



Graduate School of Development Studies

**NGO-led Service Delivery to the Poor:
The Case of Agricultural Support Programme
(SATNET) in Kasese District, Uganda**

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List of Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AHEAD	Association for the Advancement of Higher Education and Development
BD	Broederijdelena Belgian Development Organisation
CARE	Care and Relief Everywhere
CDRN	Community Development Resource Center
CDO	Community Development Officer
DFID	Department for International Development
DENIVA	Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Association
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
Hivos	International Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam
KALI	Karambi Action for Life Improvement
KFP	Karughe Farmers Partnership
LG	Local Government
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
MO	Member Organisation
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
NAADs	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOGAMU	National Organic Movement of Uganda
NDP	National Development Plan
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
QUAM	Quality Assurance Mechanism
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Policies
SATNET	Sustainable Agricultural Training Network
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Dedication

*To my wife Emmanuelina and children Kenneth Okuni, Maria Fortunate and Elysa
Monica for their inspiration.*

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Abstract

The Non-governmental Organization led service delivery model is considered to be cost effective, participatory, and accountable, thus services reach the intended beneficiaries. Increasingly literature has come to prove otherwise that the NGO-led service delivery is contradictory, instead NGOs implement donor agendas because of the high dependence on donor funds. This study examines NGO-led service delivery model amidst growing evidence and knowledge that this model may not adequately contribute to poverty reduction without government institutional support.

The study found out that the NGO-led service delivery model is constrained by funding, political environment, governance and dynamic between NGOs and government. The need for the donor agencies to channel resources through NGOs does not only expose NGOs to donor dependence but puts the NGOs in a position of implementing donor agendas as evidenced in the study as NGOs struggle to be effective and accountable to the donor community. NGOs seem to be on crossroads to follow the social mission of delivering services or to engage in advocacy activities. By the mere fact that NGO funding, governance and relationship with government depends on the legal and administrative framework, increasingly NGOs have been constrained to deliver services contrary to the donor presumption.

Whereas NGOs have caused some impact to on poverty reduction of individual farmers in Uganda, they cannot be relied on because they only focus on a small percentage of the poor, even in places with the highest number of NGOs high levels of poverty is still evident. Further, this paper highlights what the NGOs and beneficiaries do to counteract the constraints identified. I therefore contend that, NGOs alone as fronted by the donor agencies are not the best alternative to deliver poverty focused resources. We need strong NGOs and Government institutions interacting together in order to deliver services to the poor.

Relevance to Development Studies

Poverty reduction is at the helm of development studies and service provision to the poor in developing countries. By service provision we mean, those agencies both government, private sector donor agencies and the NGOs that deliver poverty focused resources to the poor. The study on the NGO-led services delivery to the poor aims at examining how the NGOs are constrained in delivering agricultural services to the poor because of the political, governance, funding and participation issues both from within the NGO and external settings.

Keywords

Governance, Funding, Politics, Participation, The poor, NGO-led service delivery and Constraints

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

The NGO-led service delivery model has received more attention in the last two decades in development work by donor agencies who argue that development needs to be more sustainable, just, participatory, democratic and environmentally friendly (Zaidi, 1999: 259). Increasingly, development aid to developing countries is being channeled through NGOs from the state (Clark, 1995, World Bank, 1994, 1995.) This shift from the state to NGOs is argued to be cost effective, accountable and thus benefits reach the targeted poor. Clark argues that:

NGOs may be best placed to articulate the needs of the weak, working in remote areas, changing attitudes and practices of the local officials, and nurturing the productive capacity of the most vulnerable groups... may provide instruments which, whether invited or not by governments emphasize the participation of the poor (Clark, J, 1995).

The NGO led service delivery has registered great attention and successes as in the case of BRAC in Bangladesh (Edwards and Hulme 1995). The NGO model is premised on the fact that; its participatory, allows beneficiary participate in decision making and successful in delivering service to the poor (Hailey, J, 2001, Mercer A, et al 2004, Perere J, 1997) . However, academics argue that, the NGO led service delivery is short term, compromise the economic recovery of the country and project based, and has brought a new development paradigm of 'projectizing and Micro-izing' (Tendler, A 2002). We examine this assertion of the 'new policy agenda' of fronting NGOs as the best model in service delivery. There is evidence that NGO service delivery has changed peoples livelihoods (Clark, J, 1995, Hailey, 2001). Despite more funds being channeled through NGOs, the rural people are still living in abject poverty even Eastern Uganda with the highest number of NGOs¹ is the second poorest region in Uganda (NGO Forum, 2003, UBOS, 2002).

The 'new policy agenda' of channeling service delivery to NGOs as a new paradigm in the development discourse has taken centre stage in the development agenda of developing countries. NGO-led service delivery though not a new concept in development has shifted the trend in thinking and practice from what used to be 'top-down' to participatory approaches of 'bottom up' (Onen, D, M 2007:2, Namara, B, R, 2009). The current development debates pushed by the World Bank and the North NGOs recommend participation of beneficiaries in project development since they argue that if the poor participate in development planning they own the results, become accountable and services reach the deserving (World Bank, 1995). We examine this assertion by the World Bank whether it's true within the Ugandan NGOs context in chapter four .

¹ A study of 753 NGOs in Uganda by NGO Forum, found that by region 34.4% (259) were operating in Eastern Uganda, 24.8% in the West, 23.6% in the North and 17.1% in the Central Region.

Despite NGOs being praised as effective in service delivery, literature shows that NGOs are at cross roads between working with government and donors (DENIVA, 2006). Further, some scholars argue that NGOs impose themselves as representatives of the poor yet they work for survival of the people that formed them (Dijkzeul, 2006 cited in Namara, R, 2009:2). With the growing interest by both scholars and development practitioners, the NGO-led model has received much attention in the last two decades. The argument here is whether the NGO-led model is the best for political, governance, funding and participation of the beneficiaries. Scholars have however, criticized the fronting of NGOs as a best service delivery mechanism, they argue that the role of the state has been reduced to ensuring an enabling environment thus making macro-planning difficult since NGOs can only intervene at the micro-economy. With the increasing number of International development institutions like World Bank, supporting the NGO approach (Onen, D M, 2007:3), its worth noting that the NGO-led model of service delivery is questionable in the delivery of agricultural services to the poor.

1.2 Problem Statement

Several studies on government led-service delivery in Uganda have been carried out with contradictory arguments on the best way of service delivery to the poor (Care Uganda, 2005, Oxfam GB, 2004, Onen, 2007). While some studies show that NGO-led model added some value on service delivery, (Gariyo, 2002), scholars criticize the NGO-led service delivery because there doubt whether there is any value added since the intervention is at micro-level, region specific and not replicable, and thus keeps the poor in perpetual poverty (Edwards, 2007, DENIVA, 2006), others accuse NGOs of trading on the poor (Namara, 2009).

In Uganda, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) formalized the participation of NGOs in service delivery to the poor, however, the PRSPs do not show whether NGOs represent the very poor or they represent individuals purported to be the poor? Evidence from literature indicate that the NGO-led service delivery in the South is not certain due to the way NGOs are organized, being donor dependent, with governance issues and the participation of the beneficiaries in decision making doubted contrary to the hype by NGOs from the North which front NGOs as the best channel through which services can reach the poor. Increasingly NGOs membership is questionable as most of them only appear to serve a specific agenda when its done, no trace of the NGO can be found, NGOs have been accused of not reporting to Government what they are doing and therefore, their contribution to national economy is not captured (MoFPED, 2010:27).

Based on available literature on NGO impact on poverty reduction and service delivery to the poor, this study aims at examining how NGOs are constrained in delivering agricultural services to the poor in rural Uganda.

1.3 Justification

The NGO led model has been lauded by neo-liberal development debates including the World Bank, (World Bank 1994, 1995) who argue that the NGO

led service delivery to the poor is transparent, promotes decentralized governance and ownership of benefits. Scholars argue that NGOs' participation in service delivery is only at micro-level thus NGO thrive on the backs of the poor whom they purport to represent. They are vividly many reasons as to why the NGOs are constrained in delivering service to the poor. This study particularly takes concern in the NGO led service delivery in the agricultural sector in rural western Uganda, a region that is a food hub with both government and NGO intervention.

The literature in the study is about NGO-led service delivery not individual beneficiary. This study therefore underscores the gap by investigating the extent to which NGOs are constrained in service delivery to the poor despite the increased funding from donor agencies. The paper examines the strategies NGO beneficiaries devise in order to address the looming poverty, hunger and disease after the end of NGO intervention.

The study looks at a case of SATNET, a membership NGO in Western Uganda comprising of Kasese, Kabarole, Kyenjojo, Kyegegwa Kamwenge, Ntoroko and Bundibugyo districts. I was motivated by the growing number of Non-governmental Organizations and grass root organizations participating in the delivery of agricultural services and yet rural poverty, food insecurity is still high in this part of Uganda.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions

1.4.1 Main question

How are NGOs constrained in delivering agricultural services to the poor in rural Uganda?

1.4.2 Sub questions

- i) What are the perceptions of the poor on NGO led service delivery in agriculture (SATNET) programs
- ii) What are the constraints of the NGO-led model service delivery to the poor?
- iii) What constitutes the strategies of beneficiaries (farmers) and NGO to overcome the constraints?

The NGO led Model is becoming an interesting debate amongst policy makers, academics and development workers. The proponents argue that the model is transparent, promotes decentralized governance and ownership of benefits, thus developing countries are being argued to adopt this process since issues of accountability, why the poor are constrained to participate, the limitations to their participation and how the NGO led service delivery can be pro-poor are at the center stage of this proposal. For this therefore, these research questions guide the study.

1.5 Research Objectives

This study aims at examining the constraints hindering the effective NGO service delivery to the poor in rural Uganda. To attain this objective, the research set out the following sub objectives.

1.5.1 Specific objectives

- i. To establish the perceptions of the poor on the NGO led service delivery in the agricultural program in rural Uganda;
- ii. To find out the constraints of the NGO-led model service delivery to the rural poor;
- iii. To establish the strategies beneficiaries (farmers) and NGO use to overcome the constraints.

1.6 Methodology of the study

The information contained in this paper is the result of data collected both from the field and secondary sources. To prove the reliability of the information, there is need for a clear and precise description of how the data was used to raise the arguments. This section provides a wrap up of the whole process from the study design, study area, population, data collection tools, data analysis and procedures.

1.6.1 Research Site and population

The field work of this research was carried out in Kasese district located in western Uganda with agriculture as a source of livelihoods for most of the inhabitants². Kasese district has a population of about 600,000 people with a growth rate of 3.6 percent. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood with about 85 percent of the total population engaged in agriculture for both food crop and cash crop. Kasese district embraced the NAADs programme in 2005/2006 and since then a total of 1400 groups have been identified and registered at sub county level. Under NAADs, the enterprises being promoted following the zoning of the district are poultry, piggery, goat keeping, cattle, horticulture, maize, cassava and potato growing³ (Kasese District, 2009). Specifically two SATNET member organizations which are agricultural based-KFP and Kiima Foods member organizations were selected because of time convenience and easy reach by the researcher, they have been members of

² Kasese district is endowed with natural resources and agriculture is the main activities for the people, with one Irrigation scheme, Naads programme, and about 800 NGOs, CBOs and FBOs are registered by the Kasese District Development Network (<http://www.kasese.go.ug/NGOs/index.htm>)

³ Information was accessed on the district website as updated 2009 and in-depth interviews with CDOs

SATNET since 2002 and were in active operation by the time of the research and had implemented work supported by SATNET.

