books) on math and English subjects and other teaching aids, and awarded best performing students on reading, writing math and other subjects. Experiences have shown how strong social movements (including trade and teacher unions, non-governmental organizations, and other civil society organizations) have motivated governments to ensure universal primary education (Birdsall, Levine, and Ibrahim, 2005).

Teachers and school directors confirmed that USAID and World Vision supported our schools with English and math teaching materials and due to this and other reference materials they have made difference. Regarding the non-state actor supports the Field Study Report on Literacy Policy and Practice in Ethiopia conducted by USAID (2012:37) reported an NGOs CODE-Ethiopia, is working on building libraries in schools and communities as well as providing supplementary reading materials to schools in local languages. They also believe that the current change we are observing on students' progress is the result of the non-state actors support in some schools. They enabled to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skill as compared to their previous performance.

Non-state Actors Contributions in mobilization of school community to promote basic education [[

The Woreda education head and cluster supervisors explained that training for teachers and school directors on the teaching learning skills and on ICT, provided educational materials for schools and library and physical education materials to motivate students and teachers, rewarded best performing students, construct latrine for boys and girls and clean water, and support girl students by providing training on health. As teachers and school directors responded, USAID supported girls school clubs of the primary schools by the receive council at any time on health and other issues and motivate girls to attend education regularly and minimized girls drop outs.

Non-State Actors' Weaknesses in universal primary education

Non-state actors' coverage of primary school and other supports were limited to the accessible places and excluded schools at the remote places. In this regard teachers and school directors supported what the woreda education officials and cluster supervisors responded and forwarded non-state actors lack monitoring of the input delivered to the school and community. Some teachers could not mention the weaknesses of the non-state actors in realization of the universal primary education.

Suggestion on Outcome of Non-State Actors' Support

The Woreda education heads in the region and cluster supervisors responded and proposed that non-state actors role has significantly important to attain the millennium development because they have contributed a lot to improve education quality, impacted literacy and numeracy, increased the number of enrollments, encouraged girls' participation, expanded primary schools and the like and their innovation has contributed for literacy and numeracy. They also suggested that non-state actors supported such as teaching aids, reference books, and constructed schools in the Woreda has sustainable impact on teaching and learning in general and literacy and numeracy in particular.

Way forward to attain the targets set about Universal basic education in the Education sector development plan

The reason that makes the involvement of non-state actors in the attempt of universalizing primary education was that more resource can be mobilized if state-non-state actor partnership is strengthened. Consequently, accessibility and quality of basic education will be increased. Both partners can share their expertise and employ them to serve the cause of EFA better. The education system will have more diversified modes of delivery and hence will be more capable of meeting the basic educational needs of the society. Some of the virtues of the innovative non formal basic education (such as cost- effectiveness, flexibility, high community participation) can be injected into the conventional school system to expand access and improve quality and efficiency, and vice versa; non-state actors will have a more favorable legal environment to run their programs (MOE, 2002).

Conclusion

To attain the millennium development goals of education, non-state actors' roles and support is significant and encouraging as their contribution in the literacy and numeracy in the primary schools. The study finding showed that non-state actors facilitated the school libraries and supported educational materials which have significant impact on reading, writing. The differences made on the literacy and numeracy in the primary schools as the result of the non-state actors' intervention can help Woreda education officials to know the gap existed in the universalizing of primary schools to attain the millennium development goals. It can also indicate areas that need further intervention in universal primary education expansion. In addition to this governments could easily identify where support is needed in the universal primary education.

Recommendations

The federal and regional governments should strengthen the collaboration between non-state actors and the school to reinforce non-state actors support and efforts in the implementation of the education sector investment, to realize the universal primary

education/basic education targeted by the fifth Education Sector Development Plan's (ESDP V), and, ultimate realization of universal primary education in accordance with and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

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