

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN
UGANDA; A CASE OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL IN MUKONO DISTRICT**

BY

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Declaration

I, **MUBIRU SADAT** declare that this dissertation is my original work and that it has never been submitted to any institution for any academic award. Where other peoples' work has been used, sources have been acknowledged and references given.

MUBIRU SADAT

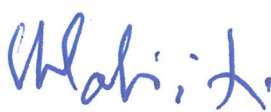
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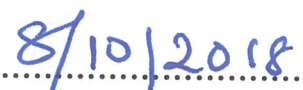
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Approval

This dissertation has been done under my supervision and is now submitted with my approval for academic submission.

Name: Hon. Jack Sabiti

Signature:.....


Date:.....


Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mom, dad and to all my friends at school and in life.

Acknowledgements

In a special way, I wish to thank the Almighty God for providing me with the wisdom and knowledge towards successful production of this dissertation.

I am highly appreciative to my Supervisor, for his inspiration, constructive guidance, patience and allowing me to use his books during my research study. I am equally grateful to all the other lecturers for the guidance they gave me in different course units.

Abstract

An overwhelming body of literature claims that Non-Governmental Organizations are an important engine of development. They are considered to be the “third sector” to the State and the Market. Analysts argue that NGOs not only improve local people’s participation in development processes but also use appropriate approaches to development. The motivation for this study was therefore to investigate whether these theorized phenomena apply to developing countries like Uganda. The study investigates the contributions of NGOs to poverty reduction in Uganda with specific reference to Compassion International in Mukono district. It investigates the beneficiary’s form of participation; people’s perceptions on the approaches used by the NGO; and the working relations between the NGO and the district authorities in poverty reduction. Using a case study design combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, the findings indicate that NGOs do promote education and training, health, environmental conservation, and protection against child abuse. However, NGOs are not panacea to poverty reduction in the country. Instead, NGOs are becoming puppets of foreign donors on whom they rely for funding opportunities. They are dependent, elitist, corrupt, less accountable to the beneficiaries and more answerable to their foreign financial benefactors. These flaws lay the foundation for religious strictness, over-concentration in urban areas, passive and pseudo-participation, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of projects. These findings prove that NGOs are less capable of reducing poverty than has been theorized and idiosyncratically propagated, because they come with pre-planned agendas with strings attached, under the camouflage of poverty reduction. The study therefore, recommends a paradigm shift: use locally available resources to fund NGOs and to sustainably and accountably induce development. This could be followed by empowering and training the beneficiaries with life skills instead of giving them tangible gifts that do not last but instead force them to develop a dependency syndrome. Granting full educational support, involving beneficiaries in all decision making and demanding for accountability and greater partnership with local government authorities would also create synergy between non-governmental and governmental development interventions in the district and indeed the whole country.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the introductory overview of the study and it comprises of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the general and specific objectives of the study, the research questions, the scope and significance of the study.

1.1 Background to the Problem

Globally, the increasing wealth of multinational corporations owned by very few individuals concurrent with increasing poverty among millions worldwide (Perkins, 2004). Massive destitution is rising alongside increasing plenty. This destitution is generally called “Poverty”. The concept “poverty” is used, generally, to mean going short materially, socially and emotionally. While the definition of poverty has been changing because of its dynamic character and the dynamics of its causes, it still implies lack of the capacity to access the basic requirements such as food, fuel, clothing, accommodation and health. In developed capitalist countries, it also denotes lack of opportunities for labour to be employed in process of wealth accumulation and in so doing earning income. Harker (1996) and Alcock (1997), explain how poverty takes away the tools for building the foundation for the future and life chances. It steals away the opportunity to have a life free of sickness, a decent education, secure home, and long retirement.

Poverty in Uganda is officially measured basing on the World Bank’s poverty line. This poverty calculation is premised on the minimum consumption. This calculation was developed in the 1990s and it reflects the cost of consuming 3,000 calories per day. It was based on the food basket of the poorest 50 percent of the population at the time of a Monitoring Survey which was conducted between August 1993 and February 1994. An allowance for non-food requirements was made, also based on the consumption behavior at the time (MFPED, 2012). Although time has passed since the poverty line was determined, this has continued to apply. For instance, 22 percent of households in Uganda were perceived to be living in absolute poverty, against the national estimate of 24.5 percent. The food basket consumed by today’s poor is remarkably similar to that consumed by poor households in the 1990s (MFPED, 2012). Yet, many things

have changed. Many people have resorted to savings, construction of houses, education of their children and those of relatives, others have reinvested their money in SACCOs, local savings cooperatives and burial associations all of which cannot be captured by calculations which focus on consumerism. Any calculation of poverty that bases on consumerism may fail to understand the reality in the peasantry society where cultures may be condemning purchasing things from the market. We may also need to add that markets are normally present where peasants go to sell their products and tools for production, principle among these are hoes.

Based on the above government approach to poverty, Muwanga (2001) distinguished between relative poverty and absolute poverty. He defined absolute poverty as a situation where individuals or households were not able to meet their basic needs like food, shelter or clothing; and when they could not meet other needs, such as education, health care and self-determination all of which result in feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability. Relative poverty, on the other hand, was defined as relating to deprivation as compared to others in society. It therefore needs to be noted that a condition where individuals fail to access basic goods and services being enjoyed by others is deemed to be a life threatening condition or absolute poverty. The MFPED Poverty Status Report of 2012 calculated absolute poverty in Uganda at 24.5 percent of the population while the non-poor but insecure people constituted 42.9 percent of the population in 2009/2010.

Given the prevalence of poverty anywhere in the world, governments direct efforts against poverty and Uganda is no exception. In Uganda, the pronouncement at independence was a declaration of a national fight against ignorance, poverty and diseases. Consequently, different government strategies have been attempted by successive governments to fight these three. However, this war is still on-going. Ever since it came to power on 26th January 1986, the NRM has initiated different anti-poverty programs in succession of one another. The major ones include Program for the Alleviation of Poverty and the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAPSCA), *Entandikwa* Credit Scheme (ECS), Cotton Sub-Sector Development Project (CSDP), Decentralization, Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), Universal Primary Education (UPE), Poverty Action Fund (PAF), Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Rural Electrification, Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (KIDDP), Prosperity For All (PFA), The Rural Financial

Services Strategy (RFSS), Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) and National Development Plan (NDP) (Muhumuza, 2007; Mugambe, 2008; MFPED, 2012). The current NDP replaced PEAP in July 2010 with the theme: "Growth, employment, and social economic transformation for prosperity". It covers a period of five years, beginning from July 2010 to July 2015.

One can base on these different initiatives to attribute the gradual poverty reduction in Uganda to such anti-poverty strategies that have been successively implemented. However, most of these strategies are not formulated after understanding the historical causes of this poverty or its current context and causes. These policy initiatives ignore the chronically poor because they are voiceless and disempowered. In turn, this tends to make them fail to actively engage in the government anti-poverty programs. People, thus, remain in their poverty situation. Non-Governmental Organizations are allegedly considered to have the capacity to reach people at the lowest level and work closely with the poor in communities. They are taken to be vital in reducing poverty among the absolute poor people (Dicklitch, 1998). They aim at providing voluntary services such as religious, educational, literacy, scientific, social or charitable to the community (Republic of Uganda, 1989, section 13). According to Muhumuza (2007), NGOs are defined as privately initiated and funded, voluntary, not-for-profit and autonomous institutions whose objectives and activities are primarily concerned with relief, advocacy and development. Their activities are aimed at contributing towards poverty reduction either directly or indirectly. This study will borrow from the above definition in determining the contributions of Compassion International, which claims to be voluntary, not-for-profit, and autonomous with the aim of improving the livelihoods of its beneficiaries.

The increased number of NGOs can largely be attributed to the influence of foreign aid although they were allegedly conceived for social service provisioning, filling the gaps left out by the governments and empowering communities to fight poverty. According to Ndegwa (1996), NGOs come in as the neo-liberal oriented approach with the principles of accountability, transparency and citizens participation in the development process. Macdonald (1994), and Dicklitch (1998), argued that NGOs were, in addition to working as poverty alleviators, emergency and humanitarian aid providers. They were also being considered to be important vehicles for empowerment, democratization, and socio-economic development. Macdonald (1994) explained how they were done and for bridging the gap between the citizens and the state. Dicklitch, (1998) goes further to acknowledge how donor funds had made NGOs in Uganda to

narrow their focus on the modernization projects while ignoring the need to empower people so that they could reduce poverty through their own initiatives. NGOs of which Compassion International belongs, normally select households or individuals in extreme poverty as their beneficiaries. They support these households through their children in a variety of ways, by basing on chronically poor indicators such as orphanage, displacement, destitution, neglect, landlessness, child-headed households, single-headed households, people living with HIV/AIDS and physical disabilities (Compassion International Manual, 2010). The choice for these categories is attributed to the government's call that more efforts are still needed to support the chronically poor in order to meet their basic human needs.

