



MEASURING AID EFFECTIVENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF BENEFICIARY PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The study Ghana sought to contribute to the subject of aid effectiveness by exploring the potential added value of including beneficiary perspectives. The study was motivated by the fact that most evaluation of the effectiveness of development aid tend adopt a top-down approach without seeking to address beneficiary perspectives as a major factor in impact evaluation of development interventions. The study which was conducted in the Tamale metropolis, adopted qualitative methods. Focus group discussions were conducted in eight communities. Additional data was collected by means of key informant interviews. The results were revealing as it showed clearly that beneficiaries are as concerned as donors regarding how aid is applied. Beneficiaries have a clear understanding of aid effectiveness and are able to illustrate vividly their perception on the subject. Much as beneficiaries have clear ideas regarding their role in ensuring aid effectiveness they are constrained by cultural, social and lack of appropriate institutional structures for channeling their concerns on the activities of NGOs. Consequently, beneficiaries feel left out of efforts by civil society aimed at ensuring effective aid delivery. A key recommendation resulting from the study is that impact of development interventions could be improved significantly if the views of beneficiaries on project impact are taken into consideration earlier during project implementation rather than capturing them at the end of project implementation as unintended outcomes. This, in turn, calls for some degree of flexibility from donors in modifying their expectations

Keywords: Aid effectiveness, development aid, beneficiaries, NGOs

Introduction

Humanitarian aid has grown significantly and was worth an estimated USD 17billion in 2012 (Poole, 2012). Alongside the significant increase in the quantum of aid is an increase in complexity of the aid architecture and various concerns about the impact of aid on beneficiary populations. The need for improved quality of aid delivery within the aid system has been underscored with increasing calls for accountability by aid agencies (Hopzapfel, 2014). This is against the backdrop of increasing numbers of new actors in the international aid arena

to include new and emerging players with a resultant in reconfiguration of the aid architecture in a significant manner. These include foundations, private sector philanthropy and new bilateral donors in Asia creating the need to build ‘a wider and more structured consensus around aid effectiveness that cover all the key stakeholders’ (ECOSOC, 2008) in an increasing complex environment. The Paris Declaration of 2005 and its follow up Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 crystalize the commitment of stakeholders to address these concerns. These

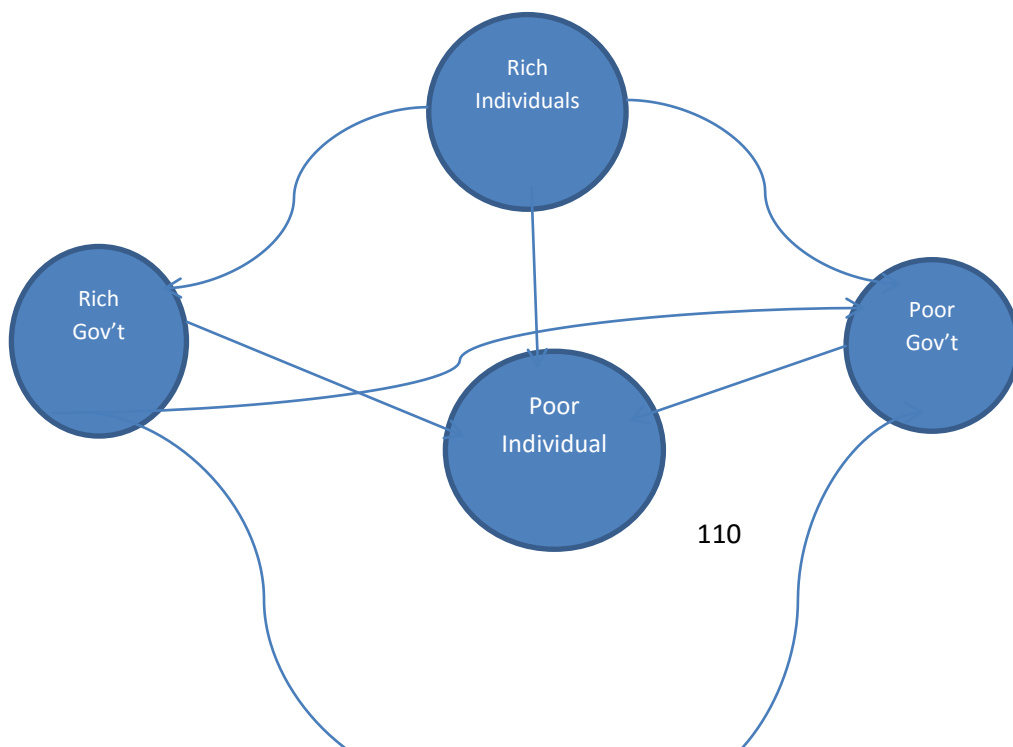
efforts have, without doubt, has resulted in a remarkable improvement in the quality of aid in general. Spurred by the Istanbul Principles, CSOs and NGOs, it has been observed (Killen, 2007) have made appreciable effort to improve the quality of aid delivery culminating in the international framework for civil society development effectiveness. During the past two decades, in particular, aid agencies have come under increased public scrutiny (Ramalingam 2013) and must demonstrate value for money as the aid budget gets tighter. The need for increased effort to ensure aid effectiveness has become even more critical due to the recent global economic crises and humanitarian crises of unimaginable proportions.

