

Mid-term evaluation of Armachiho Food Security Development Project, 2012

Executive summary

This midterm evaluation report is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus-Development and social service commission's (EECMY-DASSC's) project called "Armachiho Food Security Development Project" that goes from 2011 to 2013 according to the agreement signed between EECMY-DASSC and concerned government line bureaus. The midterm review covers the current project phase and deals with the project period from January 2011 to September 2012. This project is a continuation phase of the previous project of 2008-2010. The mid-term evaluation of 2008-2010 project recommended that the need of specific additional period of time in order to assure the sustainability by fully transferring the technologies/ or innovations in to the target communities and concerned line offices expanding/scaling up of the new intervention activities and outputs undertaken and obtained. Thus, the project was designed focusing on integrated watershed development approach operating in three specific Kebele Administrations (KAs) having a common watershed boundaries of the same Kebele Administrations (KAs) with project components including agriculture, Natural resource conservation and management, livelihood diversification like income generating schemes, potable Water supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, Capacity Building, integrating women development, HIV/AIDS & HTPs prevention and control, and Reproductive Health.

The midterm evaluation has been carried out in a participatory way where concerned zonal and woreda level government sector representatives, project personnel, implementing and funding partners responsible staffs, the project target groups and community representatives involved. The midterm evaluation/review process included; field observation and discussions with project target groups and stakeholders, report presentation by the project and having general discussion. Accordingly, the primary data was obtained through interviewing and discussing with target groups and relevant stakeholders during field visit and observation, while secondary data extracted from the signed project document and report submitted by the project office.

The midterm evaluation/review process showed us the status of planned activities performance and the ways of communication among project agreement signatories as well as the

communities. With some reservation of government sectors the project tried to supply the necessary resource as per the mutually agreed plan and tried to go through the strategies/tracks placed in the document. Some encouraging performances were observed, such as improvement of targeted poor's income through livelihood diversification, PLWHAs organizing themselves in cooperatives and started adopting alternative livelihood strategies like participating in IGA. Also in potable water supply, sanitation & hygiene, and natural resources conservation commendable activities have been undertaken. In contrast some crucial activities have not moved/undertaken with respect to the given period/time of the project. Further expansion through establishment of additional propagation site of highland fruit production (seedling propagation, rootstock multiplication, distribution of the matured seedlings to farmers and knowledge transfer), making efforts on creating linkage with market and research institutions has not been undertaken. The process of self help groups identification, their asset building and organizing them in cooperatives has not moved as planned.

The project holding organization has made available the promised resource/finance from the committed donor/partner (NCA) timely. Up to date ETB 3,193,782.48 released and utilized out of the allocated budget of ETB 3,482,085.79. In addition ETB 200,000 has been made available to undertake reproductive health and related activities.

The midterm evaluation team recommends to all project stakeholders; Especially concerned government sector offices, the project target community and the project implementing organization to coordinate efforts, jointly plan and accomplish the unimplemented crucial project activities that mainly include:

- Scaling up/expansion of highland fruits production (seedling propagation and rootstock multiplication at selected farmers fields, enabling them to distribute the matured seedlings to farmers and transfer knowledge), making efforts on creating linkage with market and research institutions,
- Speeding up the process of self help groups identification, their asset building and organizing them in cooperatives and strengthen for sustainable own livelihood engagement,

- Strengthen the integrated watershed development approach for effective conservation/rehabilitation, management and equitable utilization of the resources; including Watershed Development Committees (WDCs) establishment and strengthening at each watershed, establishing and strengthening Watershed Development Technical Teams (WDTTs) at woreda level to ensure the sustainability of project.

Introduction and Background

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane yesus Development and Social Service Commission (EECMY-DASSC), Armachiho food security development project is one among 55 ongoing NGO projects and programs in North Gondar administrative zone. The project was planned and is being implemented based on the EFDR CSO law, guidelines and on the project agreement signed between EECMY-DASSC and concerned government bureaus in the Amhara National Regional state.