Although NGOs came to fill the gaps and cover the weaknesses of the state and the market in reducing poverty, a lot of effort is still needed in reducing poverty. While they are being praised for being responsive to the needs of the people by using bottom-up approach to poverty reduction, still many households are said to be wallowing in abject and vulnerability to poverty even when they have been under NGO service provisioning for years. This has been mainly attributed to over-reliance on foreign aid. It is argued that the empowerment and emancipatory functions of NGOs to poor people are more illusory than practical. To demonstrate this, Uganda, which is flooded by NGOs claiming to fight poverty, is ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world. It is the 144th out of 177 countries in terms of human development (UNHDI, 2005).

This research therefore sought to understand the contributions of Compassion International in poverty reduction. The study focused at the work of the NGO at household level in Mukono District. The district is in the remotest area in South Western Uganda. The Uganda Population and Housing Census (2002) estimated Mukono District population at 274,800 by 2010. There has been an increase in the population densities from 275 to 324 persons per square kilometer from 1991 to 2002 respectively.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Compassion International is taken to be vital in reducing poverty among the absolute poor people in Mukono district, through providing voluntary services such as religious, educational, literacy, social or charitable to the community. It is considered to have the capacity to reach people at the lowest level and work closely with the poor in communities. With its primary concern to relief,

and development, it has been widely applauded as a catalyst for poverty reduction in the district. Nonetheless, its contribution to poverty reduction in the district, seem to be questionable. For instance, according to UBOS 2005, Mukono district is the poorest in western Uganda. There are still high levels of illiteracy and poor access to education and health services, despite such services being the priority to Compassion International. In general, the 24.5 percent and 42.9 percent of Ugandan population who are chronically poor and vulnerable to poverty would also appear to be an overwhelming population that raises concern regarding whether NGOs (Compassion inclusive) contribute towards poverty reduction, and why, despite their increasing numeracy and donor funding over the past two decades poverty levels remain high.

Given the mismatch between increased NGO programs and persistence of poverty in the district, three issues are raised in this study: the reasons for disconnection between the theorized role of Compassion International in poverty reduction on the one hand and the failures of the organization interventions on the ground to meaningfully change people's lives (conflict between theory and evidence); there seems to be methodological, theoretical, and empirical gaps in existing studies in NGOs that needs to be filled; and the appreciation of the importance of a new analytical, empirical, and theoretical critique of these works in relation to poverty reduction in Uganda. Based on these issues, this study queried what Compassion International did and how it was doing it. The study critically analyzed the roles and questioned the appropriateness of approaches and interventions of NGOs towards poverty reduction among the chronically poor. To achieve this objective, the study focused on Compassion International's work in Mukono district and examined the level and nature of beneficiary participation in poverty reduction programs.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The overall objective of the study was to analyze the contributions of NGOs to poverty reduction in Uganda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

To explore activities and approaches used by Compassion International in Mukono district

To investigate the form of beneficiaries' participation in Compassion International's work in Mukono district

To explore working relations between Compassion International and the district authorities on poverty reduction in the district

To examine the performance of Compassion International in poverty reduction in Mukono district

1.4 The Scope of the Study

1.4.1 Geographical Scope

The research based its study on Compassion International in Mukono district. Two sub-counties of Mukono Municipality and Nakifuma Municipality were the areas of study. These sub-counties had concentration of the NGO field offices and projects. From these two Sub-Counties, three parishes of Nakifuma, Seeta and Kalagi were chosen and five villages selected from them to be used in the study. However, other sources of information were also obtained from Compassion International country headquarters in Kampala to corroborate and have comprehensive data.

1.4.2 Content Scope

The study gathered information on Compassion International in Mukono District. The focus of the study was on NGO field offices in the district. Organizational activities and beneficiary participation in those activities formed the core of analytical resources to ascertain the opportunities for, extent, genuineness and forms of beneficiary participation in the projects. The study also analyzed the beneficiaries' perceptions and attitudes towards approaches used by Compassion International in reducing poverty in the district. Working relations between Compassion International and the district authorities were explored to ascertain their harmony in development planning process and poverty reduction programs in the district. Generally, therefore, the researcher needed information about the roles of Compassion International in poverty reduction in the district.

1.4.3 Time Scope

The study covered all aspects of Compassion International in poverty reduction from 1995 to 2018. The year 1995 was the time when Compassion International started operating in Mukono

district. In view of this, a clear insight about its operations is informed by a sufficient time span of nearly two decades.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study brings out the facts about the poverty situation in Uganda. It also highlights NGOs as one of the Non-State agents of poverty reduction in Uganda. With the findings in place, all the beneficiaries are expected to use data to evaluate their performance toward poverty reduction. It is also hoped that the study would help the government in assessing itself on the poverty reduction strategies vis-à-vis NGO interventions. The government may use the findings to realize the mistakes made in formulating and implementing poverty reduction programs. This may stimulate the government to revisit its strategies in order to implement poverty programs which are realistic to achieve the intended objectives.

The study findings can potentially help practitioners to revise the strategies of raising sustainable resources for sustainable poverty reduction programs. For example, using locally available resources such as sand, stones, and local labour, is an important strategic choice that both beneficiaries can put into consideration. The study helps the researcher to expand knowledge on NGOs and poverty reduction. The study adds knowledge on the already existing body of knowledge on non-governmental interventions in development and poverty reduction across the globe. More specifically, the importance of using appropriate approaches to help beneficiaries to get out of poverty and to ensure active participation in all planning and managerial processes cannot be overemphasized. The study also fulfills part of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration and Management to the researcher.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on NGOs and poverty reduction in Uganda. It has three sections: the first section examines issues of poverty, its dimensions and causes with a perspective from Mukono district, as well as the beneficiary participation in poverty reduction programmes. The second section addresses the proliferation of NGOs in developing countries and examines the factors for their growth in Uganda. The third section integrates the above two by advancing a clear understanding of the roles of NGOs in the developing world generally and Uganda in particular.

2.1 Definitions of Poverty

There is no precise and generally agreed definition of poverty because it has different meanings to different people. World Bank defines poverty on the basis of material consumption. For instance, it argues that a person is poor if his/her income or expenditure is below a defined poverty line (Appleton, 2001). On the other hand, the basic needs approach defines poverty beyond income and material requirements. It incorporates other basic human requirements, such as education, health, housing, safe drinking water, and sanitation. Nevertheless, Townsend refutes the basic needs approach as an extension of the subsistence concept. He affirms that the needs of the population cannot be defined adequately by mere reference to the physical needs of individuals and essential services required by the community (Townsend, 1993). He argues that once the insufficiency of income is simplified, it is easier to argue that the national growth of material wealth is all that is required to overcome the phenomenon of poverty (Muhumuza, 2007). In essence, he defines poverty on the basis of income levels.

According to Chambers (1983), the material and basic needs are not enough to define the concept of poverty. He stresses that poverty is more than lack of income because it also involves a feeling of powerlessness to break out of the cycle of poverty and insecurity of persons and property. This is in line with the report by UPPAP (2000) which shows that vulnerability to poverty assumes four major dimensions: poor physical wellbeing, a constrained social network, powerlessness, and gender inequality. The definition of poverty, therefore, needs to encompass

all the aspects as income, basic needs, social aspects and power relations in order to understand how to deal with it and get solutions to the phenomenon (Chambers, 1983; UPPAP, 2000).

2.2 Dimensions and Causes of Poverty; Perspective from Mukono District

Generally, there are two types of poverty which can be used to understand the concept: Absolute and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is a situation where individuals or households are unable to meet their basic needs like food, shelter, or clothing. In addition, they are unable to meet survival needs such as holistic education, health care and self-determination leading to feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability. Relative poverty, on the other hand, concerns individual deprivation measured relative to others in society. When individuals cannot access goods and services enjoyed by fellow citizens it is unacceptable but is deemed to be a life threatening condition as absolute poverty (Mwanga, 2001).

The causes of poverty in Mukono district therefore, are categorized into: topography, individual, historical, resource related, natural calamities and institutional. For instance, the rugged terrain in Mukono district exposes the soil to erosion leading to decline in soils fertility and food insecurity, reduces land area for cultivation, curtails accessibility to and within the district on strains access to schools, health services, market, and information, provides a camouflage for rebel activities (ie iterahamwe), increases the construction cost of economic and social facilities, denies and blocks the communication process, and ultimately results in loss of labour through out-migration. Individual behavioral practices such as extravagancy, laziness, alcoholism, and lack of cooperation cause poverty (UPPAP, 2000). Excessive drinking leads to poor health and failure to provide for the household, leading to poverty. Cultural practices, such as polygamy, high bride price and oppression of women may cause poverty. Population pressure on natural resources such as land and forest exacerbate poverty not only in Mukono but also in south western Uganda (UBOS, 2005; Ssewaya, 2003).