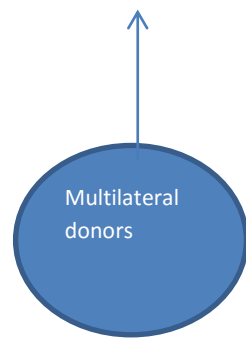
A Changing Aid Delivery Framework

The traditional aid delivery architecture has been characterized by four main actors namely; rich individuals in developed countries, rich governments in developed countries, poor governments in less developed countries and poor individuals in poor countries (Kharas, 2007). Within this framework the aid delivery channel consists of the following mechanisms. Funds mobilized from rich individuals in rich countries mainly via taxes were channeled through multi-lateral institutions to poor governments who, in turn, design programs and projects to the benefit of the poor in their countries. These multi-lateral institutions were more, or less, extensions of the foreign services of these rich countries and the donor-recipient relationship was direct. These arrangements

characterized the immediate post-world war II era when aid was delivered as a martial program that would transform poorer countries economically and in a dramatic manner. This basic architecture has since undergone a significant change and has become more complex (Kharas, 2007) with a multitude of actors on both sides. This has resulted in a complex institutional arrangement for aid delivery in which civil society organizations, mainly NGOs, play a significant role by intermediating between donors and individual beneficiaries in poorer countries amidst skepticism about the impact of official aid delivered through formal channels. The change is influenced by increasing numbers of rich individuals and corporate entities in rich countries that are seeking alternative means to deliver aid to the poor. In response, new aid delivery channels have emerged with a complex array of actors (Poole, 2012). These include direct transfers to the poor through NGOs in rich countries (e.g. Care International), multi-donor funds (e.g. the Global fund), donor-designed programmers (e.g. the Bill and Milinda Gates Foundation), volunteerism (VSO), direct cash transfers (e.g. school sponsorships), quasi-government partnerships between rich countries and NGOs in poorer countries (e.g. USAID Feed the Future), partnership arrangements between northern and southern NGOs and cooperate social responsibility arrangements in various forms by private sector businesses (e.g. the Vodafone foundation).

Aid Architecture





Among these, grass-root NGOs in poor countries have played an important bridging role between donors and poor individuals in poor countries for several reasons including the following (Boulding, 2009). Firstly, Grass-root NGOs are community-based and, for that matter, have access to local knowledge and are abreast with local dynamics. Their inclusion in projects and programs brings the added value of ensuring contextual fit for aid support. Secondly, grass-root NGOs promote citizen participation and provide voice for the poor in development. This is because NGO interventions are issue based and mission-driven. Thus, they are seen as devoid of the entrapments of ‘corrupt political systems’ and therefore, promote the virtues of democracy through good governance.