The idea for the continuation of this project in this period derived from the terminal evaluation recommendation of the previous period (2008-2010) project. The previous project terminal evaluation proposed; (a) the need of proper transfers of the project outputs/activities, and introduced technologies/inputs to the community and government sectors gradually to ensure sustainability. (b) Promising results of the introduced technologies/inputs such as highland fruit production, different improved vegetables and cereals need to be scaled up and benefit many other community members in the surrounding areas, (c) Strengthening the process of self help groups identification, their asset building and organizing them in cooperatives and strengthen for sustainable own livelihood engagement, (d) The need of strengthening the target groups and concerned local sector offices with capacity building trainings, exposure experience sharing/learning and technically supporting to strengthen activities like natural resource conservation/rehabilitation, management and equitable utilization, and (e) To improve awareness of the community on various problems faced in the areas such as HIV/AIDS, HTPs, water, sanitation and hygiene, and women development.

General information of the project

Project Title: Armachiho Food security Development project

Target woredas/kebeles/watersheds: Lay armachiho woreda Kerker kebele(Fahana watershed), Chira Ambezo kebele (Markibign watershed) and Gondar town woreda Sabia Sayina kebele (Abagolum watershed).

Target groups/beneficiaries of the project: 3,197 (Female 631 and Male 2,566) households with a total of 16,625 (8,479 F & 8,146 M) vulnerable people.

Name of project owning organization- Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus - Development and social service commission/EECMY-DASSC,

Project funding Organization: Norwegian Church Aid-Ethiopia (NCA-E)

Total budget: ETB 5,000,000

Project period: 2011-2013 /3 years

Overall project objective- Contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the people inhabiting in the watersheds through integrated watershed development approach.

Major project components

1. Agricultural production
2. Natural resource conservation, management and utilization
3. Income Generating Activities /IGAs for poor women HHs and landless/jobless youth
4. Potable water supply, sanitation and hygiene,
5. Integrated reproductive health (HIV/AIDS & HTPs prevention & protection and woman development)

Type of evaluation -Mid-term Evaluation

Evaluation objectives-

- I. To assess the project progress whether it is moving to the expected outcome as per planned/scheduled or not
- II. To make adjustment/alignment for better progress and achievement of the intended outcome within the remaining project period.

Evaluation team: zonal and woreda signatory government organizations, beneficiaries/target community, project staffs, implementing and funding stakeholders

Evaluation procedures followed

The evaluation was conducted by the coordination of North Gondar Administrative zone department of finance and economic development with active participation of various concerned sector offices community and agencies representatives. The midterm review proceeded for two days, the signed project document and the cumulative project report were used as sources of the secondary data and observations of performance visited in field and beneficiary households interviewed were also used as the primary sources of data for the project. Along this the project coordination office and partner government representatives have presented report on major activities performance, success and challenges including their partnership. Also descriptions and required explanations by beneficiaries, woreda offices and site/field officers of government sectors and project staff were considered as additional inputs for the evaluation.

Achievements with respect to major components

Result 1:- Increased access to improved agricultural technology/inputs and innovation as well as increased knowledge and practices on high land fruit production and other valuable crops.

The project planned to demonstrate highland fruit production, to propagate seedlings and multiply rootstocks on the existing and newly established project nursery sites & distribute to farmers, support and capacitate farmers to promote the highland fruit production, seedlings & rootstock propagation & multiplication respectively, to provide different tools for the fruits management, and to supply various improved vegetable and cereal seeds.

The project accomplished at a lower level compared to the plan and within the given period, i.e. about 4,700 rootstocks (31%) out of the planned 15,000 and 580 seedlings (11%) out of the planned 5,000 have been prepared and only 190 seedlings have been distributed (5%) out of the planned 3,500. Very few Farmers were supported and promoted to produce and prepare seedlings and root stocks at their fields. That is, out of the planned 504 HH farmers only 131 (26%) households started production of highland fruits at their fields. Only 14 (40%) out of the

planned 35 household farmers were supported to propagate highland fruits on their fields. The highly demanded tools are not made available as per planned. Though, the vegetable seeds were made available and provided at higher amount compared to the plan but yet not sufficient for the existing demand of the community.

Result 2:- Ecological balance restored by harnessing, conserving and developing natural resources in the targeted watersheds.