2.3 Beneficiary Participation in Poverty Reduction Programs

Participation is defined as people sharing ideas, thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, planning, prioritizing and being involved in the decision making process (Aston, 2004). It thus involves people with similar needs and goals, in decisions affecting their lives. In Habraken and Myers views, Participation has two definitions with opposite meanings. Participation can either represent assigning certain decisive roles to the users, where they share

the decision making responsibility with the professionals. Participation is also where there is no shift of responsibilities between the users and professionals but instead only the opinion of the user is considered while making decisions (Habraken, 2002; Myers, 1996).

Beneficiary participation on the other hand is defined by Abrams (1998) as the theory where local community should be given an active role in programs and improvements directly affecting it. Habraken (2002) and Arnstein (2000) associated citizen participation with citizen power and control. According to them, it is associated with, redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. This study therefore examined the level of power that beneficiaries have in participating in Compassion projects, right from the needs assessment, planning, implementation and management. The research question therefore assessed whether all beneficiaries participated in all levels of planning and management of Compassion International projects that intended to reduce poverty among the people in Mukono district.

Beneficiary's participation encourages effective representation and this positively influences the social climate of programs and projects. According to Salvatore (1968), none or under representation leads to timidity, conformity, apathy and rebelliousness by the recipient communities, rather than respect for the project and its activities. This means that for organizational projects to support reducing poverty, fair representation of all beneficiaries is very crucial. This is because equal participation allows beneficiaries to contribute in the decisions and management of projects hence being responsive to them. In this study, the researcher analyzed whether Compassion International take beneficiary participation as paramount in the process of decision making and management of its projects.

2.4 NGOs Proliferation and their Roles in Africa

It has been argued by different scholars that Non-government organizations (NGOs) have been common in Africa to foster development (Huntington, 1991). They argue that NGOs fill gaps left by the authoritarian and despotic regimes and complement on the government's efforts towards poverty alleviation and social service provisioning. The recent rise on NGOs is therefore reflective of international trends which embrace the dominant discourse of neo-liberalism as well as domestic responses to the state from basic service provisioning. This has made Aid increasingly being channeled through NGOs and other non state actors rather than through

decrepit and often corrupt states. This is because they are thought to provide more accountable, effective, and equitable services in many areas than public or private agencies (Brett, 1993). This led to some modernization proponents to suggest that official donors should act as „wholesalers“ and the indigenous grassroots NGOs as the „retailers“ of assistance (Landell-Mills, 1992). The preference for funding NGOs in the development process and poverty reduction has been attributed to their „comparative advantage“ over other development agencies in addressing the development needs of the poor (Fowler, 1988).

Since 1980s therefore, the nature of governance has changed dramatically in all African countries from the authoritarian rule to what the World Bank calls „good governance“ (World Bank 1996). From 1945 until the late 1970s, the top down statist models were a necessary evil to bring about economic growth and long term development. However, in 1960s they were accused of high mass corruption, dictatorship and thus caused economic and political crisis (Moore, 1996). This necessitated the use of neo-liberal, market and civil society oriented approach to development (Edwards and Hulme, 1997). Thus, NGOs have caused much hype and enthusiasm within the dominant neo-liberal paradigm (Bratton, 1989; Diamond, 1994). However, most NGOs have perpetuated upward accountability and priority has been placed on making accountability to donors rather than beneficiaries. Consequently, poverty in Africa has persistently increased (WDR, 2012).

2.5 The Growth and Expansion of NGOs in Uganda

As already noted, the origin of NGOs in Uganda has been widely attributed to the colonial period (Diclitch, 1998; Nsibambi, 1998; Thue, 2002; Muhumuza, 20007), but their roots can more accurately be traced back to the pre-colonial era (Heinrich, 2007). In colonial era, NGOs mainly focused on providing key social services such as education and health services. Their roles continued in postcolonial governments despite the attempt to replace them in the provision of social services. This was because the independent government was constrained by the scarcity of resources and social services remained inadequate especially in rural areas (Muhumuza, 2007). The relevancies of NGOs continued until 1970s when they witnessed more political control that forced some of them more especially the foreign ones to withdraw (Muhumuza, 2007). Nonetheless, the period of 1980s to date, witnessed both the revival and the mushrooming of NGOs in the country.

Two factors can therefore explain the proliferations of NGOs in Uganda; external and internal factors. Externally, the efficiency and transparency associated with NGOs paved the way for the recognition of NGOs as an alternative to the state (Dicklitch, 1998; Lindenberg and Bryant, 2001). Secondly, the end of the cold war allegedly gave birth to a third wave of democratization characterized by opening up of space for NGOs. Other external factors include; neo-liberal policies such as SAPs and the influence of donors, whose support to developing countries have been tied to the creation of pluralist society since 1990s.

Nonetheless, it would be an intellectually biased to leave the external factors unturned. The shift from the statist development approach to market forces and NGOs, though important for the growth of NGOs, largely represents the interests of developed countries rather than the poor countries. The end of the cold war, for instance, was a triumph only for the interests of the USA. Although it led to the expansion of NGOs, it could not save the social-economically underdeveloped countries from their challenges like poverty and civil wars. The negative effects of SAPs are also on the record. Many NGOs have also hidden behind the rhetoric concepts of „democracy“, „good governance“ and „human rights“ to promote selfish interests of western countries (Kaldor, 1999; Perkins, 2004).

On the other hand, internal factors deserve a mention. The increasing inability of the state to pursue effective development strategies because of declining public infrastructure and productivity, inflationary pressures and balance of payment problems (Muhumuza, 2007). This crisis forced the government to seek foreign aid, which required the adoption of a neo-liberal policy perspective and managerial style. Foreign aid was thus given on condition that stabilization and Structural Adjustment Reforms, such as privatization and decentralization, be implemented. However, these reforms were still new. Therefore, they created socio-economic problems that negatively affected the welfare of the people especially the poor. Consequently, donors had to use alternatives of working through NGOs (Gordenker & Thomas, 1997; Etyang, 2004; Ndegwa, 1996).

However, there is no need of overemphasizing these factors because the breakdown of public infrastructure, for instance, was not entirely a catalyst for the growth of NGOs in Uganda. One can argue that it was also a hindering factor. For instance, some NGOs fear to establish development projects in remote areas because of poor infrastructures such as roads. Policies such

as decentralization, privatization, and other policy interventions have also got strong attachments from donor countries and they have been faulted for condoning corruption in local governments as argued by Olum (2011). It can therefore be argued that these may hinder the growth and activities of NGOs in Uganda. Finally, it may be argued that the close interaction between the state, through decentralization, and NGOs - though capable of creating a conducive working environment for NGO may also compromise their neutrality, making it difficult for them to carryout checks and balances of unfair government practices (Dicklitch, 1998).

2.6 Importance of NGOs in Reducing Poverty in Uganda

The importance of NGOs in this section has been viewed in two main dimensions. The first and dominant dimension is that championed by mostly western scholars, and it looks at NGOs as mainly in a positive but biased way. Under this view, NGOs are seen as important in promoting empowerment through self help initiatives (Dicklitch, 1998). Empowerment is the multifaceted process which involves transforming economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstances of the currently powerless (Sandbrook, 1993; Dicklitch, 1998; Bratton, 1990). It has been alleged that empowerment is possible because NGOs have the potential of reaching the grassroots levels of the communities (Schmitz, 1995; Van de Walle, 1990; Paul, 1991). Other roles NGOs play include; Watchdog role because of checks and balances in areas where the state tries to evade accountability to the citizens (Brown and Korten, 1991; Diamond, 1994). NGOs are also allegedly known for promoting democratic principles among beneficiaries (Bratton, 1990; Korten, 1990). To these scholars, democracy is important in the process of reducing poverty through developing democratic virtues such as tolerance, moderation, willingness to compromise and respect for opposing viewpoints (Diamond, 1994; Korten, 1991; Thomas, 1996; Van de Walle, 1990). This is also associated with good governance and encouraging citizen participation. Thus, citizens are able to learn and appreciate their obligations as well as their rights. The study, thus, established how these democratic virtues are promoted and maintained in the class of poor people and how relevant they are to their living conditions. This was done by analyzing the level of beneficiary participation in different programs managed by Compassion International.

However, this view contains several flaws. First, it suffers from a tendency to use concepts that contain a value bias, for instance „*good governance, democratic virtues*’ among others without examining their ideological content and purpose. In emphasizing the importance of NGOs, it

ignores the differences between rich and poor countries in which the NGOs operate. Moreover, this view deliberately disregards the potential dangers of foreign aid on NGOs. It is also unreasonable to think that the myriad of problems created by imperial powers in Africa - for example poverty, ethnic conflicts and political instability can be solved by the very people who created them (now called „donors“) through NGOs. Besides, as Anderskov (2001) and Perkins, (2004) noted, some NGOs are formed by crooks to swindle donor funds. In some cases, NGOs have been used by Western governments to undermine democratically elected governments and promoting imperialism in developing countries. In brief, this view of NGOs appears to be ethnocentric, ideological and historical. It is therefore incapable of analyzing the dynamics of NGOs in developing countries like Uganda.