Have NGOs Brought an Added Value?

Many countries in Sub Saharan Africa have been major recipients of international aid. The rural areas, in particular, have been the focus of many aid agencies to the extent that central Governments have used the presence of NGOs to justify the exclusion of some areas from Government funded development projects. For instance, most of Northern Ghana was excluded from projects funded by the US funded Millennium Challenge Account despite official acknowledgement of the high levels of poverty in the area. All this has led to a closer attention to NGO performance by donors and aid agencies regarding their effectiveness in delivering aid as against the traditional role of the state in delivering development to its constituents. Indeed, Nunnenkamp (2008) questions the effectiveness of aid delivery by NGOs to the extent that he did not find it a panacea in delivering better targeted aid. Keywords like ‘impact’, ‘performance’, ‘results’ and ‘accountability’ have assumed new prominence all in an attempt to answer the questions regarding how effective NGOs have been in delivering aid?

Related to this is the question regarding how NGO effectiveness can be measured which is the focus of this paper.

Morrisey (2002) argues that previous methods of assessing the effectiveness of aid by drawing links between micro and macro level indicators is fundamentally flawed and that aid can be more effectively measured against the specific objectives set by the donor rather than adopting a systemic approach. The objectives of aid are multiple and most often difficult to measure. Therefore, that aid has not achieved an overall objective does not mean that it has not been effective. Burall and Roodman (2007) have made similar observations about aid effectiveness arguing that that aid may be considered effective if it has resulted in some benefits for the target population. The debate on how to measure aid effectiveness took center stage during the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness underscoring the need to continuous review and develops frameworks for accessing the impact of aid to conform to the dynamic nature of the current aid architecture. It must be recognized that just as projects may deviate from their originally intended purposes with negative consequences some other deviations harbour positive benefits for beneficiaries although unintended. Using a strictly input-output approach to the evaluation of the effectiveness of aid therefore, confers on the process a mechanical and inflexible approach that has the tendency to overlook key positive outcomes that may not necessarily be appreciated by researchers.

Conceptual Approaches to Measuring Aid Effectiveness at the community level

The OECD/DAC (2002) describes impact as “the positive and negative, primary and secondary, long-term effects produced by a development

intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended". The conceptual basis for impact analysis for development intervention follows the conventional "input-activities-outputs-outcomes-impact" approach of impact analysis (Roche, 1999). Conceptually, "questions about the impact of humanitarian assistance cannot be reduced to a technical discussion about how the impact of particular projects can best be measured as Morrissey (2000) rightly argues that the fact that aid may have been delivered inefficiently does not mean that it has not achieved impact. "The wider environment in which aid is delivered, and the principles and ethics that underpin humanitarian action, may determine the humanitarian outcomes for populations as much, if not more than, the technical efficacy with which a particular project is delivered" argue Hoffman et al. (2004). This is true of development interventions in general and analysis of impact need to be context specific and broad generalizations avoided. Miller (2011) argues that the debate about measuring aid cannot be reduced to the simply question of 'how effective aid is' on its face value. Indeed, he proceeds to argue that the debate may be 'empirically unresolvable' or even relevant. The focus should rather be 'how effective aid can be' under specified conditions, policies or approaches rather than broad generalizations. This argument by Miller (2011) sums up the obvious practical difficulties in measuring the impact of aid using the conventional input-output approaches as he argues that neither micro-level nor macro-level assessments are adequate. Hoffman et al. (2004) provide a comprehensive overview of practices in impact assessment in the health and nutrition sectors based on extensive analysis of recent literature. Results obtained indicate that impact assessment in these sectors are, generally, poorly done and assess processes outcomes rather than outcome indicators. In conclusion, Hoffman et al. (2004) argue that impact assessment within the humanitarian sector is generally poor not due to lack of tools but rather lack of skill by development workers to adequately carry out qualitative and quantitative analysis of development interventions using the conventional approach. This is supported by Poole (2012) who argues that humanitarian action has historically been subjected to less rigorous and extensive evaluation procedures. Admitting to obvious