Since this is a case study of SATNET, which operates in five districts of Western Uganda (Kabarole, Kasese, Bundibugyo, Kyenjojo and Kamwenge), one district was purposively selected for my convenience. Care was taken to choose a district where SATNET had had its operations for at least three years. Based on the interventions that SATNET had delivered to the members, three years was a period for which agricultural projects are assumed to give outputs. To be more precise, the study about why the poor are constrained to participate in SATNET programmes targeted the SATNET staff, members, Civil servants, Political leaders and NAADS coordinators at sub county level . Attention was paid to other NGOs which are working in the same district so as to capture information that was relevant to the study. A list of SATNET member organizations was established which was used to select the two member organizations of Karughe Famers Partnership and Kiima Foods where the respondents were selected.

1.6.2 Techniques of data collection

The study collected data both from primary and secondary sources with the use of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. However, due to the nature of the data sought, the research was more skewed to qualitative approach

1.6.3 Procedure of the research

Primary data was collected by use of interviews, observation and focused group discussions (FGDs). The question guide was developed and pre-tested to ensure clarity consistency and validity in question framing. Twenty in-depth interviews were held with farmers who had benefited from Karughe Farmers Partnership and Kiima Foods programs. The interviews lasted between one-two hours, four FGDs two from each organization lasting two hours were held to collect the beneficiary opinion and seek why they are constrained in participating in NGO led service delivery. These methods were chosen because the major concepts of the research were operationalised qualitatively.

Precisely, FGDs were held to collect information from beneficiaries of KFP and Kiima Foods agricultural inputs. Caution was taken to hold different FGDs for men and women separately because of fear that, if women were mixed with men they often become passive in the discussions. A total of four FGDs each made of 7-9 participants and lasting two hours were conducted.

Key informant in-depth interviews with staff of SATNET, KFP and Kiima Foods, Community Development Officers (CDOs) lasting sixty

minutes were conducted to collect data on their views on the research question. A total of ten key informant interviews were conducted to collect data specific to NGO led service delivery in Kasese district.

1.6.4 Secondary sources:

Secondary sources were used to collect data to augment the primary data collected from the field. The sources were:

- i) Government of Uganda Policy documents
- ii) Journals, academic Books and academic websites
- iii) Reports of SATNET, Karughe Farmers Partnership and Kiima Foods, this was used primarily to get respondents lists

1.6.5 Data cleaning, treatment and analysis

As is common with most fields based researches, my research using interview guides as one of the data collection techniques faced instances of incomplete responses as well as inconsistencies which needed some attention before entry and analysis. In this regard, field checks were done where I cross checked regularly to ensure that each question was entered. Those which slipped off my control were eventually sorted out during my first week from the field as I cleaned the data and prepared it for entry and analysis. I set out with a sample size of 40 respondents but ended up with a respondent size of 30 participants because others were not trace due to non response errors and involvement in politics.

1.7 Study Limitations and Field problems

This research situated in a poverty studies context would have been more complete and elaborate if it took into consideration the role of NGOs in Poverty reduction, however, given that there is a gap in the NGO-led service delivery, the paper strictly focused on how the NGOs are constrained in effectively delivering agricultural services to the poor. Nonetheless, for now, due to time, word limit and ethical issues, the research contained itself to strictly answering the research question above not delving into its closest causes. The study did not go into details of the process of how NGOs are organized but rather the focus was on how the NGOs are constrained and the strategies by the NGOs and the beneficiaries devise to cope with the increasing poverty and hunger in the rural country side

The study only considered the fully registered members of SATNET who are in active operations in Kasese district, details of SATNET membership, NGO category and their activities were not explored due to the time limit. Since the study was about service delivery, causes of poverty and its impacts were not included in the study design. The results are only limited to the research question posed.

This study was about NGO led service delivery in rural Uganda other than NGO driven processes in participating in policy. Therefore the findings of the

study may not be generalized to the whole of Uganda, but gives a picture of what it takes for the NGOs involved in service delivery to the poor.

The field work was carried out in July to August, 2010, at the same time NRM -one of the political parties in Uganda was carrying out primary elections at village level to district level. Some respondents were involved in the primary elections and therefore, it was difficult to get them at the time of the interview. Other respondents preferred that I follow them to the voting sites which would deny me the chance to observe their projects if the interviews were held outside their homes. At one site, the respondents were participating in a workshop causing me to postpone the interview to the next day because waiting for them during lunch break would not give me ample time to probe them well.

1.8 Structure and Organization of the paper

This paper is organized in five chapters. Chapter one provides the background to the study, the research problem, questions and objectives. It also highlights the research process and scope of the study. Chapter two explains the theoretical and conceptual framework used in the study in reference to participation and NGO led service delivery and adopts the World Bank perspective of participation. Chapter three explains the agricultural based NGOs and their politics and dynamics of participation in service delivery. It shows the divergent space that NGOs are working under in Uganda. Chapter four explores why the poor are constrained participation in NGO led service delivery, the constraints faced and the coping mechanisms. It analyses the findings discusses the discourses of NGO led model in the rural set up of Uganda. Chapter five presents the conclusions by recapitulating on the findings and argues why the poor are constrained. It also presents the policy implications of the findings.

Chapter 2

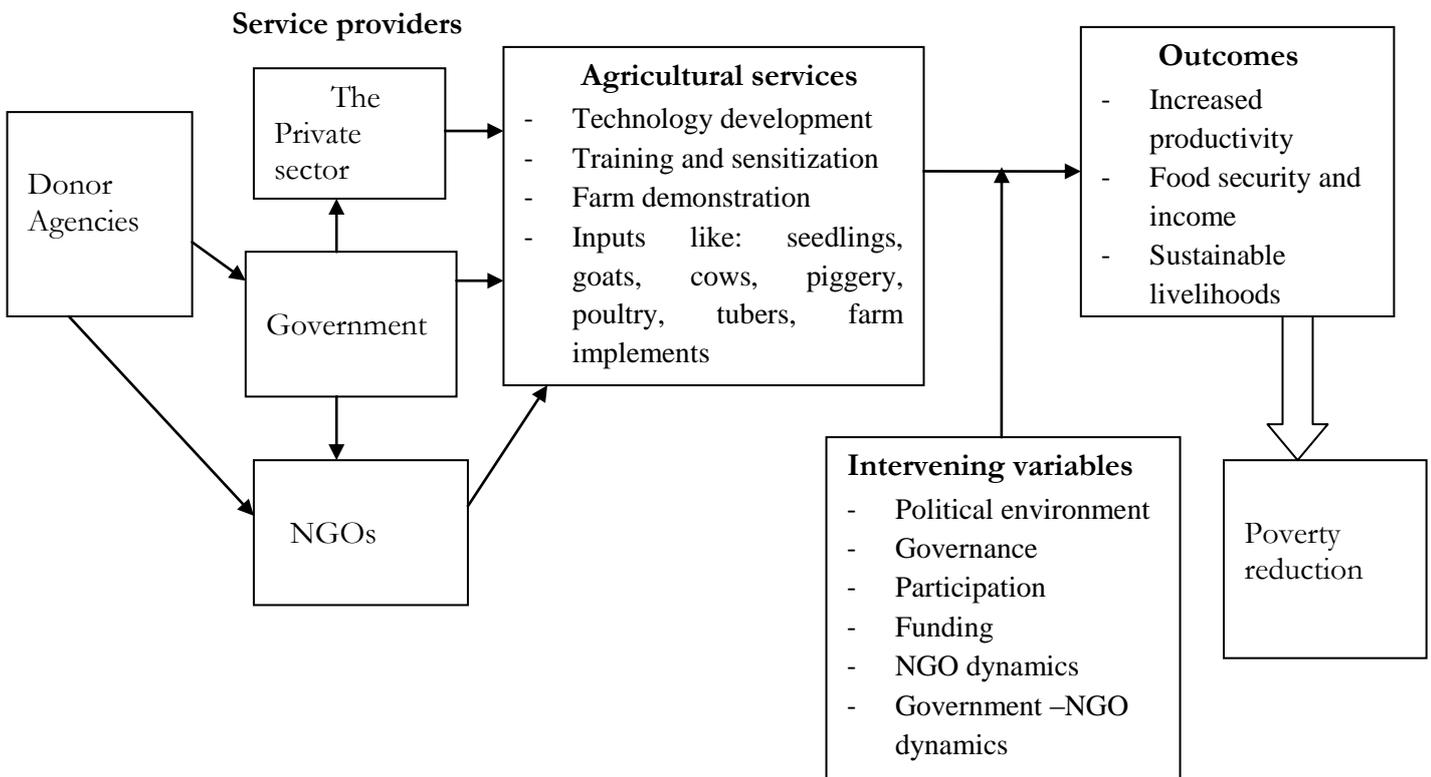
2.0 Theoretical and conceptual framework

In this chapter, I seek to give the conceptual and theoretical framework about Non-governmental organization-led service delivery to the poor which I use to analyze the data in the preceding chapters. The conceptual framework is based on the literature about NGO-led service delivery that we have used to investigate the constraints which are indicated as intervening variables in figure 1 below. The chapter explores to understand the concepts used in the study and the theoretical framework, understanding service provision, and NGOs context in Uganda

2.1 Service provision chain.

The service provision chain used in this paper is illustrated in figure 1 based on the literature on NGO-led service delivery. The chain is only limited to the study, however, it gives an illustration of how service delivery can be organized by NGOs, government, private sector and donor agencies.

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework



Source: Author's construction based on the literature review

The conceptual framework used in this paper in figure 1 above indicating service providers that include: government, the private sector NGOs and the donor agencies. From figure 1, the donor agencies are instrumental in

providing financial resources to government and NGOs. To implement the public private partnerships, the government of Uganda, provides resources to the private sector in form of contracts to deliver resources to the communities, while NGOs through the NAADs programme are outsourced by Government to deliver services to the NAADs beneficiaries. This outsourcing of NGOs by government resources supplements NGOs financial resources from the donor agencies.

At the same time, government provides agricultural services directly to the farmers through extension services at sub county level, research and technology development since investment in research is expansive. The aim of private sector is profit motivated; this paper does not go into details of the private sector. The paper rather concentrates on NGO-led service delivery because we find the donor agencies⁴ pushing for the channeling of poverty focused resources to the poor through Non-governmental organizations. The conceptual framework illustrates the chain of delivery system right from the chosen service providers, agricultural services delivered to the poor, the outcomes of the agricultural services and the end result being poverty reduction.

In this paper, we consider agricultural services to be: technology development, training and sensitization, farm demonstration and in-puts like; seedlings, goats, cows, piggery, poultry, tubers and farm implements. NGOs in rural Uganda deliver the mentioned services to selected beneficiaries using selection criteria that are set by the NGOs and the members. The idea of delivering the agricultural services is to increase productivity, food and income security of the poor, so that the poor live a sustainable livelihood and improved quality of life. The ultimate end of delivering the agricultural services to the poor is poverty reduction as enshrined in the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), The National Development Plan (NDP, 2010), the NAADS Act, 2001 and Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA).

However along the delivery chain, there are intervening variables that may affect the delivery system positively or negatively. In this paper we shall base much on the negative barriers of the intervening variables (Political environment, Governance, Government-NGO dynamics, NGO dynamics, Funding and Participation). By political environment, we mean policy formulation and how the politics of the state play an important role in shaping and passing policies that regulate the operation of NGOs, how these policies might constrain NGOs in delivering services to the poor. In Uganda the NGOs are regulated by The NGO Act (2006) considered by NGOs to be so bureaucratic and stringent in enabling the smooth running of NGOs participating in service delivery⁵. Other regulatory instruments also affect NGOs from smooth operations as NGOs are required to renew their registration with the NGOs board every after a given period of time. It's

⁴ Based on the literature, the World Bank and current debates on service delivery suggest that NGOs are more efficient, accountable and close to the people therefore can deliver services to the intended beneficiaries better than the state (World Bank 1995)

⁵ NGOs petitioned the minister of Internal Affairs to react to some sections of the NGO Act (2006) that requires NGOs to update their registration even if it expired while implementing programmes in the field, the NGO is supposed to halt the exercise and update its registration first

perceived by the NGOs in Uganda that there is a lot of political interference in their operations (NGO Act 2006)

By governance, we mean legal and administrative setup of the government and how it affects the NGO service delivery. We take into cognizance of the fact that, NGOs also implement their own policies⁶ to ensure quality controls in service delivery. We chose governance because it's a critical pillar in the state of affairs for both the government and the NGO working environment. Governance and participation in this paper are important in studying how NGOs are constrained in delivering services to the poor.