The critical view therefore challenges the above dominant dimension. This dimension is characterized by skepticism about the usefulness of NGOs. A typical NGO in a poor nation like Uganda, according to this perspective, is heavily reliant on foreign aid. It is accountable to donors rather than the local people; and sometimes it is a briefcase NGO. Moreover, some NGO's have generally been used for the selfish ends of donor governments and the World Bank, and they are vehicles of neo-liberalism as the case of the 1980s. NGOs were even criticized for being externally imposed phenomena which heralded a new wave of imperialism (Yenshu Vubo; 2008). Combinations of such weaknesses therefore, tend to limit the effectiveness of NGOs in reducing poverty in developing countries like Uganda (Dicklitch, 1998; Thue 2002; Coninck, 2004; Bchbington et al, 2008; leinrich, 2007).

This explains why some scholars like Dicklitch, (1998) assert that the promise of civil society, synonymous to NGOs in Africa is elusive“ and that NGOs are too close to the powerful [donors and governments] and too far from the powerless people (Edwards and Hulme. 1992). Other scholars have dismissed the view that NGOs are magic bullets that can solve all our problems. They further hold that views of NGOs as vehicles for development and democratization are overstated and unrealistic (Dicklitch, 1998). In brief, the critical perspective seems to suggest that understanding NGOs should go beyond mere outline of their importance; it is important to consider the socio-politico-economic environment in which they operate. By questioning the relevance of NGOs in developing countries, this critical dimension raises issues which make it more practical in analyzing NGOs and their importance in Uganda.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

There are different theories or models that can help to explain this study. Among others include: “donor-driven model” where NGOs perform their activities with directives and strings attached from the donor countries (Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter and Oakley, 2002; Wallace, 2006; Win, 2004). The second theory is the “third sector model” which is believed to be people-centered, flexible, and uses participatory management style in poverty reduction programs (Bratton 1989; Uphoff, 1993). The underlying strength of donor driven model is that anti-poverty programs are planned and implemented with financial support from multinational corporations and new technologies in at-poverty programs may be introduced. Nonetheless, most of the anti-poverty programs in this model are directed from the financiers and are implemented with conditionalities. These may not appropriately fit in solving the localized poverty problems. Since most of the Anti-poverty programs are pre-planned without involving the local beneficiaries, such programs end up becoming utopian and superficial, attracting no attention to responsiveness. This leads to unsustainability of such poverty programs, hence persistence of poverty. It was from these arguments that the researcher used the “third Sector” model in this study.

According to the “third sector model”, NGOs are important in making up for the institutional weaknesses of the state and market through promoting socio-economic development (independent and dependent variables). This is done through NGOs delivering social services to the poor, equitably and efficiently, and through participatory approach to development, ie engaging beneficiaries in poverty reduction programs and working with local government. They are thus oriented toward bottom-up processes of development that emphasize local-level development, integrated interventions, mobilization of the poor and participation (causal mechanisms) (Uphoff, 1993; Bratton; 1989; United Nations, 1995). However, certain conditions (intervening factors) such as: pre-planned agendas with strings attached, corruption, upward accountability and emphasis on paper-based rational management tools and concentration in urban areas may negate this promise. Consequently, NGOs try to fight poverty and they fail although it is reasonable to expect recipient organizations to have appropriate accountability and transparency measures, current practices are criticized for being extremely time-consuming, difficult to use, and for taking time away from important work on the ground (Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter and Oakley, 2002; Wallace et al. 2006; Win, 2004). Furthermore, quantitative performance indicators may not actually measure real or meaningful change in the

community (Mawdsley et al. 2002; Wallace et al. 2006) and NGOs may not pursue the most relevant work because of pressure to adopt funder agendas.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology that was used to achieve the study objectives. It explains the study designs, study area, population of study, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data analysis processes and management.

3.1 Study Design

The study employed a case study design. In this case, Compassion International in Mukono district was selected. This method enabled the researcher to have in-depth understanding of the real issues. The method was also very appropriate because of limited time and resources which would be used to investigate all the field offices of Compassion International in Uganda. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research. This helped to strengthen the study regarding better representation of the populations of both the geographic areas and subjects under study (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2008). Both quantitative and qualitative research patterns had epistemological assumptions, values and methods that were integrated. Thus, had the ability to *offset* biases linked to each research method; where by the weaknesses of either of them was counterbalanced by the strengths of either method. It also capacitated a level of completeness in the study because gaps left by either method were filled in by the other (Bryman, 2008).

3.2. Area of Study

The main study was conducted in Mukono district in Central Uganda. The district was purposively selected. The district had three Constituencies with fourteen Lower local governments called sub counties. Mukono district was one of the remotest districts in the country affected by high levels of poverty due to its geographical set up and remoteness. With this view therefore, three parishes from two sub-counties of Nyarusiza and Chahi were used as the area of study. These parishes were chosen randomly in view of concentration of Compassion International projects as well as communities experience, knowledge and practices with Compassion projects to alleviate poverty in the areas.

3.3. Study Population

The researcher picked interests in Mukono district because it was a heterogeneous district, comprising of different ethnic groups that presented a mixture of sources of livelihoods and coping strategies to get out of poverty. It was one of the districts where Compassion International had established many project offices pursuing different activities to develop the beneficiaries. Fifteen project offices in the district gave ample size of respondents to the researcher to provide answers for the research questions. The study was carried out amongst the NGO management officers and the beneficiaries at household level in the district. Key NGO officers at the headquarters were consulted for further information. The district political leaders and key bureaucrats were also included in the study.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

3.4.1. Sample Size

The study was conducted among the beneficiaries and workers of Compassion International as well as the district officials in Mukono district. Using various sampling techniques, a total of 100 respondents from different categories was planned to be enrolled in the study but 95 of them turned out in the study representing a response rate of 95 percent. This number acted as a sample size for the study. Different sampling methods were employed. Three parishes were purposively selected in two sub counties of Nyarusiza and Chahi. This was in view of concentration of Compassion International projects as well as communities' experience, knowledge and practices of Compassion projects to alleviate poverty. In the study, 20 beneficiaries of the NGO were selected from each parish to constitute the total of 60 beneficiaries.

3.5. Research Instruments

Collection of data in this study used cross- fertilization of methods. This was helpful to tap all the relevant information in the study. First, it based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using administered questionnaires, interview guide, focus group discussion and observation. Secondary data was collected through review and analysis of documents pertaining to NGOs and Poverty reduction programs. The selections of these research instruments were guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available and the objectives of research.

3.5.1 Key Informant Semi-Structured Interviews

Key informant interviews were used to bring the researcher and respondents face to face. This enabled the researcher to collect first hand information over what they think, know or feel about Compassion International in the process of reducing poverty. The researcher used these instruments because they permitted flexibility in data collection. They allowed the researcher to easily formulate questions and language expression during interviews so that it could suit the interviewees' background and educational level. This meant that possibilities of rigidity which could be associated with structured interviews were eliminated (Bryman, 2008; Mutasa, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were planned to be administered to twenty key informants but fifteen were obtained. These were people believed to be reasonably informed about the issues at hand.

3.5.2. Semi-Structured Questionnaires

A total of 60 questionnaires were drafted and administered to the NGO beneficiaries. The semi-structured questionnaires were both closed and open ended questions. The research objectives and research questions guided the design of these questionnaires. Closed ended questions were formulated in the questionnaires because they were suitable for collecting information for quantitative analysis. Open ended questions were used to enable the respondents add more relevant in-depth information and experiences for insight into the issues of the study.

3.5.3. Focus Group Discussion

Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) of seven people on average each were purposively conducted from three parishes. The FGD was sensitive to age, sex and educational background and they wholly included all categories of people in the area. This enabled the researcher to gather general views, emotions, feelings, perceptions and beliefs of beneficiaries about NGOs and poverty reduction in the district. During the discussion, focus group discussion guide was used to put the interviewer and interviewee on track. Respondents were purposively selected in order to capture information based on respondents' independent opinion and perceptions regarding the subject matter during Focus Group Discussions. This helped the researcher to verify and corroborate the responses given by other respondents in the study.

3.5.4. Observation

Observation in the study enabled the researcher to see for himself what people actually do rather than what they say. This allowed him to gain firsthand experience, explore topics that could uncomfortably be discussed with informants. The researcher also noticed unusual aspects during the field research using observation method. For instance, it was observed that some beneficiaries were sleeping with their animals in the same house. Observation was employed to notice and gather images of development projects that compassion international had established in the district. Specifically, what was observed included; the types of houses constructed by NGO to beneficiaries, the nature of clothes beneficiaries put on, the type of food they eat, activities they engage in and the general wellbeing of the beneficiaries. Observation was accompanied by informal discussions with people in the area. Field photos were also taken for pictorial evidences with permission from the community leaders.

3.5.5 Documentary Review

Documentary review was also used to obtain data that the respondents were not able to provide through other methods for various reasons such as forgetting or sensitivity reasons. With firm assurance on ethical considerations of confidentiality, the researcher requested project directors for such documents. These included project reports, proposals, budgets, work plans, baseline surveys, evaluations, and registration books, books of accounts, registers and minutes of meetings of committees. This helped the researcher to achieve high internal reliability, objectivity and validity of the study through triangulation.