methodological challenges in measuring aid effectiveness Miller (2011) in a comparison of macro and micro level assessments of aid effectiveness concludes that micro-level assessment may rather be more suited to addressing the question of aid effectiveness. This argument forms the foundation of this study as it asserts that sufficient infusion of qualitative analytical tools and sufficient engagement with project beneficiaries within the wider political, social and cultural context of a development intervention will enhance the quality of humanitarian aid impact analysis.

Aid Effectiveness as an alternative

Given the complexity of impact assessment, as indicated above, and its limitations it makes practical sense to focus on measuring, instead, the effectiveness of aid. In effect, 'aid effectiveness is about delivering aid in a way that maximizes its impact on development and achieves value for aid money' (Killen, 2011). Aid effectiveness, according to the OECD, is 'the extent to which a development intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way'. Consequently, Lehtinen (2002) distinguishes three types of effectiveness namely;

1. Development effectiveness which refers to the achievement of less attributable, longer-term outcomes and impacts in developing countries to which agency efforts are ultimately aimed, but which are beyond the manageable interest of the agency.
2. Organisational effectiveness which refers to more direct, accountable and attributable measures of performance for a development agency and;
3. Aid effectiveness which refers to the performance of a particular set of activities or instruments.

Conceptually, measuring performance using indicators can be difficult in practice in the sense that varied needs and purposes of different levels of development agencies and stakeholders offer practical challenges regarding their definition of and uses for performance indicators. Performance measurement on the basis of indicators that aggregate output measurement programme wide or

sector-wide will introduce distortions if indicators are not properly selected. Admittedly, the use of quantitative indicators to measure aid effectiveness has shown remarkable progress. However, over reliance on quantitative indicators may conceal development outputs and outcomes that do not get reported at the organizational level by way of standard monitoring indicators (Holzapfel, 2014). Likewise there are inherent difficulties in demonstrating a “causal linkage between changes in international or national statistics and the interventions of an individual development agency at the micro level. Even at an input level, it is not easy to show what results have been achieved with the agency’s resource allocation to a particular country, particularly where aid is fungible, when governments offset spending in a particular area by reducing their own expenditures for the same purpose” (Lehtinen, 2002). It therefore, makes sense to devolve performance assessment of NGO effectiveness beyond the programme to the lowest level possible. Lehtinen (2002) distinguishes two broad categories of performance assessments applied in the NGO sector, namely Input-based and output-based performance monitoring systems. Input-based performance monitoring systems focus on measuring aspects such as the destination of aid flows. Output-based systems, on the other hand, focus on assessing the outputs in the form of concrete results, of their interventions as a way of avoiding the many difficulties involved in assessing, such as attributing development results to individual agencies. Outputs of projects, such as the number of services delivered, are generally easily collected and are available annually. Most output-level monitoring systems, however, are “targeted at the level of project and programme performance measurement, and aim to assess the achievement of the overall objectives, the project purpose and specific outputs of the project, as stated in the project document” (Lehtinen, 2002). While output-based performance assessment lends itself more to practical demands of assessing aid effectiveness, it is limited in application in this regard, owing to the fact that its focus so far has largely been on the organization’s performance as compared to its own objectives. Assessing aid effectiveness, however, requires looking beyond the individual agencies to their role in the wider micro and/ or macro settings of a given context. This is where the challenge is.

Key among these challenges is the glaring absence of beneficiary perception on aid as a component of aid effectiveness. Consequently, this study sets out to explore this component, which we consider critical, in generating a more holistic picture of aid effectiveness. The study forms part of a study to determine the effectiveness of aid as delivered by NGOs in Ghana. A key aspect of the study involved determining the perception of beneficiaries on aid effectiveness the results of which are discussed below.