The funding factor for NGOs is an important aspect of this conceptual framework, whereas, the current debates suggest that NGOs are the best alternatives in delivering service to the poor, the trend in events has not been the same for all NGOs in funding the projects that are intended to benefit the poor, donor agencies have instead pushed their agenda into the NGOs work which has resulted in NGOs becoming vulnerable to donor policies. Many of the NGOs involved in service delivery are being pushed to do policy advocacy which agenda has seen grass root non-governmental organization lose focus in order to continue getting funding from the western NGOs. We investigate the funding gaps of NGOs in rural Uganda and how it constrains service delivery to the poor.

2.2 NGOs and service Delivery

NGOs are commonly defined as 'independent development actors existing apart from government and corporations, operating on non-profit or for profit basis, with degree of emphasis on voluntary,undertaking community development work or advocating on development issues' (Michael, 2004: 3). We treat NGOs in this paper to be voluntary, nonprofit and serving social mission that is aimed at delivery services to the poor. The world bank, which is a key player in development business, identifies the following strengths of NGOs: '*strong grassroots link; field based development expertise; ability to innovate and adapt; process oriented approach to development; participatory methodologies and tools; long commitment and emphasis on sustainability; and cost effectiveness*' (World Bank, 1995: 15).

NGOs played critical role in addressing persistent poverty, hunger by providing agricultural inputs in sub-Saharan Africa (Salih, 2001:1-7), there is no exact number of how many people are served by NGOs, however, Fowler (2005b:18) estimate that NGOs reach roughly more than 20% of the poor in the world. Despite the well-reported success stories, the participation of the beneficiaries in NGO service delivery has been criticized. Many argue that NGOs may not help the poor meet their needs, for example Fowler, refers to the service delivery of NGOs to be 'overt' and 'employed to shield more critical intentions of civic mobilization' (Fowler 2005b cited in Namara 2009) more, some accuse NGOs of causing duplication of services rather than serving the deserving poor ,Leopold attributes this to the failure to develop projects based on local realities, local knowledge, donor insistence on logical

⁶ NGOs in Uganda development a Quality Assurance Mechanism (QUAM) that is a control measure used for self governance.

frameworks and short term outputs rather than sustainable changes (Leopold 2001:96). The theoretical assertion that NGOs are better placed to deliver services to the poor is the motivation for this paper. We use this argument to examine the extent to which NGOs are constrained in delivering agricultural services to the poor as many scholars have argued in that favour.

NGO involvement in service delivery of poverty reduction programs is partly because of the increased need for efficiency in the provision of public services and donor insistence on ‘value’ for money. NGOs also assert that they are in a unique position to facilitate community empowerment because they are nearer to the poor and utilize participatory approaches.

Today, NGOs are considered to be a better channel for delivering multilateral and bilateral aid (although they still consume a small, but growing, proportion of aid)- this ‘ new policy agenda’ (Edwards and Hulme, 1996) has shifted the burden of sustainable development on to the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are increasingly seen as a magic potion for all the shortcomings that distress underdeveloped countries. Zaidi (1999) notes that NGOs have been positioned to address and resolve issues which range from those that affect the environment, gender inequality, sustainable development, law, political emancipation and participation. Issues or areas that the private or state sector cannot address are automatically expected to be undertaken by NGOs. The fact that a very large number of NGOs have failed to do so is now increasingly recognized by observers and analysts of the process (Zaidi, 1999: 260). In my analysis, I consider the NGO-led service delivery to be embedded within the political, governance and funding processes of NGOs in Uganda. This enables me to relate the aspects of the NGO-led service delivery to the constraints examined in this paper.

2.3. Government and NGOs service delivery

Uganda has a population of 30.7 million of which 70% of the working population depend on agriculture as their main source of livelihoods, (MoFPED, 2010: 197). Service delivery in the agriculture sector is crucial to the economy and livelihoods of the people of Uganda. The government of Uganda with funding from donor agencies has initiated agricultural delivery mechanisms of which the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADs) is the most recent one. With the growing number of districts totaling to 112 (MoFPED, 2010), the NAADs programme is envisaged to target the poor who are economically active to engage in productive work in all the districts of Uganda with emphasis on food security and improving rural livelihoods. The NAADs programmes like the earlier programmes⁷ initiated by Government is also donor funded with emphasis of reaching out to the poor. With all these agricultural delivery mechanisms, NGOs on the other hand have joined the delivery chain by providing agricultural services in form of training, technology development, inputs like: seedlings, tubers, dairy goats/cows and piggery and poultry all targeting the poor in rural Uganda. Within the last two decades,

⁷ Earlier programmes, like Entandikwa in the early 1990s, Area based Agricultural modernization Programme, were all hijacked by the elite class while the poor were only called to listen to speeches and how the programmes targets the them (the poor),

Uganda witnessed an upsurge in NGOs working on service delivery alongside the government delivery mechanism. In the same period, the country has undergone several macro-economic adjustments that are geared towards poverty eradication including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs) which are either home grown or donor driven bringing on board NGOs in the service delivery (MoFPED, 2004). The donor community argue that the shift to the NGO-led model of service delivery is pro-poor, and enables the grassroots people to participate in decision making processes, and allow 'bottom-up' planning. We are concerned about this shift in thinking and practice from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up' to analyze the findings in this paper

The earlier initiatives in Uganda by the donor community that were under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiatives were targeted to critical areas that the benefiting country identified to be critical for poverty eradication through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The PRSP process brought on board the element of participatory planning, budgeting, and implementation through collective forces between Government, Donors and NGOs thus giving the beneficiaries an opportunity to identify priority areas under which to access government money. As Namara notes '*the participation of NGOs like Uganda Debt Network (UDN) in the HIPC process with Government in lobbying for debt relief was seen as a dimension of capturing the grassroots voice since NGOs are close to the people and therefore represent their views*' (Namara, R. 2009: 68, Guijt, I, 2008). We are concerned with the government -NGO working relations, we investigate how it constrains NGOs in delivering services to the poor in a manner that is not compromised by both parties (the government and the NGOs).

To further understand the government NGO working relations, we look at the government sponsored National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) that purely targets the active poor farmers in all the 112 districts of Uganda. The NAADS Act, 2001 legitimized the participation of NGOs in the delivery of agricultural services through a system called 'out-sourcing' (MAAIF, 2000, Care, 1995), evidence on how this has benefited the NGOs and the poor to become sustainable is scanty and even then, the NAADS program which is state run has been criticized in its delivery processes⁸ (New vision, 5th April, 2010). Some studies have indicated that state led service delivery is faced with challenges of corruption, the beneficiaries do not participate in the processes of decision making and thus the services delivered end up being of poor quality; as observed by Sen, that '*benefits exclusively meant for the poor end up being poor benefits*' (Sen, 1995:14), insufficient and hijacked by the elite.

...the participation of the poor in the NAADS program has been manipulated and informative, institutional processes have been hijacked by the elites and government bureaucrats and curtailed the participation of the poor farmers. NAADS

⁸ The president of Uganda was quoted to have said that whereas the government had injected close to sh.9bn in Naads in Lira district, the people were bitterly complaining that they are not benefiting from the project, instead the politicians and implementer had hijacked the project to their advantage

implementation process in Nebbi district is therefore not participatory (Onen, D 2007:53).

As argued by Dani that for public goods and services to reach all segments of society, delivery mechanism must be accessible, effective and accountable (Dani, A. et al, 2008 :) Thus, we use this argument to examine the political and governance structures of government and NGOs working relationship in service delivery in the agricultural sector given that poverty and hunger is rampant in the rural Uganda despite NGOs and government huge investment in the agricultural sector.

In the recent past, Uganda has witnessed an upsurge in NGOs⁹ whose motive and objectives is poverty reduction as indicated in the NDP, 2010. Generally all NGOs in Uganda claim that they are close to the grassroots people and therefore speak on their behalf, their programs are pro-poor and thus they are better placed to deliver services to the poor. This notion has been supported further by the development workers and policy debates in the North. Thus, its argued that the private market and NGOs will provide services better, consequently more donors are channeling funds through NGO actors, government's role is to provide an enabling environment (World Bank, 1995, Edward and Hulme, 1996 in Mkandawire. T, 2001:7). Analysis of the literature indicates that government is argued to develop policies that ensure NGOs operate in a free and fair environment while leaving service delivery to the NGOs and private sector. Our concern at this stage of service delivery is, are NGOs riding on a safe road or there are constraints emanating from the shift of donor agencies of channeling resources to the NGOs from the government. I examine this shift further in the analysis of the findings of the study to investigate whether and how NGOs have been dubbed into donor agencies' agendas.

2.4. The Poor and Service delivery

It's not easy to define the poor, however we ought to base on the literature from different scholars and development workers to attempt give an operational meaning of 'the poor'. The World Bank defines the poor using poverty line: as those [people] who spend less than US\$ 1.25 a day. In Uganda the poor are defined conventionally using the World bank definition of the poverty line , '*house hold whose real expenditure per adult equivalent falls below a given level (the poverty line) are considered poor*' (MoFPED, 2004:12). We recognize that using the poverty line approach in this study we may not get the best for the purpose of the study, we therefore use the capability/entitlement approach to poverty by Sen (1993). The capability approach to poverty is based on human development of the whole being; it underscores foundational importance to human freedom of choice and achievement. The capability approach encompasses personal characteristics like intelligence, age, sex, reading skills, social aspects like, public policies, social norms, gender roles and power relations (Sen 1992). The advantage of this concept lies in its multidisciplinary definition of the poor, poverty can be defined by applying the various social

⁹ Uganda has 7000 NGOs increasingly involved in policy advocacy, monitoring implementation and in actual delivery of services (Namara R, 2009: 7)

indicators as in the human development index (Caizhen, L, 2009:24). Thus defining the poor using the capability approach brings a broader picture than using the income or the poverty line approach.

The location of the poor in service delivery is studied in a new but growing development literature. A study by Edwards et al (1996) showed that NGOs even fail to reach the poorest of the poor whom they work for. As much as NGOs get money from donor agencies, they have not ably delivered services to the poor however much we claim that NGOs are cost effective in service delivery. Much of the money meant for service delivery to the poor is spent in expensive hotels paying for the bills of the project managers organizing workshops, conferences and making press releases to impress the donors that they are working when they appear in the media. We question this whether the poor have been involved or it's all about accountability. Zaidi notes that *'managers of NGOs spend half of the donor funds on making trips to meeting the donors in expansive hotels, demanding for stipend for writing reports and evaluations'* (Zaidi , 1999). Rather than using the poor to solicit money from donors to make accountability to the donors, we are concerned in this paper that instead of NGOs accounting 'upwards' to the donors, efforts be made to account 'downwards' by delivering what ought to be for the poor.

We may put this approach of locating the poor in service in the social science context whereby the communities have attached different meanings to the poor, thus social networks are important to examine how the poor are perceived in service delivery. If we don't properly take this into cognizance, the social outlook of service delivery to the poor, we ought to leave out what is important for us to design policies while designing pro-poor interventions meant for poverty reduction by both the government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

2.5 Participation and its use in development work

Participation is given prominence in this paper because it provides space for the poor to be heard at all levels of analysis used in the paper. We look at participation of the beneficiaries in funding, governance, and policy making in the delivery of agricultural services to the poor. The word participation is used by both exact and natural sciences, in the present paper we use a social science context, the use of the word participation needs to be redefined and located among the vast literature on participation. Some authors like Oakley notes that participation is considered a voluntary contribution by the people in one or another program (Oakley et al, 1991:6). The discourses on participation is contested, Mosse D, notes that participation is linked to greater productivity at lower costs, efficient mechanisms for service delivery, or reduced recurrent and maintenance costs (Mosse, D, 2001: 17). Jennings, for example, considers participation to be involvement by a local population and at times additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a program designed to change their lives", (Jennings, 2000:1) Jennings argues, participatory development must recognize "the importance of entrusting citizens with the responsibilities to shape their own future"(Jennings, 2000:2). The overriding emphasis in this perspective is the local people's capabilities and popular agency (Mohan G, 2004:62).