To attain the expected result at the end of the project period (31December 2013) the project planned to produce and provide for plantation on degraded land about 480,000 various multipurpose seedlings in its nursery site, support 100 farmers to enable them producing about 120,000 seedlings in their nurseries. It was also planned to conduct study on a watershed, to establish three watershed development committees at watershed level and two watershed development technical teams at woreda level, to train them and 120 targeted farmers. It was also planned to construct different types of soil & water conservation structures; like 60km of stone and soil bund, 2km of cut of drain, 230m³ of gabion check dam, 3,000m³ loose stone check dam, 6,200 trench and micro basin and 400m³ gully vegetative fencing/stabilization, and 30 hectares of area closure on the upper catchments of the watersheds bared land. It was also planned to pitting and planting seedlings on 2 hectares and to introduce 60 fuel and energy saving stoves to selected women headed households, provide trainings for 110 farmers, 35 IWD committee and IWDTT members and 13 project and woreda sectoral staff.

The achievements up to end of September 2012; production of 427,000 seedlings on the project nursery site (89%) of the plan and 112,000 seedlings on private nursery sites (93%) of the plan. The produced seedlings distributed and planted covering 7.8 ha (390%) of the planned land. Besides, 30 fuel & energy saving stoves distributed and the rest 30 in the process to be distributed. 2 new catchment areas studied and 126 community members and 2 government as well as 2 project staff trained. Construction of 249km stone and soil bund (415%), 2,602m³ (86%) of loose stone check dam, 11.32km (566%) cut of drain, 3,350 (119%) trench and micro basin and stabilization of 190m³ (47%) gully were undertaken and 45 (150%) hectares of land closed keeping it away from human and animal interventions and strengthening with biological conservation measures over and above the planned 30 hectares. Pitting and plantation of

seedlings covered 7.8 hectares against to planned 2 hectares of land. Most planned activities were addressed with high and better performance with the exception of gabion check dam construction delay and under implementation of such as gully stabilization and some others. Better achievements are mainly due to all concerned stake holders active participation and entire community mobilization.

Result 3:- Increased households' income through engaging poor women headed households and men in different income generating activities.

To achieve the intended result the project planned to encourage and support poor/vulnerable women and youth to be identified and established in self help groups, to build own asset and start saving, and then provide seed money as startup capital for the saving and credit cooperatives they are organizing. In this regard, it was planned to support 10 target groups with 20 modern beehives, 120kg wax and 10 sets of accessories when they make available 40 transitional beehives, 120 poor female headed households to start with shoats production/fattening and to introduce 9 washera breed ram. Provision of technical support and capacity building/trainings on business plan preparation for 200 farmers, on shoat production/fattening for 120 households, on bee keeping for 20 farmers and establishment and strengthening of 3 saving and credit cooperatives was also planned.

Concerning achievements against the plans; the project has provided training and technical support for 5 selected/identified farmers to prepare 20 transitional beehives and they were provided with 10 modern beehives, 60 kg wax and 5 sets of accessories on credit basis. The remaining 5 farmers have also been trained to prepare 20 transitional beehives and the project is in the process of purchasing and providing 10 modern beehives, 60kg wax and 5 sets of accessories in similar way. 60 poor female headed households were provided with 158 sheep/goats on credit basis and 9 washera breed rams were purchased and provided to be used/benefited by the watershed community. Also 59 poor female headed households were screened and provided with training on sheep/goats production and management, and the project is in process of purchasing and providing 116 Sheep/goats on credit basis. 40 farmers have got experience sharing on saving and credit association's objectives, establishment, management and

functions. The planned 3 saving and credit cooperatives establishment and business plan preparation for 100 shoats producers were not undertaken so far.

Result 4:- Increased access to safe water supply, sanitation facilities and hygiene by the target people inhabiting in the three watersheds

The project planned to construct 4 water points, to provide 8 simple hand tools, to provide technical support for the construction of 200 private latrines and to train 28 community representatives and 15 project and line offices staffs on WASH and 100 community members on improved home management. Within the mid-term evaluation period construction of 5 water schemes (2 springs and 3 hand dug wells), provision of 10 simple hand tools, support for construction of 113 private latrines, training for 35 and 66 community representatives on WASH and on improved home management respectively were undertaken.