Context of the Study

The research was carried out in the Tamale metropolis. Tamale is the capital of the Northern region and has a 2013 projected population of about 562,919 according to GSS (2012). This makes it the third largest settlement in Ghana. The Metropolis has a total estimated land size of 646.90180sqkm (GSS, 2010). Geographically, the Metropolis lies between latitude 9°16 and 9° 34 North and longitudes 0° 36 and 0° 57 West. It is located approximately 180 meters above sea level. The Tamale Metropolis shares boundaries with five other districts namely, Savelugu-Nanton to the North, Yendi Municipal to the East, Tolon-Kumbungu to the West, Central Gonja to the South West and East Gonja to the South. Majority of the people are farmers with agriculture employing 63.3% of the population. Moreover, although largely urban, the Tamale metropolis shares most of the features typical of rural areas. There are 115 communities in the Metropolis. Most of these communities still lack basic social and economic infrastructure such as good road networks, school blocks, hospitals, markets and recreational centers, thereby hindering socio-economic development, poverty reduction and reducing the general phenomenon of rural-urban migration. The number of health facilities Tamale, the administrative capital, is quite satisfactory. These include a teaching hospital, a regional hospital, a district hospital and a military hospital. This, however, is in sharp contrast to health facilities in the rural areas most of which are poorly equipped. Even though efforts have been made to improve access to health service delivery, patronage of these facilities has been low particularly in the rural areas due to poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. Life expectancy in the Metropolis is about 50 years compared to the

national figure of 55 years. The high level of illiteracy and poverty as well as limited access to safe drinking water and poor Sanitation have combined to expose many people to health hazards which accounts for the low standard of living of the people. The prevalence of diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, anaemia, acute respiratory infections and gynaecological disorders as well as outbreak of epidemics such as cholera, anthrax, CSM can be traced to the above factors. The Tamale Metropolis is as vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic as any other district in the country. The main contributory factor to the spread of the virus in the Metropolis is the high prevalence of poverty that compel people especially females into behavioural patterns which expose them unduly to infection.

Sampling Method

A total of eight communities in the Tamale metropolis where sampled NGOs were active were selected for data collection randomly. This was done by obtaining a list of all communities in which NGOs included in the study operated. Eight communities were drawn at random for study. The sampled communities include: Vitin, Kakpayili, Kanvilli, Shishegu, Nakpanzuo, Maleshegu, Katariga, Kogni.

Methods of Data Collection

Focus group discussions were organised in all eight selected communities. Direct beneficiaries within NGO target communities were organised into separate groups of men, women and the youth in order to ensure that inter-generational and gender perspectives are captured. In order to ensure proper representation the focus groups consisted of males and females each from the youth, the middle aged and the elderly. However, the idea was not to undertake a comparative analysis of the different perspectives but to enrich the discussions by analyzing issues from different perspectives. Key informant interviews, with community elders and field staff of NGOs, were employed to probe for further details and to ascertain some of the issues raised during the focus group discussion.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis was mainly qualitative. Data obtained were analyzed jointly by researchers and community members at the time of data collection. Data collected was initially analyzed by researchers and shared with community members at the end of each focus group discussion. This allowed community members to make input into the final analysis.

Results and Discussion

Overview of NGO participation in health delivery in the Tamale metropolis

The study assessed the delivery of health related interventions. Fifteen per cent (15%) of all the NGOs studied had a focus beyond health as there was no NGO that focused specifically on health only. These NGOs provide a wide range of health services in the metropolis focusing mainly on preventive primary health care rather than curative health care and channeled through programmes that focus on health education. Priority areas for intervention include: HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation and child and maternal health care. While services provided by NGOs are generally similar. Taken individually, they are specific to the following interventions:

- Awareness creation and prevention of HIV/AIDS;
- Improved access to reproductive health for example, through improved capacity of traditional birth attendants, education, family planning etc.;
- Reduced maternal and child mortality through improved nutrition;
- Malaria prevention

Geographically, although these NGOs have offices in Tamale most of their interventions are concentrated in the poorer and less endowed peri-urban areas of the metropolis and beyond.

Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

An attempt was made by the researchers to achieve some level of parity in key demographic indicators of the sampled respondents. This, it was felt, was important as the study sought to capture the

perceptions of a cross section of the population. The key demographic parameters considered include sex, age, marital status and education. A summary of these indicators are shown in table 1 below. The sample consisted of 41% female and 59% male. The youth, aged between 20 and 30 years, constituted 31% of all respondents while married

couples constituted 74% of all respondents. Respondents who were single were either divorced, never married or widows. Majority of the respondents (80%) had no formal education. To a large extent the demographic features of the respondents, generally, reflects that of the population.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Sex</i>		
Female	33	41
Male	47	59
Total	80	
<i>Age</i>		
20 – 30	25	31
31 – 50	15	19
41 – 50	18	23
51 and above	22	28
Total	80	
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	21	26
Married	59	74
Total	80	
<i>Educational level</i>		
No formal education	64	80
JHS	9	11
SHS	5	6
Tertiary	2	3
	80	

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Aid from beneficiary perspective

Overall, beneficiaries had a fair idea of what aid is. Generally, beneficiaries think that aid is any form of support that is given them that is not coming directly from government basically referring to NGO interventions. However, they were quick to add that government offers support in times of disaster specifically mentioning the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO). Asked if they were aware of other forms of support such as sector wide support from bilateral and

multi-lateral sources beneficiaries affirmed their knowledge of such donors. However, they consider this government support since it is coming to them directly through normal government budgeting. It is important to note that the channel through which aid is delivered is important in shaping beneficiary understanding of aid.

Definition of aid effectiveness from beneficiary perspective

Asked what, in their view, constitute aid effectiveness, almost all the beneficiaries were unanimous in equating aid effectiveness to their general economic well-being. For them support from NGOs should result in measurable changes in their well-being. The most significant indicator of improved well-being is an enhanced wealth base, the reason being that economic independence allows one to provide one’s needs without ‘waiting for someone else to provide them’. It was interesting to note that beneficiaries do not expect NGOs to provide all their need as is vividly illustrated by an elder in one of the communities.

‘To carry a pot, you need to, first of all, balance it on your knees before you lift it to your head. We think that aid is effective if NGOs help us balance the pot on our knees; the rest we shall do’.

Village Elder

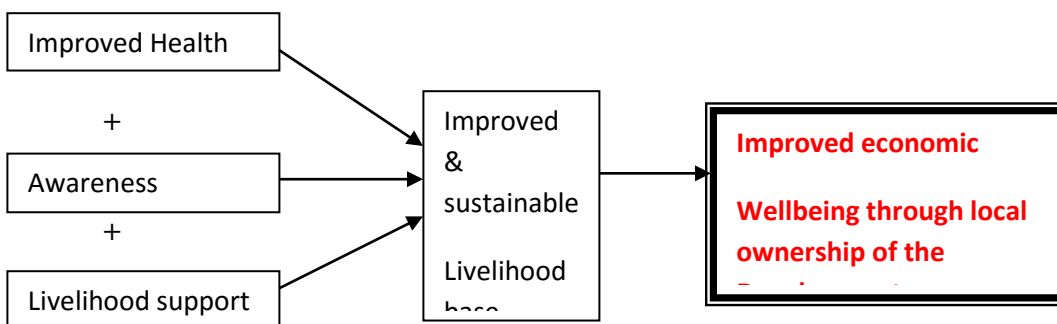
The general perception had been that beneficiaries were too dependent on NGOs and were not doing much to help themselves. While it was obvious during the study that quite a number of beneficiaries expected NGOs to solve their problems for them because they receive funds more or less on their behalf quite a sizeable number felt that this should not be so. This former group is of the opinion that NGOs ‘use’ them to put up proposals to access

funds and are therefore, obliged to support them. This situation raises an important question about the extent to which beneficiaries are involved in projects at the conception phase which, in turn, has implications for ownership of development interventions. Local communities are not adequately consulted during project conception. Most beneficiaries indicated that they only hear of projects at the implementation phase.