The World Bank as an International body from its own point, views participation as *'the process by which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policymaking, resources allocation, and program implementation'*, (Klugman, 2002: 237) . According to the World bank, participation of stakeholders in the selection and design of projects can improve decision making, strengthen ownership, and help poor people and disadvantaged groups; and that systematic social analysis can help ensure that bank operations achieve objectives, that they are feasible within their social and institutional context' (World Bank, 1994¹⁰). This paper uses the phrase participation of the poor in development work to mean involvement in decision making at all levels of governance.

Participation in development work has a long history and emerged with the adoption of Participatory development which nursed out of the recognition of the shortcomings of top-down development approaches. The aim of participatory development was to make 'people' central to development by encouraging beneficiary involvement in intervention that affects them. The broad aim of participatory development is to increase the involvement of the socially and economically marginalized peoples in decision making (Guijt 1998:1 in Cooke 2001).The World bank (1994) saw participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources that affect their lives... donor driven and outside development was rapidly adopted by individuals and organization. Participatory approaches are justified in terms of sustainability, relevance and empowerment (Cooke, 2001: 5).

Participation can result in political co-option, and can require contribution from participants in form of labor, cash or kind and thus transfer some of the project costs on the beneficiaries, and those who challenge the rhetoric of participation; it masks centralization in the name of decentralization (Biggs and Smith 1998 in Cooke, 2001)

Participatory planning may more accurately be viewed as the acquisition and manipulation of the new 'planning knowledge' rather than the incorporation of 'people's knowledge' by projects (Cooke, 2001:8). Chambers refers to participation as "handing over the stick or pen and chalk"- a process in which people are let to do it themselves for themselves and take control over the process;

the participation for all development organizations is that at every level, ownership is pushed down, handed over and fostered. Beyond this, participation at community or group level is then not 'their' participation in 'our' program, but our participation in theirs; and participation by the poor is not just in the design and implementation phase of projects, but also in identification, monitoring and evaluation, and policy formulation (Chambers, 1995a:38)

Chambers notes that participation is about facilitating investigation, analyzing, presentation and learning by local people themselves, so that they generate and own the outcomes, and also learning requires confidence that

¹⁰ World bank Social Assessment guidelines, May 1994

‘they can do it’, that the people are able to map, model, rank, score, diagram, analyze, plan and act. (Chambers, 1997:157)

However, recent debates have looked at participation from the human rights perspective and political view. Gaventa (2004) argues that all the trends in participatory approaches and the different perspectives should help to extend the concept of participation to citizenship and to “recast participation as a right, not simply an invitation offered to beneficiaries of development” (Gaventa, 2004: 29). We note that the rights based approach to participation argued by Gaventa represents the element of human agency and development which we use in further analysis of the data in this paper.

2.6 Constraints of NGO service delivery

Much of the literature discussed in this chapter has been on the NGO-led service delivery to the poor. We now consider literature on the constraints faced by NGOs in service delivery. We base on studies from East Asia, Latin America where many NGOs are involved in service delivery to the poor. Studies by Rauh Karen (2010), Zaidi S A (1999) revealed among others the following to be constraints of the NGOs service delivery; heavily dependent on donor funds, power relations between donors (NGOs from the North) and recipients (NGOs from the South), professionalization and report culture, bureaucracy in NGOs work, dynamics of the aid chain, participatory model *visa viz* the actual implementation. Vivian notes that *‘the myth of participation is exposed and NGOs service delivery is non participatory, the NGOs staff end up “thinking for” for the community, often overruling popular decisions’* (Vivian, 1994: 184), paper based accountability (Edwards et al, 1995, Fowler 1991), reliability and sustainability have not been fulfilled as NGOs operate in a specific condition , governance and politics of who provides services to the poor. Our concern is to investigate how NGOs are constrained in delivering services to the poor despite the praise and huge amounts of funds from the donors.

The constraints as revealed by the studies by Rauh K (2010) and Zaidi A (1999) are relevant to our study on how NGOs are constrained to deliver services to the poor. We therefore, put it to ourselves that despite these constraints what are the coping mechanisms NGOs adopt in the face of all the limitations encountered during the service delivery process. Many times, as NGOs partner with governments, they are reminded of their social mission of being non-profit, and holding leaders accountable (Care, 2005) therefore, there is disjuncture for NGOs to try to do business with government in the form of outsourcing as shown in the literature.

Because of their limited scope and reach, NGOs are hoodwinked to contract services which they were not meant to do, this action itself puts the NGOs in a compromising situation of politics of competition for winning contracts which many commentators and observers argue has eroded the moral fabric of society. The NGO staff who are not competent in business like mission setting are forced to hire consultants to write technical proposals to get government funds. Rauh K, (2010), in her study on NGOs in Latin America, explicitly revealed that because of politics of power relations, NGOs in the south find themselves in a position of implementing the agendas

of donors who dictate on them [NGOs] the terms of work, always filling log frames with quantifiable indicators. The current trends in the NGOs world of donor recipient breeds the concept of 'master-servant' syndrome. NGOs in the south become the servant, always making accountabilities and reports to fulfill the donor requirements and meeting deadlines otherwise funds are withheld or contracts cancelled.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the theoretical and conceptual framework used in the study in reference to participation and NGO led service delivery and adopts the World Bank perspective of participation. The next chapter explains the agricultural based NGOs and their politics and dynamics of participation in service delivery. It shows the divergent space under which NGOs are working in Uganda.

Chapter 3

Agricultural based NGOs, Political environment and Governance

3.0 Introduction

Investment in Agriculture steams from the fact that the sector provides the biggest employment avenue for the majority of Uganda's population. Indeed 70 percent of the total population engages in agriculture as a source of livelihoods (MoFPED, 2010). Since the 1990s the number of people living below the poverty line has decreased from 56 percent (1992/3 to 44 percent (1996/7), 35 percent (2000) trends went up to 38.8 percent (2003) and down to 31.1 per cent (2006) (UBOS, 2006). Decline in contribution of agriculture sector, from 51 percent (1991) to 34 percent in 2006, yet 70 percent of the population draw their livelihoods from agriculture (UNDP 2007:48). Our concern is to use this literature to establish why NGOs are still faced with constraints in delivering services to the poor despite the huge sums of money being invested in agriculture.

Interventions in agricultural development trace its origin not in Uganda but as worldwide phenomenon with both governments and the private sector including NGOs and individuals participating in the agricultural sector. In Uganda, right from pre-independence to post independence, investment in agriculture is noted in programmes like Rural Farmers Scheme, Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), Area based Agriculture Modernization Programme (AAMP), now the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) that has components of rural livelihoods (Onen D, 2007:30). The basis of these programmes is hinged on the premise that the NGOs, which have the mandate to mobilize, organize and represent the 'peoples will' fully, deliver services to the deserving poor.

Interestingly, the participation of the NGOs in delivering services in form of 'outsourcing' has been doubted as it is feared that once the NGOs go into partnership with government, they will lose focus, be compromised thus abandon the core values of demanding accountability and playing the role of checks and balance of government programs (Care, 2005, Oxfam, 2004). Increasingly, NGOs are a focus of many government programs like NAADS, AAMP in Uganda, however, delivery of agricultural services using out sourcing does not serve the best interest of the poor beneficiaries who are at times by-passed in the processes of planning, procurement and delivery, they are looked at the receiving end. With the NGO-led service delivery, we examine how the chain of delivery is organized, the politics, governance and the financing of NGOs to see whether there are constraints affecting NGOs to reach the grassroots people. We base our claim on the argument of the World Bank that NGOs involve the people; they are efficient and therefore can best deliver services to the poor. This study considers an NGO to be intermediary, membership, nonprofit often utilizing external funding to offer services to the poor. The focus is on those NGOs involved in agriculture services.

3.1 SATNET Programme as a service provider to the Poor

SATNET is a net work of 51 member organisations founded in 2000 by 11 organisations in the Rwenzori Region. Rwenzori region is in western Uganda comprised of Kasese, Kabarole, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa, Bundibujyo and Ntoroko districts (MoFPED¹¹ 2010). SATNET's mission is to increase livelihoods of the farming community through capacity building of member organisation and their trainers, advocacy, networking, research on sustainable and organic agriculture production and marketing systems. Specifically SATNET is built on six objectives:

- i. to enhance the capacities of SATNET members and their trainers to effectively and efficiently deliver quality services to farming community
- ii. promote participatory research and utilisation of research information
- iii. promote and enhance farmer driven agri-business initiatives
- iv. to lobby and advocate formulation and implementation of farmer friendly realistic policies and government programmes
- v. promote and strengthen cross cutting issues in SATNET programmes
- vi. to increase and strengthen information sharing, networking, collaboration and partnership

Table 1: SATNET membership

S/n	District	Number
1	Kabarole	16
2	Kasese	15
3	Kamwenge	6
4	Kyenjojo	9
5	Bundibugyo	5
	Total	51

Source: Authors construction from the SATNET Annual Report, 2009

The members of SATNET are independent and are required to register with the NGO Board in order to fulfill their legal existence with the laws of Uganda. At the same time, SATNET members subscribe annually in order to participate in SATNET activities¹². The mandate of SATNET is not to fund the members but to be a voice through which the members can organize joint activities together on common issues and synergies in the region. Therefore, the role to deliver agricultural services directly to the farmers is a preserve of the member organizations. SATNET trains the members and packages information in a user-friendly form. For effective service delivery, SATNET partners with other members to carry out common agricultural activities. As a lead farmer based organization, SATNET has pioneered the farmer field

¹¹ Budget Speech delivered by the Hon. Minister of Finance at the Fifth Session of the 8th Parliament of the Republic of Uganda

¹² SATNET suspended three members who did not fulfil the requirements of registration and subscribing to SATNET (SATNET Annual Report, 2009)

schools approach to training- a school without ‘walls’ as commonly called by SATNET members, together with the district agriculture department. SATNET organized an agricultural fair that brought together, the community and organizations to show case their knowledge and technologies in public.

As indicated in table1 above, SATNET has 51 registered members, Kasese district with 15 members, two organizations were selected for this study on the basis that they were fully registered, have been fulfilling SATNET requirements for the last five years and were in operation in Kasese district. Karughe Farmers Partnership and Kiima Foods NGOs with operation in Kasese district, which are member organizations of SATNET, were selected for this study.

Table 2: Enterprise promoted by SATNET Member Organization

Member organization	Enterprise
Bukonzo East Training Team (BETT) Karughe Farmers Partnership (KFP) Ndogo United Herbalists Association (NUHDA)	Smilax anceps
Mutiba Foundation for Agriculture Kiima Foods	Raphia Farinifera
New Eden Christian Foundation Bio garden (implementing Partner)	Candle nut and Jatropa
Caritas Kasese Green Home Rwenzori Herbal and Environmental Activities Association (RHIVA)	Oil Palm

Source: SATNET Annual Report, 2009.

Table 2, shows ten organizations that had benefited from a project on domestication of key plant species supported by the French Embassy in Uganda. Like many NGOs in Uganda, SATNET is donor dependent with Hivos contributing 51 per cent (Ugx . 261,948,000/=) to the total annual budget, membership fee 1 per cent (Ugx . 2,920,000/=) other sources were: Broederlijk Delen (BD), Organic Denmark, Belgium Technical Cooperation (BTC), French Embassy, Global Environment Facility, Concern World Wide, Kabarole District Local Government.