Result 5:- Increased access to information on health, HIV/AIDS, HTPs, women development, etc., that enhances the general well-being of the inhabitants in the watersheds

With additional fund secured from NCA, it was planned to provide training on women development for 225 (200 community members, 5 project and 20 line staffs) on HTPs (milk teeth extraction, uvula cutting and early marriage) for 1260 (1200 community representatives and 60 HTP practitioners), on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS 600 community representatives. With regard to the achievement the participants enrolled in the trainings include; 191 on women development, 683 on HTPs and 650 on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. The project also supported the Association of 44 People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) finance enabling them to purchase 103 sheep for generating their own income.

Changes/observable outcomes

The introduced highland fruits and improved vegetables are found to be very appropriate, highly valuable and crucial in improving livelihoods of the targeted community. Some farmers who adopted and began production of the fruits (apple) and vegetables such as improved potato have started earning additional income, diversifying and improving their livelihoods. We observed three farmers well established and managed apple and other fruits fields and modern living

houses with iron sheet cover. The farmers told that their basic needs including sending children to school, medical care etc. are fully covered from their own income and have started saving and diversification of livelihood. They are highly motivated to scale up production (apple seedlings propagation & rootstocks multiplication and potato tubers multiplication) and even sell to meet high demand of other farmers in the area. In this regard the project has to do a lot in meeting the planned activities and reaching more target groups.

Having healthy ecosystem means sustainable livelihoods. In this regard, the efforts to mobilize and capacitate the community to focus on environmental rehabilitation, restoration and conservation have been very encouraging, and needs to be continued, strengthened for proper management and effective utilization.

Target groups who had less option to earn or diversify their income sources have been identified, trained on different income generating activity skills as per their tendency and began to produce sheep/goats, apiculture (honey) and the like by the credit they obtained in kind or cash and technical supports they got from the project and started earning additional income and supporting their families.



Life of W/o Yeshifana Amare (picture above) has been improved through intensive horticulture farm at her backyard focusing on highland fruit production.

As a result of the potable water supply schemes development and Sanitation and hygiene works about 886 community members have access to clean water and 113 households have their own latrines after getting awareness and technical support on sanitation and hygiene.

People who are affected by HIV/AIDS and Harmful traditional practices and the practitioners trained and some of them engaged in income generating activities and benefited. HTPs are reduced because of the reduction of practices and practitioners and increased awareness of the community.



Picture of PLWHAs engaged in IGA

Financial utilization

The funding partner committed to allocate 5,000,000 Ethiopian Birr for the three years implementation of this specific project. Accordingly, the annually allocated budget was transferred on quarterly basis. From January 2011 up to 30 September, 2012 ETB 3,193,782.48 has been transferred to the project office and utilized for the planned project related activities and services. In addition to the agreed budget NCA allocated ETB 200,000 for undertaking activities such as harmful traditional practices and HIV/AIDS prevention and control, and other reproductive health related activities. In 2011 the budget allocated for establishment of nursery site to propagate highland fruits seedlings and rootstock multiplication was reallocated and utilized for gabion purchase for natural resource conservation. This was done due to failure of

Lay armachiho woreda to provide the required land for nursery site establishment. The overall financial report submitted by the project office is annexed as part of this report for reference and follow up.

Cooperation and Coordination with relevant stakeholders

The project office showed utmost interest to closely work with relevant signatory and non signatory government offices and other stakeholders. The project office submits annual plan, quarterly progress reports and shares other necessary information. The project also requests technical and professional support of the sector offices officially when deemed necessary. It also tries to be transparent through all its performances and processes of activities. However, some sector offices such as Lay Armachiho woreda agriculture office has been reluctant in providing the required material and professional support and as a result the project could not perform some crucial activities as per the plan.

Challenges faced, lessons learnt and measures to be taken

Scaling up/expansion of highland fruits production (rootstock multiplication, seedlings propagation and matured seedlings distribution to farmers in need) both at nursery sites and selected farmers field has not been carried out as expected. Only 11%, 31% and 5% seedlings propagation, rootstock multiplication and seedlings distribution were undertaken, and 26% and 40% of the targeted farmers have started production and multiplication activities at their fields. The project and concerned line offices should join hands to exert maximum efforts to enhance production, multiplication and grafting at selected farmers fields and distribute the matured seedlings to farmers in need.