Beneficiary Perception of Aid Effectiveness

Beneficiaries equate aid effectiveness to beneficiary capacity to take ownership of the development process. Consequently, intervention by NGOs must result in enhanced capacity of beneficiaries to take over their own developmental process. Figure 4 below illustrates beneficiary perception on aid effectiveness. For aid to be effective, it must translate into visible improvement in their livelihoods which, in turn, should result in economic well-being. The three most important output of NGO intervention considered key to improved livelihoods are health, awareness and livelihood support activities. Once beneficiaries are of good health through improved access to health services, and are aware of opportunities and supported with their livelihood activities, they will be able to improve, as well as sustain their livelihood base, eventually improving their economic well-being. Improved economic wellbeing is considered critical to taking over the process of engendering beneficiary’s own development. It is at this stage that aid is considered to be effective.

Figure 1: An Illustration of beneficiary perception of aid effectiveness



Engendering local ownership

Saxby (2003) refers to ownership as the “relations

among stakeholders in development, particularly their respective capacity, power or influence to set

and take responsibility for a development agenda, and to muster and sustain support for that". Beneficiary views on ownership were therefore, explored with a view to gaining insight into their interpretation of ownership and how it relates to development work. Specific ways of engendering local ownership of the development process, in beneficiary view, are as discussed below:

Involvement

Beneficiaries are of the view that NGOs should involve them in planning interventions especially, project proposals. Almost all participants were unanimous on the fact that NGOs develop proposals in their offices without involving them in the process. Some NGOs, however, have a network of local committees who are consulted regularly, according to the NGOs. However, little evidence was found among beneficiaries to support the fact that this leads to active involvement of community members as, in their view, NGOs rather use these committees to implement projects and do not involve them in planning interventions.

Empowerment

NGO intervention must aim at empowering beneficiaries by enhancing their capacity through learning to take greater control of the development process. Beneficiaries laid emphasis on economic empowerment and facilitating access to education

Table 2 Satisfaction rate of communities regarding aid delivery

	Government (NADMO)	International/National NGOs	Local NGOs
Quality	High	High	High
Participation	Low	Low	Low
Fairness	Low	Average	Average
Sustainability	Low	High	High

Source: Field data, 2013

A perceived changing trend in NGOs aid delivery

The general perception among beneficiaries of NGOs regarding aid delivery is that aid is decreasing in quantum reflected in reduced number of NGOs. Beneficiaries have observed that International NGOs, in particular, have reduced their intervention, at least directly, within the metropolis. This is true, in part, due to the fact that most of these international or northern NGOs have

for their children.

Perceived satisfaction level of beneficiaries regarding aid

Three main delivery channels for aid were identified by beneficiary communities namely; government through the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), International NGOs and Local NGOs. These were rated in relation to the following three criteria; quality of aid delivered, beneficiary participation and fairness in distributing aid. The results are as indicated in table 2 below. Quality of aid delivered was adjudged generally high among all three categories of aid delivery channels. Beneficiaries, however, thought that their participation in interventions is low across all three categories of aid delivery channels. The main reason accounting for this perception was concern about the fact that beneficiaries are not consulted, most of the time, in determining the form of support they require. Fairness was adjudged lowest for government aid because beneficiaries have concerns about how transparent the process is, as well as, political influence in distributing aid by government in times of disaster. Likewise, sustainability was adjudged lowest for government intervention because it is one-off and mostly in times of disasters.

changed their mode of intervention by not intervening directly but rather partner local NGOs for direct service delivery. Apart from this, recent shifts in donor funding from direct support to sector-wide approaches appears to be impacting on the ground not only via NGO presence but reduced funding. The perception among NGOs, especially local NGOs, is that it is increasingly difficult to access funding and that donors are increasingly attaching stringent conditions to aid.