At the individual member organization, Karughe Farmers Partnership source of funding in the last five years were; Hivos, European Union, SNV and subscription from members while Kiima Foods the source funding is, BD, and local sources through subscription fees. With less funding coming in from the donors, SATNET developed a strategy to link its beneficiaries to the government programs like the NAADS for sustainability purposes. As indicated in the literature, we are concerned about how funding, governance and politics constrain the smooth delivery of services to the poor. In the case of SATNET, we based on the literature from the reports and minutes of

annual general meetings (AGM) in the last five years, which we use to analyze the primary data.

We note that at SATNET, funding for programmes is highly dependent on donors an aspect we investigated in relation to its affect on service delivery. We noted in table 1, that SATNET cannot fully deliver services to the member organization because of the funding gap. Out of the 51 member organizations, only 10 were selected for the French embassy project on domestication of key plan species. However, due to the budget cuts by donors to SATNET and its members, the main challenge will be how agricultural services will be delivered to the poor as funding from donor agencies continues to dwindle. We use this case to further examine how member organizations cope with limited financial inflow from the donor agencies in a quest to deliver agricultural services to the poor.

3.2 The poor and service provision?

Service provision by NGOs is a term used differently by different development practitioners, scholars and academics. The word NGO-led service provision gained momentum in the 1990s when the World Bank and other International bodies joined the bandwagon of the Western NGOs to appear to be changing the development paradigm from ‘top-down’ to ‘bottom-up’. Service provision is organized at different levels and the poor are considered to participate in development programs including government programs through their representatives. Like Chambers notes, participation allows the lowers to be heard, therefore if they are excluded from involvement in decision making, the outcome of the project becomes ‘theirs’ not ‘our’ (Chambers R, 2005). Brock K, notes that the participation of NGOs in the district activities is likely to be labeled as ‘participation in decentralized planning’ (Brock, K, 2004: 105). Some commentators have taken participation to be a constitutional right for which if the people are not involved in any project planning and implementation then that becomes denying them their constitutional right to participate and express their will (ibid).

With the adoption of the decentralized system of governance in Uganda, the people were empowered to participate in the local government planning processes, determine what they need, hold leaders accountable, monitor and give feedback on issues if any gaps are identified. The LG Act also empowers the people to hold leaders accountable if they do not deliver on their part (LG Act, 2001, MoFPED, 2004). In the local government planning process in Uganda, the poor are the target beneficiaries for government services through the NGOs and the private sector delivery mechanism, which is presumed to be cost effective and participatory. This is true of the NAADs program, and NGO led service delivery. It’s argued that *‘the poor are hard to get and have no time to participate since they are busy finding what to feed on thus if they do not participate, they are participated’* (Interview with NGO worker). With this view in mind, participation of the poor in service delivery is seen at the receiving point instead of the poor being central in the delivery mechanism.

As the donor agencies change focus from service delivery to advocacy, the NGOs that were once involved in service delivery have switched to advocacy,

which is a more lucrative venture with a lot of funding from donor agencies and International bodies like the European Union, Department for International Development (DFID) and World Bank. With a shift to advocacy, NGOs have tended to compete with each other in policy advocacy to be able to attract funding for their activities. The question is who talks what, who represents who, and where do they get the mandate? Donors are competing to fund NGOs especially those at the apex- networks, coalitions and thus NGOs have joined the bandwagon of ‘showing off’ practice in an effort to win donor funding (Namara, R, 2009: 199). This is an indication of how donor dependency on donor aid has over ridden the original motives of NGOs by the individual motives of those who run NGOs claiming that they represent the ‘poor’. We find a rather an overlap in the mission of NGOs that were once service delivery and switched to advocacy, *‘the constraint is basically high dependency on donor funds, locally generated funds cannot run organisations even for three months, if donors stopped funding us we can close shop the following hour’* (interview with NGO staff, August 2010). We note that locally generated funds in the form of membership fees are a small fraction of the budget of NGOs (only 1 percent for SATNET) to effectively deliver services to the poor.

3.3 Do the poor get what is due to them from the service providers?

The NGO-led service delivery that is considered to be democratic, participatory and effective has been significant in the new development discourse that calls for a revamp from the traditional top-down to the bottom-up approach that is believed to bring the poor to participate in development agenda. The bottom-up approach enables the poor to be an integral part of planning, implementation, policymaking and governance (Salins L, 2007:10 in Namara, 2009:83). The underlying principle is that citizens are ready to participate and share their political agendas and bureaucrats are willing to listen and respond (Cornwall, 2007: 5) If citizens participate in local decision making, engage in local problem solving activities, it is seen as contributing to guaranteeing the access of the poorest to social services, thus enhancing prospects for economic and political inclusion, and for development (World Bank, 2001; UNDP 2003 in Cornwall, 2007: 5)

The NGO-led service is presumed to challenge the top down model of development, transform peoples attitudes and thus a means to poverty eradication. The aim of SATNET is to work with the poor men and women in the rural agricultural parts of the Rwenzori Region of Uganda. Together with its member organisation, SATNET has mobilized rural farmers to embrace agriculture as business¹³ shifting from subsistence to commercial farming.

our mandate as SATNET is not only to target rural farmers but also reach out to the wider public in sensitizing them on commercial farming; we have concrete evidence that the poor if mobilized and given a platform to participate they can be agents of change. Together with our members, we have changed the lives of the rural folk in the five

¹³ SATNET strategic intervention area to shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming (SATNET Annual Report, 2009)

districts where we operate through skills training, knowledge sharing and exposure visits, farmer to farmer visit (Interview with SATNET Coordinator, August 2010)

Since the NGO-led service delivery is one of the strong points by the World Bank and current debates on service delivery, we investigated how the NGOs have secured the space to allow participation of the beneficiaries in the chain of service delivery. Some scholars expressed escapism on how NGOs have not been able to involve the beneficiaries in service delivery but further adopted the public service model of 'top-down' approach in involving the people. The extent to which the NGO-led service delivery is pro-poor is contested by many people who think that its just a fashion to involve the people in decision making not in real terms of financial, procurement and full time assignment as noted by the one of the Community Development Officers (CDOs).

The NGOs pretend to be involving the poor in their work, the only thing I see is training, where they get attendance list to prove that the poor have participated in decision making but the core issues are not handled in those meetings' (interview with CDO, August 2010).

Interview with the SATNET, staff revealed that they have been constrained to involve all the poor at different levels of governance,

We used to invite two people from each organisation to attend our Annual general meeting, but due to financial resource constraints, we now invite the chairpersons. About 60% of our members have no access to donor support and the annual budget was also on descending trend ... to ensure participation of women. We base on the women organisation to send female participants (SATNET Staff Interview, August 2010)

We can argue that participation in NGO-led service is a constraint at some stages in the service delivery chain especially at decision-making level. If the beneficiaries are not involved at the stage of decision making then policies passed may not be in their [beneficiaries] favour and therefore, the poor shun participating in NGO activities if decision making is left to representatives only without hearing the voice of the majority beneficiaries.

3.4 Perceptions of the beneficiaries and conditions for benefiting from NGO Led service delivery

The last decade was characterized by a shift in thinking that NGOs were effective in delivering services to the poor, NGOs represent the voice of the poor and better placed to participate in the policy process like the PRSPs/PEAP process (Namara 2010:25). To deliver services better, NGOs set benchmarks to select those to benefit from the services in the agriculture sector. In-depth interviews with the beneficiaries revealed that:

in order to be selected as a beneficiary, you must belong to a community group, prove that you have land where to keep the goats/poultry or piggery/ and where to do kitchen gardening. As women we are challenged to prove that we have land, the only thing is if one is married then its assumed that she has land and if not married then its assumed that she lives at the family land (in-depth Interview with KFP beneficiary, August 2010)

In regard to the above, land becomes a condition for being selected as a beneficiary. However, as noted by Cleaver, NGOs also have become bureaucratic in choosing who to participate in their programs, this also means

that by putting land as a prerequisite for benefiting from the NGO service delivery, then the poor are being excluded.

I trained with KFP in animal husbandry and sustainable livelihoods, I have land, and had local goats but I was not selected to get improved goats from KFP because I did not meet the criterion of benefiting [I was not wedded in church with my husband]. I have however, used the knowledge gained to cross breed my goats, apply manure in my banana garden and now I have the best garden in the village (in-depth interview with a non beneficiary of KFP goat project in Nyakiumbu sub county, August 2010)

The conditions set for benefiting in NGO projects can sometimes leave out the poor who are the targets for these programs. The elites at times hijack these programs since they have the land, can subscribe to the local community groups and end up hijacking what is meant for the poor. However, a further in-depth interview revealed that, membership to a community group was important to live in the community as more other benefits can accrue not only from NGOs but from self help projects. The poor have set up their coping mechanisms that shield them from being exploited. In one of the FGDs in Munkunyu Sub County, the participants revealed that those who have land accept to use it for group activities, after realizing that land was pre-condition for selection as a beneficiary in any agriculture based program even for the NAADS¹⁴ programme.

For us, if one member does not have land, we look among ourselves and find somebody with land, then as a group we use that land to plant tomatoes, maize, potatoes and eggplants, which we sell as a group, then share the profits. We have also requested Kiima Foods to help us to construct mini irrigation scheme since water is a major challenge in this area (FGD with Kiima Foods beneficiaries in Munkunyu Sub County, August 2010)

To be selected as a beneficiary, all the in-depth interviews and key informant interviews indicated that the beneficiary is supposed to have some bit of skill in keeping the project identified. If its poultry, atleast one needs to have local chicken to begin with, this becomes a yardstick to show that the farmer will not start from zero.

the members of the group are all trained, but when it comes to selecting those to be given the birds, they first evaluate themselves in terms of providing polls, having local birds and the time to look after the birds. At the end of the exercise some members who meet the above are forwarded to us (KFP) and then we go to monitor whether what is stated is on ground. In this way we use self evaluation to select the beneficiaries (In-depth interview with KFP Official, August 2010)

As noted in the literature, NGOs also have become bureaucratic in some way, because the conditions set for the beneficiaries are not different from those set by the government NAADs project which commentators have termed non participatory because the poor are excluded based on the conditions set, thus I argue in this paper that NGOs have not given the poor the chance to participate freely in the projects that were meant for them (the poor)

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the agricultural based NGOs, perceptions of the beneficiaries and the conditions for benefiting from NGO-led service delivery.

¹⁴ NAADs Report 2001, to be selected as a beneficiary for the project land is one of the conditions used, the poor and the youth who don't have land, have argued that, that condition excludes them from participation in the project.

We investigated different beneficiaries of NGO service delivery and found out what they perceived and the conditions for benefiting. We conclude that the conditions (belonging to a group, having land, being married in church, cost sharing, knowledge of the project) for benefiting from NGOs are a big constraint for the rural poor farmers to participate in NGO-led service delivery. The next chapter explores the constraints faced by NGOs in delivering services to the poor. It analyzes the findings and discusses the discourses of the NGO-led service delivery to the rural poor in Uganda.

Chapter Four:

4.0 Constraints faced by NGOs in service delivery to the poor

This chapter examines the constraints faced by NGOs in delivering services to the poor in Kasese district, Western Uganda. We present those constraints that were commonly identified by the NGO staff and the beneficiaries during the fieldwork, we discuss what the NGOs are doing to overcome the constraints and how the farmers are coping to adjust to the constraints faced. Despite the challenges, the beneficiaries mentioned that they benefit from the NGOs, however, emphasis was on challenges since NGOs only implement short term projects as discussed in the next section.