3.5.6. Data Processing and Management

The collected data was organized and categorized using appropriate computer programs such as micro soft word and excel. Data analysis used two approaches; namely, the qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussion guides was analyzed using two methods such as content analysis and narrative analysis. Content analysis was used in triangulation to check the authenticity of data collected. Narrative analysis was applied to provide verbatim information from the respondents. This helped the researcher to enrich the study with practical and authentic information. The synthesized information was then grouped into themes and sub-themes derived from the specific research objectives of the study. Quantitative data analysis helped to analyze and categorize data

in terms of frequencies and percentages. Simple descriptive tabulations were used for quantitative analysis. This was important in determining trends and interpreting research findings. Conclusions and recommendations were then drawn to satisfy the research question.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The major ethical issues that the researcher faced included; informed consent, deception and confidentiality as in the Bailey's book. The research was steered by the principles guiding ethical concerns in social science research (Mutasa, 2010). In this way, the researcher followed the principles of harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception (Bryman, 2008). This began by obtaining an introductory letter from Higher Degree Committee through the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. The letter was then presented to the selected respondents. Following the principle of informed consent, the researcher explained to the participants the whole issue about the study; the purpose of the study, the procedures to use during research, the risks and benefits of research, and explained to the participants that their participation was voluntary. The researcher treated participants with respect and not as subjects to ensure that they retain self-esteem. Confidentiality, anonymity and safety were also assured to the participants. They were informed that the research was purely for academic purposes. To maintain anonymity, questionnaires did not provide option for respondent's names and filling them were based on informed consent.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Some respondents were unable to disclose some information more especially the NGO officials with fear to disclose information considered to be sensitive in the organization. However, the researcher accessed data by assuring confidentiality to the respondents and using open ended questions accompanied by probing. Probing helped the researcher to get detailed data about the aspects of study.

Bureaucracy at the district local government also limited the study. This was because most of the field interviews involved making appointments with key respondents. For instance, the time the researcher needed to meet the district officials for appointments, it was a labour day and none of the officers was in the office. Some NGO officials were also busy with other activities. However, the researcher reduced the dangers of this limitation by following agreed time strictly so that the

work would be completed in planned time schedule. Finally, quality and reliable data were collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, the results of data collected from the field in accordance to the research objectives, design and methodology laid out in the previous chapter. The main purpose of the study was to examine the performance of NGOs in poverty reduction, with particular reference to Compassion International in Mukono district. This chapter also discusses other emerging issues and examines the challenges and gaps that hinder NGOs in reducing poverty in the district and Uganda in general.

The chapter has seven sections. Section one addresses the social-economic characteristics of respondents that were employed in the study. Section two brings out the development activities of Compassion International in Mukono District. Section three addresses beneficiary determination. Section four analyses beneficiary participation while section five tackles issues of working framework under which Compassion International partner with Mukono district local government to implement the development agenda. Section six explores the illusionary nature of participatory poverty reduction and then ends with challenges of Compassion International in reducing poverty not only in the district but also the country at large.

4.1 The Study Respondents and their Social- Economic Characteristics

The sample description and analysis in this report were based on the study questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion guides administered to respondents in Mukono district. The results were received from a random sample of NGO beneficiaries in Nyarusiza and Chahi Sub-Counties, Compassion International Uganda and the district officials. In the sampling design, 100 respondents were planned to be enrolled as the sampling size to answer a series of research questions but 95 respondents responded to the questions. This represented a response rate of 95 percent and was a representative of all the beneficiaries in fight against poverty in the district. The table bellow, demonstrates the social-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Age	Response rate	Percentage
Adult (18-70)	95	100
Family Status	Response rate	Percentage
Married	20	21
Single	15	16
Widow/Widower	57	60
Others	03	03
Size of Household	Response rate	Percentage
1-3 People	15	16
4-6 People	20	21
6 People and above	60	63
Religion	Response rate	Percentage
Anglican	67	71
Catholic	12	13
Muslim	06	06
Others	10	10
Education Status	Response rate	Percentage
No education	10	11
Primary level	50	53
Secondary Level	20	21
Tertiary/University level	15	16
Occupation status	Response rate	Percentage
Peasant	76	80
Business	14	15
Government workers	05	5
Total	95	100

Source: Field Research

The above table describes the socio-economic status and experiences of respondents regarding the performance of Compassion in reducing poverty in Mukono district. In the study, the social-

economic characteristics of respondents considered were; Age, family status, size of households, Religion, educational level and occupation status. These respondents were the key beneficiaries of Compassion, selected randomly from three villages found in Nyarusiza and Chahi sub-counties and the officials from the NGO and the district local government. They were comprised of 95 respondents from whom 60 were interviewed using questionnaires, 20 using focus group discussions and 15 using key informant interviews.

Beginning with age characteristics, all the respondents interviewed were aged between 18 and 70 years. The reason for considering this age category was to gather independent views based on individual opinions about NGOs and poverty reduction in the district. On family status, 60 percent of respondents were either widows or widowed, 21 percent married and the singles were 16 percent, while other category comprised 03 percent. Since the highest percentage that comprised 60 were for widows and widower, it clearly indicated that these people had orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) that perhaps needed support from Compassion International. In related instances, it was reported that some men abandon their families in search for jobs of which they do not return back home. In this way, mothers and their children remain in the helpless families and thus falling victims of physical, psychological, economical and social poverty, making them dependent to NGOs support. This was revealed by one of the female respondents in an interview at Kabindi CDC, she said;

My husband left me with three young children that is, one boy and two girls with no house; my son got registered in the project and the project bought for us land and built for us a house.

Thus, from the respondent views, the family was enjoying the benefits from the project that ranged from a house, land and other services like free medication and education.

In the study, the size of the household was arranged in such a way that all information about household size was captured. For example, it was divided into three categories: it was arranged from 1 to 3, 4 to 6 and 6 and above people in each household. In the study however, it was established that the small household comprised of 16 percent, while the middle comprised 21 percent, the largest household taking the highest percentage of 63 in the study. This is corroborated with the idea that large families may lead to high level of dependency and poverty as a result of failure to meet all the necessary needs like education and health needs. In terms of religious affiliation, 71 percent were Anglicans, 13 percent Catholics, 06 percent Muslims and 10 percent comprised others. In terms of education status, 11 percent had no education, 53 percent had completed primary level, and 21 percent had completed senior six, while 16 percent had

completed either tertiary education or university. From the study therefore, above 50 percent are primary level and below, indicating that their lack of education may perpetuate the existence of poverty among the group categories. This perhaps explains the reasons for 80 percent of the total respondents being peasants and entirely depending on agriculture for survival and only 15 percent belonging to business fraternity and 5 percent to government.

The study found out that most of the beneficiaries were Anglicans with 71 percent. It was understood that since Anglicans in America founded the organization, it used the same pre-determinations to select beneficiaries in Uganda. Considering one religion as the first priority, however, undermines the African culture of solidarity. In this way, the effects might be negative because some poor people from other religious beliefs have been neglected in some important poverty reduction programs in the community. For example, for all beneficiaries visited, those whose houses were constructed by Compassion, none was a Muslim or a catholic. In the same avenue, project sustainability may be hampered, simply because community members may have different perceptions and beliefs based on their religious attachments. For instance, one of the beneficiaries bought a pig from a gift obtained from Compassion. When the pig escaped to the neighbors' potatoes garden, she was accused for grazing in the sweet potatoes garden. In order to compensate 30,000 Uganda shillings for the loss, the pig was sold off because the owner did not have another source of income. However, it was later realized that the conflict originated from the fact that the pig was bought from the money got from Compassion; yet, the neighbor was a non beneficiary and a Muslim believer.

It can therefore be deduced from the above social-economic characteristics of the respondents that most of them were from poor family backgrounds and thus necessitated the enrollment of such households in Compassion projects in the district. These families were absolutely poor and the interventions from the government and Non-Governmental Organizations were absolutely needed.

Despite the enrollment of such poor households, the study revealed that there were other poorest families which were left behind and were not enrolled in Compassion poverty reduction programs. Most of these were poor households that were far away from town and were not accessible as explained in the next analysis. There were also those beneficiaries who received and participated in all Compassion programs but remained poor. As the analysis revealed, there

was high levels of dependents on hand-outs and poor mechanisms of sensitizing, monitoring and evaluating projects. This was worsened by implementing pre-determined westernized projects yet with less training offered to the beneficiaries. This condition led to unsustainability of most of the projects like housing hence failing to contribute in reducing poverty in the area.