The process of self help groups identification, their asset building, organizing in cooperatives and enabling them for sustainable own livelihood engagement, is not being undertaken as it should be procedurally. The authorized government (cooperative office) should be the owner to lead the process in collaboration with the concerned stakeholders.

In carrying out the project activities there was loose cooperation of Lay Armachiho agriculture office such as delay in assigning focal person who can provide technical support, long delay/reluctance to provide land for the highland fruit seedling preparation and stock multiplication, lagged to train the target groups particularly for IGA and the like that resulted in less performance on some activities. To be effective in the future project's success all stakeholders (project agreement signatories and other relevant bodies) should be accountable, join hands and do their parts as per planned.

One important concern that was noted and recommended in the terminal evaluation of the previous project was the issues of scaling up best practices and sustainability. For scaling up encouraging practices, the above mentioned two components of the project; highland fruits and organizing and strengthening self help groups requires more attention to lay down the bases. When it comes to the sustainability issue, there should be clear phasing out strategy for handing over project outputs step by step to relevant bodies and exit out gradually. The strategy is not clearly worked out for starting the process. So the phasing out strategy has to be worked out to be part of the project document, and accordingly the required capacity building activities and handing over process should start as soon as possible.

Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluation has been carried out in a participatory approach where major stakeholders from government sector offices, community leaders, project funding and implementing partners and project staffs as well as beneficiaries involved. The evaluation was conducted through field visit, report presentation and discussion. Accordingly sample results and beneficiaries were visited in every components of the project. As a result participants have identified successes and failures of the project performance and then have given suggestions on issues that will be taken as lessons for better and coordinated efforts of the relevant stakeholders in the implementation of remaining activities and missed processes.

Intervention areas that need all stakeholders' attention include the following.

The need of action plan revision/alignment particularly for the unperformed activities with full involvement of partners/stakeholders to finalize on the due dates of the project and to attain the expected results, starting the handing over or transferring process of activities already finalized to the community and the relevant sector offices of local government, and continue providing the necessary technical supports in strengthening their capacity for sustainability of the project outputs.

Scaling up/expansion of highland fruits production (seedling propagation and rootstock multiplication at selected farmers fields, enabling them to distribute the matured seedlings to farmers and transfer knowledge), making efforts on creating linkage with market and research institutions,

Speeding up the process of self help groups identification, their asset building and organizing them in cooperatives and strengthen for sustainable own livelihood engagement,

Strengthen the integrated watershed development approach for effective conservation/rehabilitation, management and equitable utilization of the resources; including Watershed Development Committees (WDCs) establishment and strengthening at each watershed, establishing and strengthening Watershed Development Technical Teams (WDTTs) at woreda level to ensure the sustainability of project.

Annex

Evaluation Participants list

- Teklehaymanot Medhin-----Manager of AFSDP
- Abeya Wakwoya (Dr.)....from EECMY-DASSC
- Gutema Gezmu -----from NCA-E
- Getasew Atenafu -----from Zone Dep't of Fina. & Eco. Dev't/NGO coordinator
- Wondafrash Temesgen -- Zone Dep't of Fina. & Eco. Dev't/ext. res. & NGO managing officer
- Tadel biru -----zone department of agriculture
- Tadel -----zone water resource development office
- Eyayu ----- from Gondar town Fina. & Economic Dev't office
- Zelalem -----Gondar city Agriculture development office
- Sintayehu -----Head of L/Armachiho Fina. & Economic Dev't office
- Atakilt Aderaw _____ from L/ Armachiho Fina. & Economic Dev't office
- Ussman Ayenew-----head of L/armachiho Water resource dev't office
- Zelalem Bereket.....EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP
- Atikilt Tesfahun.....EECMY/DASSC/AFSDP

List of direct project target groups (beneficiaries) involved in the evaluation process

| S. No | Name | Sex | Kebele |
|-------|------|-----|--------|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| | | | |