4.1 Funding for NGOs

In this section, we discuss and analyze how funding of NGOs service delivery to the poor constrains. Financial resources are important in running organization to implement their plans. As donors keep changing their focus to advocacy, NGOs in service delivery have had to change focus in order to continue to be funded. The trend in events following donor demands as revealed by (Zaidi, 1999, Rauh, 2010) proves to us how NGOs in the south are at risk of being whisked away from the core social mission to serving donor agenda. Thus, the beneficiaries are left to hunt for the best alternative to continue participating in planning and decision making of NGOs, which is both a political and governance issue. Interviews with the Karughe Farmer's Partnership Director, concurred with the revelation by the farmers, *'indeed we are refocusing our strategy, service delivery is no longer as attractive as it used to be, we were made to source out for funding and we landed on European Union funds which were for good governance agenda'* (Director KFP Interview August, 2010). It's against such reasoning that NGOs are faced with a challenge of deciding between service delivery and advocacy, which the beneficiaries termed 'betraying' the social mission of serving the poor as indicated in the FGD of farmers

...I heard we have not received funding for the last two years, but our director was heard on radio talking about other things not related to goat rearing and sustainable agriculture, what I don't understand is whether they (KFP) will still come to us for follow up or the project has closed. When we asked one of the contact person they told us that we are now doing advocacy on good governance that was funded by EU (FGD interview with KFP beneficiaries in Kitholhu sub county, August, 2010)

With limited funding, even NGOs are at cross roads of continuing with service delivery or changing focus completely. Service delivery involves many risks such that even with limited internal sources, NGOs cannot maintain their staff for two months maximum, if donor funds are not available. SATNET for instance can only generate 1 per cent of the total budget from membership fees, which amount cannot even pay for office space and staff salary for one month. Financial resources are at the core of business for even those NGOs, which concentrate on social mission without diverting to profit motives. Interviews with the coordinator SATNET further revealed how some member organizations faced with financial crisis had even closed shop and deregistered from SATNET, *'as a result of consistent financial crises, three of our member*

organizations were deregistered because they could not meet the requirements of paying annual subscription fees and renewing their NGO status with the NGO Board (Coordinator SATNET Interview, August 2010)

The poor farmers who had benefited from the deregistered organizations that lost funding and closed shop are left to wonder how and why. The alternative to such farmers as indicated by SATNET proposals to member organization was to join the government NAADs programme since they had been trained and had the skills to support themselves. Further, it's this change in donor trend that constrains the NGO-led service delivery in developing countries. The funding gap is not only affecting the beneficiaries but a wide range of people, the employees, suppliers and the public since resources are diverted from service delivery to advocacy, which only benefits the elite who can make good proposal and convince the donors on good paper work (Rauh, K, 2010)

In order for members to participate in SATNET programmes, they are required to pay annual subscription fees. Those members who did not pay for three consecutive were de-registered from SATNET¹⁵. Increasingly it has become difficult for the poor to participate in NGO programmes because of financial constraints, the members are atleast required to pay subscription as a form of commitment and sustainability of the organization. The situation is waste for community-based groups, which require members to subscribe and even participate in several meetings that take place. Thus, funding becomes a constraining factor in participating in most of the activities of the organization.

Faced with financial constraints, NGOs have had to respond to the constraint in a more assertive perspective as revealed by the staff and beneficiaries. At SATNET, the staff mentioned that *'they are encouraging their members to join NAADs groups at parish level in order to sustain their work and to fund raise as a group'* (Interview August 2010). By proposing to the member organization to join the NAADs programme, is seen as a sustainability strategy for the groups and to benefit from the current concept of donors who believe in funding networks or consortiums than individual organization. At KFP, the director reported that, *'we have mobilized our farmers to form marketing groups; we were able to bulk about 2 tons of maize grain in the last season (April, 2010) which we took to Nyakatonzo Cooperatives Union for sale'* (Interview, August 2010).

By bulking maize, the farmers benefit more than, if they sold the maize as individuals. The organization's role is to mobilize its beneficiaries, organize transport and make follow up of the payment. This finding, reveals how organizations delivering agricultural services should put in a component of marketing to address the constraint of financing.

On the part of the farmers, we found out that, instead of working as an individual they have resorted to group farming as reported by Kanyatsi United Women Association (KUWA) in Munkunyu Sub County during an FGD.

¹⁵ The Minutes of SATNET AGM held on 26th March, 2008, indicated that three members were de-registered for not complying with the constitution. Minutes were accessed on 09th August in the SATNET resource Room by the author)

As members of KUWA, we registered with Kiima Foods, to get support in form of seedlings, training in sustainable agriculture, we decided to work as a group on three acres of land, our main challenge is to raise funds for hiring a tractor to make a first plough and water for irrigation, which we reported to Kiima Foods to address..... we got response that Kiima Foods got funds from donors to pilot small scale irrigation scheme at our demonstration farm for us to learn from.

From this finding, we note that, beneficiaries of NGOs have their own mechanisms of coping when faced with financial constraints; they realize the importance of numbers and cooperation.

4.2 Constraints in the planning and decision making processes

NGOs like any other institutions have guidelines¹⁶ in relation to decision-making processes and stakeholders involved in participating in management processes. The members meet during annual general meetings to receive and adopt annual reports¹⁷ including audited accounts. In the first place, the language used during the meetings is English with little or no intention to translate in vernacular. The membership of SATNET is peculiar in that the local languages used are; Lhukonzo, Rutooro, Rukiga and Lwamba and Lhubwise. The consensus of the members is to use Rutooro and Lhukonzo if they must translate. Thus if any member is to be selected from SATNET member organization, she or he must have some knowledge of English if she or he is to participate in the deliberations of the meeting. Cleaver notes that participatory decision-making is the most difficult part to achieve since they can result into lengthy meetings... *'at large meetings there was a notable disparity between the number of men speaking and number of women speaking, and the need to implement measures to ensure greater participation of women'* (Cleaver, F, 2001: 43). At one of the FGDs women reported that the language used in meetings is too technical for them to understand:

‘...they (the elite) talk in complicated language which we don’t understand even when we use Lhukonzo they still mix with English a word like work plan, logical framework, audit report can not be simplified, we end up keeping quiet for the rest of the time in the meeting. Our participation is in form of attendance but not in terms of decision-making. What can we decide when we have not followed what was said during the deliberations?’ (FGD August 2010).

Decision-making is crucial in running organizations and as a forum for feedback and filling information gaps. As mentioned by the FGD, technical language used by NGOs is not homegrown; it is an imposition by the donor community to get information from the members. The use of log frames has created too much paper for the staff of NGOs even failing to carry on their fieldwork. While the beneficiaries complained of technical language, the staff reported time wasting and too much paper work taking their time. Thus,

¹⁶ The NGO registration Act, 2006, indicates that for an NGO to Register, it must have a constitution signed by members and a resolution from the members to register the organization

¹⁷ SATNET General meeting held on 26th March, 2010 at St. Adolf Formation Center, Fort Portal

NGOs have been seen as paper organizations instead of real service delivery. The result to cope with the too much paper work is for NGOs to hire consultants to do the paper work but with a cost attached. The direct impact of this is to the service delivery chain, where money is diverted to writing reports and paying per diem for top management involved in preparing reports and feedback to the donors and the community.

4.3 Constraints in monitoring and evaluation

The membership of grass root groups and Non-governmental organizations is usually with members who are illiterate who cannot read and write. This is a fact for Uganda with high illiteracy levels (23.8%) Being a member of an organization requires that you are involved in monitoring and evaluation of processes and programmes. For this to be effective, members are required to make reports and read ahead of meetings. We find illiteracy to be a constraining factor in monitoring of SATNET programmes and processes as revealed by the inability of members to write reports depending on the staff, *'our staff are getting busy and busy, imagine after field work, they sit to listen to the members, write down their stories into reports'* (interview with Kiima Food field staff, August, 2010).

The farmers also reported the same constraint of technical knowledge, *'though the staff are there to help us, they also become tired thus we just can't keep calling them all the time to come and fix a problem, we hear of a table to fill when we do farmer field visit, I don't understand those things'* (in-depth interview with Kiima Foods beneficiary in Kyondo August,2010)

Interview with the Director Kiima Foods revealed that some members cannot read and write at all, something constraining the smooth running of business at Kiima Foods, *'our membership is of men and women who barely did not go to school, something that we have no control over, but affecting our daily operations to the extent that even men fear to let their wives freely participate in some organization programmes'*. Illiteracy increases the workload for some staff because the members who do the checks and balance of project activities cannot even write a single report about what they have found out, as observed above, the volume of paper work keeps on accumulating on the staff hence affecting direct implementation of work

Time is another constraint that was highlighted by both the staff of SATNET, KFP and Kiima Foods. The poor farmers spend a lot of time in doing everything possible to fend for their families. In the words of Prof. Ashwani *'the poor have no time to rest, they work a lot we cannot claim that they are unemployed'*¹⁸. In-depth interview with the farmers, revealed that indeed time is a major constraint to attend meetings, appear for trainings and even do some group assignments. The poor find themselves in a dilemma of work, group activities and personal responsibilities

¹⁸ Prof Ashwani Saith, during one of the 4202 sessions at ISS (2009) on Poverty Concepts and Interventions

..in our group we agreed to meet every Saturday but now, I cannot attend because my business runs on Saturday, the meetings on Saturdays are not well scheduled for us, we work the whole week, we need some rest, I have goats to feed, children to care for and other family responsibilities. I have not attended meetings for the last four months, I am constrained, but committed to the group. As a household woman, I have to balance between attending meetings and my family life (In-depth with Kiima Foods beneficiary in Kyondo, Interview August 2010)

It is admitted that time factor and other household activities is a challenge NGOs face while implementing their work. Findings from the field, suggest that time and household activities are a limiting factor to participation in organization activities. From the literature, we note that, staff of NGOs who are presumed to be undergoing professional trainings to improve organizational profile complained of too much work expected from them against the direct implementation of the project.

4.4 Constraints in implementation

In the implementation of NGO programmes, there are constraints that deter the beneficiaries from participating as indicated in the above findings. The in-depth interviews further revealed that the poor are constrained in participating in the implementation of NGO work. Thus the respondents commonly mentioned lobbying and advocacy.

I believe lobbying is done by those who went to school, for me, I listen and wait for the outcome if we are to receive goats and piggery then I would be happy, my work is to look after my projects not to keep making noise and shout, it's a waste of time, how can I influence policy change from deep here in the village. We need other people to do that lobby and they bring what they get, we can't all go at the same time. Our staff are competent to do that on our behalf (interview with KFP beneficiary, August 2010)

With this belief in mind, the poor feel that some work of NGOs belongs to other people while the staffs of the NGOs interviewed believe that lobby and advocacy is about the power of numbers.

..yes, our people still believe that lobby and advocacy is for the educated, its about the power of numbers, we must all engage the policy makers, even when we gave them goats, we want to benefit from the NAADs programme, SATNET has come out broadly on that, we have issues with farmers, they are constrained in coming out boldly, we shall continue training them in lobby and advocacy that's the best way for our farmers to be self sustainable and assertive (in-depth interview with SATNET staff, August, 2010)

The poor participating in the implementation of programmes is to their advantage but if they feel constrained, the service will remain *'leap service and another white elephant'* (Key Informant, Bwera, August 2010). NGO service delivery is crucial in poverty reduction strategies in Uganda. Berner, notes that NGO participation in the PRSPs was one way of capturing the voice of the poor, however, it was noted that the process of NGO participation in the PRSP/PEAP was hasty and rushed into and another ritualistic participation (Berner, E, 2010: 15)

As mentioned in section 4.1.2 above, the poor are constrained to participate in NGO work because of time and they have inadequate finances to meet all their needs. It was mentioned during an FGD that, if members were asked to work they all accepted, but when it comes to contributions in financial terms, it's hard for all the members to subscribe. SATNET suspended three

members because of non-compliance to the constitution, KFP and Kiima Food staff revealed that the financial aspect from the member's side is tricky, even when we ask the members to pay at subsidized rate; it is hard for all of them to meet the target. At KFP, the members who were selected to get goats, birds or piggery were supposed to put in place the following if selected:

- i) have land to do the farming
- ii) construct a pig sty, poultry house, or raised house for the goats
- iii) be able to sustain the project after the project life time

On observation, some beneficiaries had abandoned the project reporting that it was expensive for them to maintain the project after the project ended.