4.2 Development Aspects of Compassion International in Mukono District

From the study, it was revealed that Compassion International through the partnership with local churches had different poverty reduction programs in the district. These programs included supporting children in education, child protection against abuse, promoting health, environmental conservation and spiritual growth. According to the project director of Muganza Child Development Centre (CDC) in Chahi sub-county, these activities were done basing on four core development aspects of Compassion International. Most of these aspects focused mainly on developing a child as the Compassion motto goes; “*Releasing children from poverty in Jesus’ name*”. These aspects included; Physical development, Spiritual development, Social emotional development and Cognitive development aspect. Each of these aspects had specific issues that they constitute. This meant that activities performed by Compassion were to be in line with these four major aspects. The table bellow illustrates the core development aspects:

Table 4.2. Development Aspects of Compassion International in Mukono district.

Number	Development aspects	Specific Programs
1	Cognitive development aspect (Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Development Sponsorship Program (CDSP) Leadership development program Skills development in carpentry, crocheting, tailoring, weaving, knitting and bakery.
2	Physical development aspect (Health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Science through Personal hygiene, medication, sanitation, soaps and health education Child Survival program (CSP) like maternal wellbeing and early childhood Development CD4 Program that involves HIV/AIDS guidance and counseling Environmental conservation through tree planting and sensitization for environmental protection
3	Spiritual development aspect (Religion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible reading Prayers Spreading the gospel
4	Social-emotional development aspect (Child Protection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection against abuse like rape, neglect and abandonment Encouraging children in socialization, group work, community work and helping the elderly

Source: Field Research

Based on the research findings, the district had fifteen project centers but each centre performed its programs on the basis of the four core development aspects as indicated in the table above.

This was confirmed by one of the key informants;

Although there may be some minor differences on the way we plan and implement our projects in different Child Development Centre projects, we are all guided by these four core aspects of Compassion..... The differences that may arise as a result of the approaches used must be minor and negligible.

4.2.1 An Analysis of Development Aspects and their Relevancies in Poverty Reduction

a) Spiritual Development Aspect

Since the historicity of Compassion International in Uganda had religious affiliations, spiritual development aspect was therefore part and parcel of what the organization had to do in the district. Basing on the data obtained from the field, the argument for promoting spiritual aspect was to make beneficiaries know God, love one another and share together the little they had as the basis for reducing poverty amongst themselves. This was assured by one of the Compassion workers;

Our goal is to make an effort and see that our children know God. We are committed to teach children how to pray, bible reading and spreading the word of God to our families and communities surrounding us.

When the community members believe that God is the creator and the provider of everything, they unite, cooperate and work together. This corporatization process helps in fighting against poverty among our beneficiaries in one way or the other and this is the essence of our existence. One of the program directors in the district added.

It was therefore interpreted that by instilling spiritual development to the children and their households, they will unite and fight poverty as a common goal. The spiritual aspect was thus achieved through conducting bible classes for children during centre days (centre days are specific days when children of all the beneficiaries must report to the CDC for livelihood trainings). In case of all fifteen program centers in Mukono district, all children that benefited from Compassion had to meet at their respective centers every Saturdays for conducting prayer meetings and taking on other livelihood trainings.

b) Physical Development Aspect

In physical development aspect, most of the programs were related to health. Children were trained in important skills in life such as; how to maintain hygiene and sanitation. This was done by teaching them healthy science lessons, sensible environmental lessons and being participative in some activities as well as being responsible in promoting personal hygiene. According to one of the key informants, they distribute soaps and Vaseline to help beneficiaries especially their children keep hygiene and help them fight diseases on their own in future. It was also established that children of beneficiaries were encouraged to participate in games like football, netball for physical

fitness. According to one of the key informants, health seminars were also organized to inform beneficiaries how to promote health in their households.

We always organize parent's seminars on health issues to equip them with knowledge on how to avoid communicable diseases and poverty related diseases. For instance, in May last year, such a one day health seminar was held at our child development centre and more than two hundred parents attended. They were trained on how to keep the water tanks clean and how to keep their home environment clean. One of the project directors commented.

It can thus be argued that this helped them to prevent breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other associated problems, thus promoting a healthy body for high production, an important aspect in reducing poverty.

Another key program was the Child Survival Program (CSP) that integrated maternal wellbeing and early childhood development. The maternal health approach among other models draws on the three delays model that recognizes the different barriers women face in achieving the timely and effective medical care needed to prevent deaths occurring in pregnancy and childbirth. With this support, it was revealed that over 95 percent of all beneficiary mothers deliver in a hospital and by a qualified medical person. The Compassion International social worker visits the mother in the first 24 hours after delivery to ensure early initiation of breastfeeding and help to manage any complication. After this stage, the early childhood support process continues from childhood to three years of age and supports a continuum of care right from the care of newborn to early childhood. With the ICPs, it was established that 90 percent of newborn in the CSP were initiated on breastfeeding within the first hour of life, 70 percent of the CSP beneficiaries from 0 up to 6 months were exclusively breastfed and 100 percent of children between 6 to 23 months received adequate complementary feeds according to the three minimum standards of optimal complementary feeding.

) Cognitive Development Aspect

While conducting the study, it was realized that in cognitive development aspect, Compassion International provided necessary equipments for children's formal and informal education. This was important in equipping children with all the necessary educational knowledge in their lives in order to grow up as responsible citizens. One of the beneficiaries had this to say;

We are blessed to have our children learning various educational skills that help them become self reliant forever..... my girl child completed a university degree in social sciences two years ago at Makerere University as a result of support from Compassion. She has already been employed by

the same organization at our CDC. If it was my initiative, nothing would have been done to her education because I had nothing I would offer to her for studies.....Compassion has therefore saved me through educating my child from primary to university level and I think my family will one time get out of poverty because she has began supporting her siblings too. The beneficiary added.

From the above analysis therefore, compassion international support children of key beneficiaries from primary to university level. The major aim of this was to acquire knowledge and skills to use for self reliant. In addition, the data provided by key respondents, revealed that there was a provision for children beneficiaries to attend vocational training courses if they found it hard to continue up to university level. Based on the findings, different courses were provided and some of them included carpentry, Knitting, crocheting, tailoring, guitar playing, keyboard training, computer training and bakery. The project director, Muganza CDC confirmed that;

Any child who has reached in primary five on words and we realize he or she is not able to proceed with further studies, we encourage that child to take on vocational training. In any case, we encourage them to explore different ways of meeting their livelihoods and therefore vocational training is one of them, she said.

There were other various activities that were done under this aspect even out of school. This helped children realize that out of school did not necessarily mean failure in life, since they could even do something else and survive in future. To achieve this, all parents and children (beneficiaries) were encouraged for example to plant fruits such as avocados, mangoes, jackfruits and paw-paws to supplement on their food and income. Others were trees that were provided to each household like Eucalyptus trees, *Imibunda*, *Gilveria*, and Pines.

1) Social-Emotional Development Aspect

In social emotional development aspect, beneficiaries were trained in social emotional activities for holistic development. To achieve a holistic development, the organization through its workers and the partner churches, committed itself to teach children ways of living in the community. According to the research findings, this was done by encouraging community work, guidance and counseling and free playing field for socialization and making friends with a good motive even when they were out of school. This aimed at making children and their parents fit in the society. According to the CDO Chahi Sub-County, voluntary community work contributes a lot in terms of reducing poverty in the community. It is therefore important to note that all activities and support provided by Compassion either in health, education, environmental protection or child protection

were all engrained in four development aspects as analyzed and they are important reducing poverty in the district.

It is thus imperative to quantify the above socio-economic activities of Compassion International in order to understand their existence and impacts on the poor beneficiary. These various activities were weighed differently by the respondents in the study basing on multiple responses. The table below gives responses in accordance to the frequencies obtained from the questionnaire administered to beneficiaries.

Table: 4.3 The level of Socio-economic support of Compassion International To beneficiaries

Socio-economic support	Response rate per 95	Percentage per 100
Education	95	100
Income generating activities	31	33
Environmental	24	25
Food and nutrition	24	25
Spiritual training	95	100
Shelter	11	12
Health	24	25
Legal and protection	11	11

Source: field Research

The table above explains the various responses from beneficiaries of the organization, in accordance to the support they get. The question was set in a way that beneficiaries would respond to all the activities compassion provides to them. According to the responses, education and spiritual training were the key activities since all beneficiaries responded, comprising to 100 percent. These were followed by income generating activities and then environmental protection, food and nutrition and health. Finally, the organization supports some beneficiaries on legal protection. In essence therefore, most of the activities that are essential to poverty reduction are

implemented. What is remaining is whether these activities are followed to monitor their effects on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries.

4.3 Factors that Determined the Entry and Exit of Needy Beneficiaries

Before any beneficiary could be chosen, the project director had to first get communication from the country head office. This meant that allowing the CDC to recruit more beneficiaries would be done following the approval of the proposal to add more beneficiaries. When the permission was granted, the project director in liaison with the church Reverend could communicate to the Church Partnership Committee (CPC). It was the responsibility of this committee to begin identifying the poorest of the poor and the highly vulnerable people through the process known as “visitations”. Criteria to select them existed and had to be followed as some of the key informants argued;

We have the indicators we follow to get the neediest beneficiaries; we give the first priority to orphans, destitute children, children with chronically sick caregivers, those who are HIV/AIDS, Mentally ill and the malnourished ones. We also consider those ones from poor families, with no shelter where parents share the same room with their children, sleep with their animals in the same house, no source of income, landless people, and children with no clothes. All these are indicators that we consider to register someone as a beneficiary of compassion, the church overseer Muganza CDC argued.