Role of beneficiaries in aid effectiveness

Most beneficiaries think they have a role in improving aid effectiveness by ensuring that NGOs are accountable. This, in their view, is achievable only if they are adequately consulted and allowed to participate in the aid delivery process. Beneficiaries were of the view that they are not adequately involved in civil society efforts to ensure aid effectiveness. Indeed, almost all beneficiaries indicated that they were not aware of civil society efforts at ensuring aid delivery. However, over 80% of beneficiaries interviewed regarding their contribution to aid effectiveness did not see how they can do so when they see NGOs purely as benefactors. This is partly informed by culture as one beneficiary vividly demonstrated with the following saying in the local language:

'You do not bite the hand that feeds you'

Beneficiaries believe that NGOs are there to assist them on their own volition and therefore, could not perceive why they, as beneficiaries, must monitor how aid is applied. As indicated above, it is obvious that beneficiaries have concerns about how aid is applied but are, generally, unwilling to demand accountability from NGOs. Where some beneficiaries have been courageous to bring their concerns regarding operations of NGOs in their communities they have been branded unprogressive by their peers. Beside culture, as a constraint to beneficiary participation in ensuring aid effectiveness, lack of awareness on the concept of aid effectiveness and the possible role of beneficiaries is a major constraint. Beneficiaries need to be informed of the aid structure and empowered to play a role in ensuring accountability among NGOs. Generally, there is suspicion among beneficiaries that some NGOs may not be doing the right thing. However, it was difficult to substantiate some of the allegations as beneficiaries do not have the capacity to adduce evidence in this regard. To this end, some of the allegations may be unfounded and unnecessarily impeding the good intentions of some NGOs. Yet another constraint to beneficiary participation in ensuring aid effectiveness, in beneficiary view is lack of institutional support for their participation or unawareness regarding what structures exist for channeling their concerns.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The literature review has revealed that there is changing trend in the delivery of international aid and NGO contributions are becoming more relevant to national priorities. This, however, has rendered traditional methods of assessing aid effectiveness less relevant to development aid as these methods focused on the link between the macro and micro level achievements. Arguments have been rightfully made for the measurement of aid effectiveness based on the specific objectives of the donor rather than a systematic approach. This approach is rather more relevant to assessing the effectiveness of donor support via NGOs as, potentially, it is more amenable for beneficiary participation. Focusing on micro-level impact indicators, which should include beneficiary views, is critical in enhancing the impact of development interventions. The study revealed that beneficiaries are not in doubt about their expectations as far as the outcomes of development interventions are concerned. Overall, beneficiaries perceive NGOs as a very important source of funds for development intervention are relatively, more effective and efficient in delivering development interventions. However, beneficiaries are of the opinion that they are not adequately involved in determining the impact of development interventions. The study further revealed that ensuring adequate participation of beneficiaries in the evaluation of development interventions within the broad frame of their expectations and aspirations could influence, significantly, the outcome of impact assessment of development projects. This is because measuring impact solely on the basis of the expected project objectives neglects, to a large extent, the so-called unintended outcomes from the donor's perspective. However, what may be unintended outcomes based donor expectations may be an important outcome from beneficiary perspective.

Thus, it is important that donors ensure some level of flexibility in their expectations in order to allow room for incorporating beneficiary expectations during project implementation and not only capture beneficiary expectations as lessons learned usually at the end of project implementation. This calls for a re-think of methodological approach that takes beneficiary views into consideration in impact

assessment within a much broader and flexible result framework that confers flexibility in measuring results. It is acknowledged that this has the potential of shifting project focus far from donor expectations. However, it is not much of a threat to accessing donor funding for local development in the current context of increased harmonization of donor interventions at the macro level and mechanisms such as multi-donor thrust funds and budgetary support.

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