..I was given a cow, I put up the shelter, but later lacked support to buy drugs for the cow. It became inconveniencing for me all the time in the bush looking for pasture, these zero grazing cows are hard to maintain if one has limited piece of land, I used to wake up at 6am go to the bush, come back home, prepare for my children, do other house hold chores and realized I had lost all my money in buying drugs, I sold the cow and bought birds, I now have birds, at least they are less expensive than the cow. I also joined the NAADs group and I was given more birds (in-depth interview with KFP beneficiary in Kitholhu, August 2010)

Financial resources for both the NGOs and farmers are key in the implementation stage of any project. The farmers could not even participate in meetings because they want to get other sources of livelihood. For NGOs to achieve their social mission in delivering services to the poor, financial resource mobilization has to be at the top of the agenda if NGOs are to contribute to poverty reduction.

4.5 Political environment and Service delivery

Under this section, we present and analyze how government policy formulation process is a constraint to NGO work, the action by NGOs to address the political agenda in question. The political arena is important to making decisions concerning the operations of the public and the private sector including NGOs. In Uganda, the NGO work is regulated by the NGO Act (2006) which NGOs under the umbrella of Non-governmental Organizations Forum (NGO-Forum) have questioned as interfering with the running of NGOs in a free space:

The Non Governmental Organization (NGO) fraternity in Uganda is deeply concerned that the legal and regulatory framework for NGO operations in the country, represented by the NGO Act, 2006, its attendant NGO Regulations, 2008 and the draft NGO Policy 2008 reflect serious inconsistencies and are essentially restrictive of the citizens' right to participate in their country's development processes.....the wider political environment remains essentially unsupportive of autonomous, vibrant and politically relevant civil society organization .. (NGO Forum, 2009:1)

The Act specifically requires NGOs to renew their licenses periodically. The question to government is even when staff are busy running activities in the field and the license has expired, they are supposed to stop!! The situation was even made worse when the NGO board issued a notice to all NGOs to renew their operation license within a period of one month (See Appendix 5). Interview with NGO staff confirmed that indeed the NGO Act (2006) was prohibitive and a constraint in their work. *'we are prohibited from participating in active "politics" and yet we are engaged in service delivery, we fail to understand why*

politicians are scared of us by passing such Act to push us out of business' (Staff SATNET Interview, August 2010).

Findings from focus group discussions revealed that, the law and the actual on ground, was different, *'if we don't participate in politics who will plan for us at local council one? yet, we are not sure of continuous support from NGOs, our mandate at this level is to play our cards well by not mingling NGO issues with politics'* (KFP beneficiary, Bwera sub county, August 2010). This finding was true during the fieldwork where some beneficiaries who had been sampled as respondents were busy contesting for political party positions. However, some NGO staff still insist that if members participated in politics then NGOs might be seen as supporting particular political party hence a potential constraint to their (NGO) existence.

To respond to the pressure from government, we found out that NGOs make their own policies to ensure proper controls of their work. Overall, NGOs in Uganda have combined to formulate a quality control mechanism called 'Quality Assurance Mechanism "QUAM" At SATNET; the Coordinator revealed that *'we have different policies such as a human resource and Finance policy. In addition as NGOs, we have formulated a QUAM as a control measure to all NGOs; we are also in negotiation with Government to address our concerns in the NGO Act'* (Interview, August 2010). The policies passed in a given country ought to be consistent with other laws otherwise, they will be contested and challenged as seen from the situation in Uganda where NGOs have petitioned the Minister of Internal Affairs on some sections of the NGO Act (2006).

4.6. Governance

Under this section of governance, we investigate how the legal and administrative framework of government constrains the NGO service delivery to the poor. We show the link how the legal and administrative framework indirectly affects the NGO-led service delivery to the poor in Kasese district. We also look at the legal and administrative setup from the NGO viewpoint and the government side. We investigate how SATNET implements her policies on governance and if all these governance issues affect service delivery to the final beneficiaries at the grassroots level. A key informant interview with the SATNET staff revealed that SATNET implements a set of policies about governance starting with election of board members who are elected by the AGM.

..our constitution is clear on governance and election of members to the management, at every AGM, the members elect members of the board from the paid up member organizations, we also elect district representative to cater for regional representation. Each member organization nominates two delegates who attend the AGM; it's from these that board members are elected. With few women coming to attend the AGM, we have a post of secretary for Gender (Coordinator SATNET Interview August 2010)

The big question is where are the poor in the governance of NGOs, going by the list of participants for the SATNET AGM¹⁹ (2002, 2007, 2008, 2009, and

¹⁹ The author accessed SATNET AGM minutes during field work on 10 Aug, 2010 in the SATNET resource room in Fort Portal, Uganda.

2010) there were common names that appeared on the attendance lists? One can easily question if these member organizations do not have elections at the parent organization so that different members attend at different times. The poor are seen at the periphery in the governance of SATNET with the elite at the top and the poor left to attend trainings, trade fairs, exchange visits. I argue in this paper that if the poor must participate then let them be seen and be heard at all levels of governance.

As much as NGOs take responsibility to demand for accountability from the leaders as representatives of the poor and helping the poor speak for themselves (Namara, 2009: 113), the relationship between NGOs and politicians has turned sour especially those involved in contracting with government services. A study by Care (2005) on NGOs contracting revealed that, NGOs were in fear to question the political powers fearing to lose their contracts (Care, 2005:17). If NGOs cannot question the political space who then is to speak on behalf of the poor? The challenge remains for NGOs to position themselves as representatives of the poor or the elite individuals who own the NGOs?? Thus, it's not clear whether the poor are given chance and space to participate in the political arena in influencing decision. The politics of who participates is an obstacle for the poor to have their voice heard? Jordan notes that *'NGOs are under pressure to give accountability to the people they serve including government, they are expected to mount pressure on the government institutions to be transparent'* (Jordan cited in Namara, 2009)

Implementation of the policy turns to be a challenge to the NGOs, being questioned on whose behalf they talk, while NGOs demand accountability from government, it turns to be a no go area and yet governance can only be achieved if people get feedback from the leaders. NGOs that have pushed hard on the accountability debate have been seen as threats to the powers that be making their work to be questioned?

To address this constraint of governance from within NGO environment and external pressure, NGOs have tended to use non-confrontational means while implementing their work. *'The whole set up of governance is a clear indication that implementation of policies is not a one off event, it needs being slow at some point otherwise, you will be kicked out of business if you push so hard on demanding for accountability, we work together with NGOs in a non confrontation way since we all serve the same people'*(interview with NAADs Coordinator Bwera, August, 2010).

Finally, NGOs have appealed to government not take them as competitors but as supplementing government efforts in the delivery of services to the poor. NGOs and government cannot do it alone as each has different comparative advantages in different fields.

4.7 Dynamics between government and NGOs

In this section we investigate how the government and NGOs directly interact to deliver services, how this interaction directly constrains NGOs in delivering services to the poor. The dynamics of running NGOs in Uganda has seemed to be competing with government; NGOs engagement with government has posed a threat to the NGO work. NGOs participating in the NAADs

programmes have been criticized of being compromised and thus lose their focus (Care, 2005, Berner, 2010). However, SATNET target was to ensure that their farmers become targets of the NAADs programmes. The key informant interview with SATNET, KFP and Kiima Foods staff concurred with the fact that government and NGOs need to work together despite the challenges posed.

..while we work with government in bridging the gap, our contribution is hardly recognized and or documented in government plans, they only talk of big NGOs who give direct funding to government. At SATNET, we have organized joint events and achieved together, however, we are still perceived as not being clear to government, remember our budgets depends on what the donors will approve; we can't start declaring what we have not received.

To many commentators, the marriage between NGO and government does not go well, since along the way NGOs are no longer playing their role of holding government accountable, it is claimed that if NGOs fully engage in government contracting who would then talk on behalf of the poor. As noted with the director KFP *'our aim now is to ensure value for money with the NAADs money, we are not in direct implementation but some of our farmers are beneficiaries, our task is on value for money'* (In-depth interview with KFP Director, August 2010)

Discussions with FGDs reported a different view about working with government, which posed a challenge

..we were left out of the NAADs programme in our sub county, we approached Kiima Foods to support us, and indeed we have gained through training in sustainable livelihoods, farmer to farmer visit. We grow tomatoes, eggplants on large scale and do some kitchen gardening. Our concern now is to get water and increase on our produce. If Kiima Foods thinks we can go to NAADs then it will be another chaos (FGD with KUWA members, 29/07/2010)

Further investigations revealed that the NAADs programme is based on zoning of beneficiaries depending on where they are located. In case of Kasese district, the district was zoned according to the comparative advantages: cattle corridor, agricultural zone, fishing. NGOs whose services are not in tandem with NAADs provided services in a particular zone cannot adequately bid for NAADs projects. However, the farmers expressed that *'zoning denies us an opportunity to access other services from NGOs'*. On the other hand, NGO staff echoed that, zoning has not worked well with them as it meant realigning their deliverable in accordance with the NAADs priority if they were to bid for NAADs projects. The dynamics of working with Government constrains the poor and thus NGOs are at crossroads of working with Government (Care, 2005:7)

4.8 Dynamics operating within NGOs

Under this section, we examine how NGO set up has become a constraining factor in the delivery of services to the poor. Our findings are based on the verbatim comments from the respondents and the literature review. What has become of NGOs in Uganda is that they seem to be perfect in everything that they do without taking cognizance of other intervening factors like climate, location and government policy on service delivery. NGOs have entered a grey area of recognition and visibility, they compete for space and end up wasting

money on non deliverables, *'the practice has seen a lot of signposts littering villages with names of NGOs operating in the area'* (Namara, 2009: 134). Key informant interviews with CDOs in the project area concurred with Namara's finding *'you find a sign post with NGO X, another one with Y, Z, a lot of money is spent on posters, all in the name of service delivery, but the actual deliverables is pea nut'*. This visibility syndrome has posed a great challenge to the NGOs world in developing countries.

While taking on the new concept of basket funding, our finding was that, some NGOs have joined the system without taking proper analysis of their strengths and comparative advantages in terms of staff, space and capacity to delivery of services. *'..we are faced with a big problem of our staff running from one organization to another , however much we tried to make staff sign contracts but we have no control over staff turnover'*(Coordinator SATNET Interview, August 2010).

Analysis of the SATNET reports showed how over three senior staff had left the organization for greener pasture; the implication on the service delivery was that in the gestation period of looking for staff, the farmers were not being attended to. To the 'small organizations' operating in only one district, were feared to be swallowed by the networks and consortiums since it's the name of the consortium or network that is made popular.