Having the indicators in mind, every field officer had to bear in mind to select beneficiaries from both Christian and non Christian households. If they were children, both girls and boys had to be given equal opportunity for selection and they had to be between the ages of three to nine years.

According to the project director, Kabindi CDC, no child who had reached his or her 10th birth day could be registered for the first time entry into a project. The beneficiaries must also be within that locality of not more than thirty minutes walking distance.

In other instances however, the research findings investigated that these tight rules and procedures for selecting beneficiaries could eliminate those who would be in dire need and poverty. For example, some needy people would not be near the CDC because most of the offices were found established in accessible areas such as towns where poor people could not afford to live. All Child Development Centers (CDCs) visited were established within Mukono town and others were in a walkable distance from town. Most poor people in Mukono district however, were not in town but

in rural areas. This meant that the poorest of the poor were not reached by the organization and therefore would hardly help in reducing poverty among them.

In addition, a situation where establishing Child Development Centre (CDC) in any area was determined by the capacity for the church to manage running the projects of the centre raised eyebrows. This implied that it had to be having well to do members who can afford to contribute either financially or ideally to manage the projects of the centre, yet it contradicted itself by emphasizing that such a church had to be with needy members. The question is; if the church could have the capacity to run such programs and each church member was able to contribute 10,000 per term to a child, would that church member being considered poor? This clearly manifests the argument that NGOs are formed by elitists whose interests are not to meet the needs of the poor but to promote their own interests. In researchers' views therefore, for the organization to consider poor people as beneficiaries, there is a need to enter to the grassroots levels where people have no single source of income to be supported wholly for holistic development.

As the researcher investigated, once beneficiaries had been selected, they were obliged to access all services as Compassion members. However, these members had to abide by the rules and regulations of Compassion, failure to do so could lead to punishment that may include being cancelled from the list of beneficiaries. Departure from compassion was however in two categories, departure in good faith especially when one had reached twenty two years or completed the course training and negative departure especially when the beneficiary disobeyed the rules and regulations of Compassion International.

Based on the research findings, the considerations for beneficiaries to depart from the list of beneficiaries in Compassion International included; children must attend centre days every Saturday, failure to do it for three consecutive days without justifiable reasons would lead to dismissal from the project; when the beneficiary has been transferred to another Compassion area may be due to migration or other reasons would be cancelled from the project; when the beneficiary specially the child was getting double sponsorship and support; when the home situation of the beneficiary had improved, the support may be cancelled to give it to others still in dire need; when the household had more than three children being supported by Compassion program, it could lead to cancellation; when the child beneficiary reached the age limit of twenty two years and; when the child beneficiary had graduated from school or completed course training.

4.4 Beneficiary Participation and Project Sustainability

This section analyzed the beneficiary participation and project sustainability of projects planned and implemented by Compassion International in Mukono district. According to key informants interviewed, they understood participation as a condition when people are able to share ideas, think for themselves, express their views effectively, plan, prioritize and get involved in the decision making process of any program in their community. In their views, beneficiary participation was understood as the process where people with similar needs, goals and those affected by a common cause involve themselves in decisions affecting their lives. This had linkage to Abrams definition of beneficiary participation which stated that it was the theory that the local community should be given an active role in programs and improvements directly affecting it. It was for instance established that 76 percent of the respondents interviewed in two FGDs conducted, agreed that it was rational to give control of affairs and decisions to people most affected by them. When asked how relevant beneficiary participation was in project planning and management, 80 percent of the respondents agreed that it helps in project sustainability. Beneficiaries understood project sustainability as the process through which projects were appropriately managed to allow the project produce output for supporting the present beneficiaries without hindering the potential benefits that may be generated from the same project for the future generation or beneficiaries.

From the face of Compassion International therefore, one would think that the organization encourages beneficiary participation as prerequisite in planning and managing the projects for reducing poverty. When asked for instance, how often the beneficiaries attend meetings in a year, responses were given as indicated in the table below:

Table 4.4 Indicating the Frequency of Meetings

Frequency	Response rate	Percentage
Once a month	07	07
Quarterly	50	53
Twice a year	20	21
Once a year	18	19
Total	95	100

Source: Field Research

As indicated in the table above, quarterly general meetings appeared dominant with 53 percent of responses and attending once in a year becoming the least with 07 percent. It was investigated that beneficiaries were sensitized and encouraged to participate in quarterly general meetings that included children meetings, seminars and workshops. For example, when the researcher went for interviews, he found when beneficiaries had had one general meeting in the previous month of February. Participants in the interviews agreed that they were discussing the changes in local contributions and how to share seedlings. Most of participants agreed that whenever there was a need to be shared with the staff, they were called for the meetings. They argued that this make them know what is taking place at the project.

In need to strengthen such views, the same questions were administered to the key informants. The project director of Muganza had this to say in response to the question;

The reasons why we call them for the meetings are to sensitize to them what is taking place at the project and the country office. In case there are changes or new gifts to give out to them, we also call them for a meeting. For instance, when there was a need to encourage the beneficiaries plant rees, we called them to discuss about the seedbed. Seedlings are now ready and we had another meeting last week sensitizing them to take these seedlings for planting. That is why you see them coming to carry them to their gardens; the project director, Muganza CDC explained.

From the directors’ explanation however, it was deduced that beneficiary’s form of participation was pseudo, token and passive because beneficiaries were only invited when *something* has been pre-planned for them. This was justified by the responses in the table below:

Table 4.5. Indicating the Type of Meetings Beneficiaries Attend with Compassion

Type of Meetings	Response rate	Percentage
Planning	20	21
General	55	58
Consultative	15	16
Both	05	05

Source: Field Research

As indicated in the table above, 21 percent said they attend planning meetings, while 16 percent attend consultative meetings, with 58 percent of respondents agreeing that they attend general meetings and 05 percent attending both. Based on these findings therefore, beneficiaries were just at the receiving side, where they only take what could be given to them irrespective of whether it was one of the beneficiary's priorities or whether, it could help to reduce poverty in their households or not. This justified the reasons as to why some of the beneficiaries failed to see how important tree seedlings were; in as far as reducing poverty was concerned.

The study also found out that it was the organization policy for all children beneficiaries to attend weekly meetings at their respective Child Development Centres (CDCs). At each centre, many things were done; children were taken through counseling sessions especially on behavioral change and how to go about their puberty stages. It was on the same day that children would attend carpentry workshops, tailoring and crocheting. According to Rutare project director, sometimes they offered voluntary counseling and testing services when they saw that children were going astray. She confessed that they offered voluntary counseling and testing services in July 2012 and since then; children had realized the need for living a safety life. However, general counseling was being done weekly to keep children updated about their biological changes and to live a responsible life.

In order to be responsive and own the projects themselves, all beneficiaries were charged 30,000 per year as a local contribution. This money had to be paid in at least three installments, each installment paying in 10,000 Uganda shillings. This money was used to construct houses for the projects, staff kitchen, paying teachers for remedial teaching and in other project centers, to use it in constructing classrooms from where carpentry activities were conducted. Basing on the views of one of the key informants, Sometime back, all beneficiaries used to pay 6000 shillings per four months (Quarterly) but as time went on, things became expensive. This made them increase to 10,000 quarterly so that the cost of expensive items could be met. Consequently, they had general meeting with the beneficiaries in February intended to explain the increase for the local contributions.

However, from the research findings, some of the beneficiaries were not receptive to the increase of local contributions. Most of the beneficiaries complained that local contribution was higher than what they earn as their source of income. In one of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), some respondents complained that the increase of the local contribution to 30,000 per year was almost equivalent to 25,000-40,000 Uganda shillings given to all children beneficiaries every end of the

year to use it in celebrating Christmas. This made some the beneficiaries think that Compassion International has become a CACCO in their community and therefore needed to know whether it was a technique used by the organization to reduce poverty in their households. For instance, from the discussion I had with one of the beneficiaries, she said;

There is no difference between us benefiting from Compassion and those who belong to a saving association. We pay 30,000 as local contribution every year and receive 40,000 as gifts every year. This is like contributions in a SACCO. In my views, the extra ten thousand received is just like an interest of thirty thousand paid annually in a SACCO; a beneficiary in an FGD Kabindi CDC analyzed.

The study also investigated that project centers have also promoted bio- annual seminars for instance on health and environmental conservations. In these seminars, beneficiaries were invited to participate and get training on how to keep the water tanks clean so that they may drink clean and safe water. They also learnt how to keep their environment clean and this helped avoid breeding grounds for mosquitoes which were threat to peoples' health. For instance, one of the beneficiaries argued that because he had learnt the techniques of keeping the water tank received from Compassion four years ago, it was still okay and it stored clean water. In the beneficiary's views, he said;

I think this water tank has got other many years to serve its purpose, I attribute its long life to Compassion staff who taught me how to keep it safe and clean; one of the beneficiaries in an FGD Muganza CDC recalled.