Professionalization of NGOs also was reported as a challenge faced by NGOs in service delivery. As NGOs expand their services to the grass root poor farmers the elite staff shun working in 'hard to reach 'and 'hard to survive areas, the elite prefer to work in urban areas where they can access other services like internet. The professionals even shun working for local NGOs and prefer *'big organization'* thus to some organization work as recruiting grounds for big organization, *'the professionals come and go, so we depend on the strength of our members and the volunteers that we trained, however, technical knowledge can only be handled by subject specialists'* (Director, Kiima Foods Interview, August 2010)

From the analysis above, we argue that, whereas NGOs are involved in service delivery, they are not in position to sustain staff, carry out evidence based scientific research on pastes and diseases and the relationship between NGOs within the same sector is still contested, thus resulting into a challenge of how to utilize each other's corporate advantage, since much time is spent on debating who is to do what, which organization will be the lead in the consortium if they applied together for funding. Thus NGOs have been accused of being accountants for the donors instead of making accountability to the communities they serve. At household level, NGOs focus on particular individuals who are face crowd out because all NGOs working in a particular will want to associate their success on the best achieving farmer.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter examined how the NGO-led service delivery model is faced with constraints of different kinds. We examined the perceptions of the beneficiaries on the NGO-led service delivery model. We analyzed and discussed the discourses of the NGO-led service delivery considering the constraints as grouped into political, governance, funding and participation space of NGOs. Further, we find out the coping mechanisms of NGOs and

farmers in the face of limited resources. Specifically we find, bulking of their produces, group farming, and joint proposal writing as a network or consortium and joining the NAADs groups as the most common alternatives for the NGOs to sustain their activities. We also note that as the donors focus more on advocacy, NGOs in the service delivery, have responded by doing both service delivery and advocacy, which situation further exposes NGOs to a big dilemma amidst inadequate technical staff and limited time to carry out advocacy work. The next chapter presents the conclusions by recapitulating on the findings and argues how NGOs are constrained in service delivery. It also presents conclusions and grey areas for further research on NGO-led service delivery and government working relationship.

Chapter five

Conclusions and areas for further research

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined how NGOs are constrained in delivering services to the poor in Kasese district. Unlike many other studies, the study avoided accusing NGOs for the gaps in their operations but rather, identified the reasons why the NGOs are constrained, the perceptions of the poor on NGO-led service delivery and the coping mechanisms of NGOs and beneficiaries in the face of limited resources. The main objective of the study was hinged on the fact that NGOs like government, deliver services to the poor but poverty situation in rural areas is still high compared to the national statistics.

This study did not fully analyze NGOs contracting with Government, however, the literature used can be a basis for me to conclude that the NGO-led service delivery is not a standalone to best explain service delivery to the poor as being cost effective, participatory and democratic as presumed by the World Bank. The study found out that NGOs are constrained in delivering services to the poor thus contradicting what the donors assume to be the strength on which poverty focused resources are channeled through NGOs.

Furthermore, from the findings of the study, as illustrated in the previous chapters, the NGO-led service delivery is participatory, effective in mobilizing the grassroots communities in rural Uganda, however we note that, NGOs are constrained by resources to sustain their work, this I would argue cannot be attributed to one single institution but several factors examined together. NGOs play a big role in representing the poor in the policy formulation process in Uganda (Namara R, 2009) and therefore their work cannot be negated to piece meal. The argument that NGOs are effective and represent the poor would hold if the constraints established were part of the design of the model right from the inception to the implementation by NGOs in the south.

The NGO-led service delivery is faced with many challenges, among which our study found out the following; funding and decision making, political pressure as resulting from perceiving NGOs as opposing government policies when they (NGOs) demand for value for money from government thus NGOs are stifled to execute their work in a free environment, governance structures including the legal and administrative framework that make it hard for NGOs to deliver services in a fair environment, dynamics within NGO operations hindering small NGOs in the district, and dynamics of NGOs working with Government, especially those NGOs contracting services with government are faced with ethical problems since contracts with government have for a long period been questioned to be marred with corruption and the politics of blame!!

I therefore conclude that the NGO-led service delivery is not a standalone model as presumed by the World Bank and other development aid agencies including NGOs in the North who claim that the NGO-led service

delivery is cost effective, participatory and thus best for the poor. We note that without proper government involvement in carrying out research, disease control and a pro-poor legal and administrative framework to ensure all stakeholders freely participate in development, there is a likelihood of friction between government and NGOs in asking who is best in service delivery.

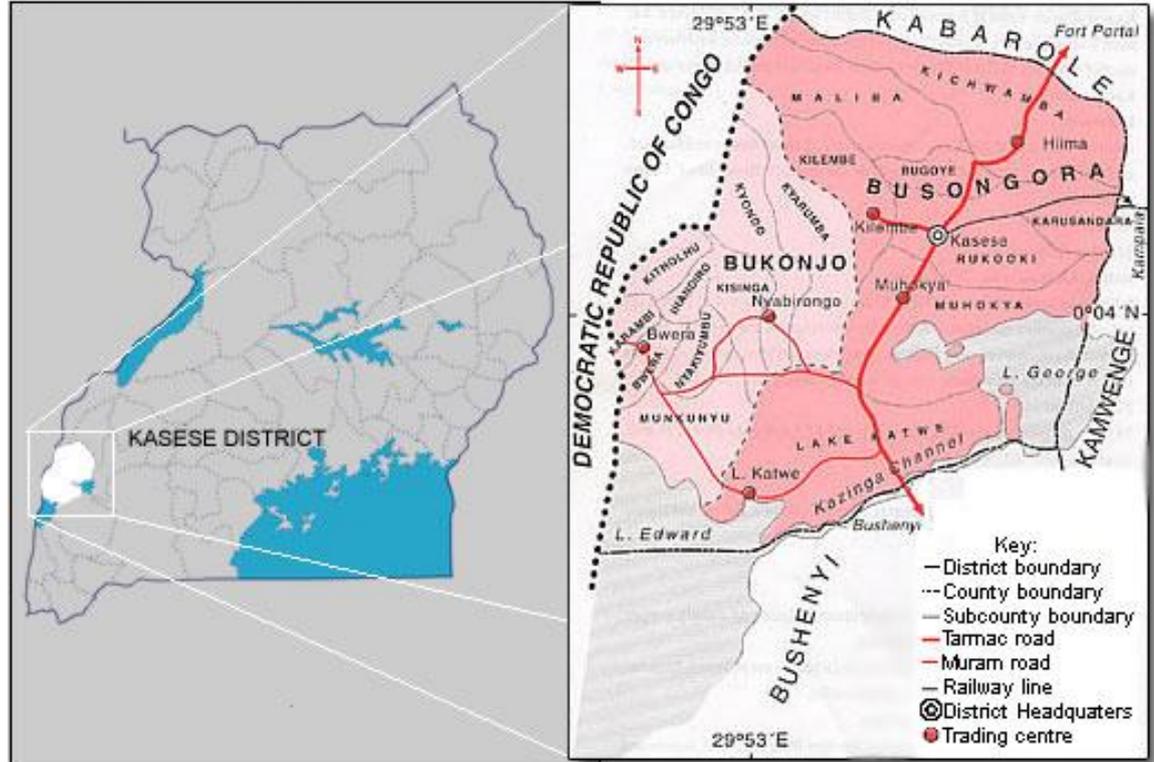
Furthermore, NGO activities in developing countries have not been recorded in government official statistics as indicated by the NDP in Uganda, therefore, government and NGOs are argued to harmonize their activities in order to reduce on duplication of work and NGOs to make known there funding sources for government to capture in the national statistics.

There is need for a more analytical study on how NGO networks and Consortium operate in Uganda to get lessons to augment my findings as this study did not go into the details of how the NGOs are organized, specific details on funding sources and the gender dynamics of NGO operations in Uganda.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Map of Uganda locating Kasese District



Source: http://www.kasese.go.ug/overview/dist_map.htm

Appendix 2

Mr. Richard Muhindo of Kyondo explaining how he has managed to balance being a beneficiary of NAADS and Kiima Foods Projects



Source: Authors collection during field work, Aug, 2010

Appendix 3

Photo of KFP beneficiary who sold the cow given to her and instead preferred to keep poultry since the birds were cheap to maintain then the cow which had made her spend a lot of money on procuring drugs.

Ms. Furumera Naziwa demonstrating how birds are fed



Source: Authors Collection during field work, July, 2010

Appendix 4 SATNET MEMBER ORGANISATION

Table 1: SATNET membership (2009)

S/n	District	Organization
1	Kabarole	Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESSE)
		Foundation For Rural Development (FORUD)
		Western Rift Valley Ecological Farm Institute (WREFI)
		Bunyangabu Beekeeping Community (BBC)
		Kabarole Integrated Women Effort in Development (KIWED)
		Kibota Widows and Widowers Association
		Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Project (ESAP). Fort Portal Diocese
		Tooro Botanical Gardens (TBG)-Association Member
		Tooro Herbal Medicine Research Center (THEMEREK)
		Bagumisa Farmers Demonstration and Training Center (BFDTC)
		Kabarole Research and Resource Center (KRC) Honorary Member
		Kabarole District Farmers Association (KDFA)-Associate Member
		Kabarole United Organic Farmers Association (KUOFA)
		Bukuku Extension Link in Sustainable Commercial Agriculture for Rural Development (BELSCARD)
		Busaiga Multipurpose Organization

2	Kasese	Mutiba Foundation for Agriculture & Community Service
		Kiima Foods
		Karughe Farmers Partnership (KFP)
		Gender & Development Association (GEDA)
		Green Home
		Bukonzo East Training Team (BETT)
		Rwenzori Herbal & Environmental Activists Association (RHIVA)
		Catholic Diocese of Kasese (CDOK)
		Burangwa Isuka Ningabu Association
		Kagando Rural Development Center (KARUDEC)
		New Eden Christian Foundation
		Sustainable Society of Kasese (SASK)
		Ikongo Rural Development Association
		Ndongo United Herbalists Association
3	Kamwenge	Catholic Women Association (CWA)
		Community Sustainable Initiative Link (COSIL)
		Technology for Rural Animal Power (TRAP)
		Kamwenge Sustainable Organic Farmers Association (KASOFA)
		Kamwenge Development Center (KDC)
		Kamwenge Bee Keepers Cooperative Society (KABECOS)
4	Kyenjojo	Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Fort Portal Diocese)
		Kyembogo Farmers Association (KYEFA)
		Rural Reconstruction Movement-Kyaka (RRM-Kyaka)
		Transparency Development Foundation – Uganda
		Development Foundation for Rural Areas (DEFORA)
		Kyenjojo District Farmers Association (KYEDIFA)-Associate member
		Nyakwanzi Farmers Empowerment for Development (NAFED)
		Bugaaki Development Association (BUDO)
		Kigoyera Organic Farmers Association (KIOFA)
5	Bundibugyo	Bundibugyo Agro Production & Sellers Association (BASO)
		North Rwenzori Rural Agricultural Community Link (NORRACOL)
		Abanya Rwenzori Mountaineering Association (AMA)
		Bubandi Middle Level Farmers Association
		Busaru Middle Level Farmers Association

Source: SATNET Annual Report, 2009



**MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
THE NATIONAL NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS BOARD**

NOTICE TO ALL NGOs OPERATING IN UGANDA

It has been noted with concern that a number of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are not filing Annual Returns as required by Regulation 16 of the NGO Registration Regulations of 2009.

The Annual Returns comprise of:

- A filled Form E (formerly Form F).
- An Annual Financial report containing audited accounts and information about sources of funding.
- Annual Reports.
- AGM minutes and an attendance list signed by all those who participated in the AGM.
- A Work plan and Budget.
- A photocopy of the NGO Registration Certificate.

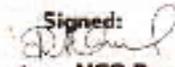
The purpose of these Annual Returns is not only for transparency and accountability but to also assist the Government to plan for the Country. It is therefore sad to note that some NGOs do not file these reports.

In a bid to correct the situation, all NGOs are required to immediately file their Annual Returns with the Secretary, NGO Board, copied to the Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister. Failure to file the Annual Returns by the 30th day of August 2010 will attract sanctions which may lead to deregistration.

The above requirement do not apply to:

- (i) NGOs that have been recently registered and have not operated for a period exceeding one year.
- (ii) NGOs that handed in their applications for renewal at the NGO Board Secretariat and are awaiting renewal of their certificates
- (iii) NGOs that renewed their registration and have operated for a period not exceeding one year.
- (iv) All other NGOs that do not fall in any of these categories should meet the above requirements before the 30th day of August 2010.

Signed:


Secretary, NGO Board.

Source: Daily Monitor, Friday July, 23, 2010

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