Nonetheless, some respondents argued that these seminars and workshops could take long time to take place. Other beneficiaries did not know that such seminars existed to help them as one of them commented;

I have been a beneficiary of Compassion International for two years but I have never heard anything like seminar. May be if they are general meetings we attend at least twice a year they call seminars;" a beneficiary in an FGD, Rutare CDC confessed.

Basing on the study findings therefore, the researcher realized that although the organization had it as one of the principles to involve beneficiaries in decision making and allowing them participate for project sustainability, the approaches used were not appropriate. Beneficiary participation was thus perceived as rhetoric, token and pseudo participation that was mainly revealed through attending general meetings. Evidences from the research findings showed that majority of the beneficiaries attended general meetings and discussed what had already been passed by the donors and submitted to the country office in Kampala for implementation. Westernized approaches of development in Uganda cannot by far, be a panacea to poverty reduction because the local needs of people in Mukono for instance, are totally incompatible to what the *western donors* think can reduce poverty. This justified the reasons as to why some of the beneficiaries would sleep with their animals in their houses which were constructed by Compassion. Others would prefer tangible benefits such as foods and Vaseline to trainings in income generating activities, yet, trainings would make them gain skills to sustain their own livelihoods.

4.5 Compassion International and Local Government Authorities: Working Relations

In order to holistically combat poverty and promote development in Uganda, all development partners were supposed to work in a holistic and coordinated manner through the principle of Public Private Partnership (PPP). Other development partners such as NGOs were supposed to work closely with the local government in order to understand what each partner was planning to implement and therefore avoid duplication of projects. This was supposed to be done through exposing work plans and budgets to each other and attending meetings and seminars to discuss and harmonize on their planned activities. power relations between different development partners were also supposed to be balanced so that each partner was doing the right things in the right time and within the prescribed laws governing the country.

In order to establish the working relations between Compassion International and Mukono district local government and how it was important in reducing poverty, different research questions were asked to explore the each partner's positions. It was nonetheless, established that there was no serious mutual working relations between Compassion International and the district authorities. For instance, when asked to explain how NGOs work with the local government to reduce poverty in Mukono district, the project director, Kabindi CDC in her words said;

I don't think we have many things we do with the local government. It is like we are working independently because we only see the district official checking on us once a year, or even after two years. Even when the district official comes, nothing he advises us to do or not to do. We do not expose our work plans and they also do not expose theirs to us. We just plan and implement our projects without consulting the district officials.

When asked whether the Compassion officials were invited for the Local government meetings, the project director, Muganza CDC had this to say;

Local government hardly calls us for its meetings. The only meetings they invite us for are the one when they are reviewing the financial year budgets and their work plans at the sub county level. When they call us, some times we go there or we do not go, depending on the availability of time.

This statement was supplemented by the director of Kabindi CDC, she said;

We do not get interests to attend local government meetings because they are characterized by a lot of bureaucracies and most of the issues they normally discuss are not of our immediate interests. For example, whenever we are called, they want us to review the work plans, they read for us the roads, schools and hospitals they plan to construct or renovate. These are also important in reducing poverty but they are not our immediate concerns and therefore create boredom to us whenever we attend such meetings.....even if we review their work plans, we never get the feedback of what we reviewed; she adds.

In the same key informant interview, Rutare CDC commented that their working relationship with the local government was minimal. He confessed that they used to have close relationship when they were having training with them about Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) care program two years ago. Since then, they had not got another serious interaction with the local government. He however, strengthened his stand by arguing that they make sure they do their work with good faith in order to produce quality results. He supported this, by giving an example, of 60 percent of children they support in primary and secondary schools that they know how to do carpentry and tailoring work. He further said that in special days, they meet these children separately to train them in such livelihood skills.

The researcher noticed that NGOs were not willing to expose their work plans because they were not aware that it was by law to expose it to the local government. For example, one of the district officials said that Most of NGOs officials were not cooperative to produce their work plans and work with the district, yet it was by law that all NGOs should always expose their work plans to the local government in order to ascertain what they are planning to implement. This was corroborated by the DCDO argument. In his words, he said;

Whenever we call NGO officials to expose their plans to the district, most of them are hesitant to do so. It takes us time to really access such plans yet it is for the benefits of both of us. We perhaps need to first improve on sensitization mechanisms so that they understand that it is by law to expose their work plans; the DCDO Mukono district advised.

It was also analyzed that NGO officials attend Local government meetings when they were expecting something tangible in form of cash or otherwise. Below is the statement of one of the local government official;

When there is any training, seminar or workshop at the sub-county level, we normally invite NGO officials to attend. At least 80 percent of the NGO officials in the Sub-county attend such workshops and seminars because there are always transport and lunch allowances and or certificates of attendances. However, when they are called for any other meeting which does not involve any allowances, you can hardly see any NGO official attending; the Sub-County Chief, Nyarusiza, recalls.

The research findings revealed that the hesitation to expose the work plans and mutual working relationship between the NGOs and the district authority was more than what is mentioned above. Revealing workplans according to one of the key informants was revealing the funds to implement such plans and their sources. Yet, sources of funds were one of the key secrets that NGO officials were not willing to expose to anyone. It was established that once the source of funds were revealed, it would lead to competition for such funds which would make the NGO lose its donors to other development partners. It can therefore be deduced by arguing that some NGOs were more concerned with maintaining good working relations with their donors than the government from which they operate; this further illustrated why they make accountability to their western donors instead of the beneficiaries. Specifically, this kind of working relations where NGOs are suspicious

to the local government cannot help in reducing poverty in the country. It also becomes a contradiction with the NGO principles of releasing children and their households out of poverty in Jesus' name, because Jesus himself did not front money in the activities he was doing to save his people. In addition, it is also in contrary with the NGO policy which was launched by NGO forum in 2010, explaining how NGOs should work with the local government.

4.6 The Illusion of Participatory Poverty Reduction in Compassion International

Reducing poverty needs a comprehensive approach where all the community members join efforts for one cause. However, a situation where poor households are divided on the basis of religious differences may not lead to poverty reduction, instead may worsen the situation. six reasons are critically analyzed to fail compassion international in reducing poverty: The selection criteria to the key beneficiaries were not favorable to all the poor households in the district. The committee responsible to select the key beneficiaries was comprised of local church members headed by the reverend. Basing on the research findings supported by the statistical data in the study, the poor households which believed in Anglican denomination were mostly considered as key beneficiaries. Those poor households believed in other denominations had limited chances of being selected. For example, 71 percent of respondents out of the whole number of key beneficiaries interviewed believed to the Anglican faith, the rest 29 percent that remained shared other denominations. Reducing poverty needs a comprehensive approach where all the community members join efforts for one cause. However, a situation where poor households are divided on the basis of religious differences may not lead to poverty reduction, instead may worsen the situation. It was from this basis that the researcher recommended that the committee responsible for selecting beneficiaries needed to encompass those members from other religious beliefs on the committee to have a sense of belonging. In this way, those poor households selected but belonged to other denominations would feel a sense of attachment and belonging to one family and would work jointly to reduce poverty in the district.

In a related assessment, the organization's strictness on religious practices make some needy people feel out of place and others ignored the would-be support to reduce poverty from Compassion. According to one of the key informants, there were tendencies of the organization staff to involve all the beneficiaries in Anglican religious practices such as praying, confessions and attending prayer conferences with a view to enhance spiritual aspect even when some of them were non Anglicans. This made the non Anglican believers feel out of place and others decided to drop out of

school because of such religious practices that were not compatible with their beliefs. For example, there were two beneficiaries who withdrew from one of the projects because of failing to stand the religious related pressure. In order for poverty to be reduced, religious differences needs to be ignored and concentrate on one common cause. It was therefore the suggestion of the researcher that although the organization has the Anglican background, it may need to improve its adaptability to other denominations if its mission of relieving children out of poverty in Jesus name is to be achieved.

The number of beneficiaries supported by Compassion at both household and societal level was too low to help in reducing poverty in the district. According to the research findings, each project centre had 200 registered beneficiaries on average. This number meant at least one child from each household. It was therefore interpreted that one person from a household of around 15 members was benefiting from Compassion. Although the organization would provide support to one person out of 15 members in a household, the impact of the services may not easily be realized by other household members. For example, if the beneficiary was given a blanket and clothes in two years time, how did the rest of the members feel the impact? Although the selected beneficiaries were sponsored for education, the possibilities of that person to study for 22 years and begin working to rescue the whole family seemed to be unrealistic. Viewing it at societal level, 200 households out of around five thousand households seemed to be a little number for a society to reduce poverty. From this analysis therefore, the researcher suggested that it would be more realistic if all members of the families chosen to benefit from the organization depending on the need; for instance, all the children in the family would attend schools while the organization supporting their parents through training them in income generating projects and encouraging them to form saving societies.

It was investigated that beneficiaries selected must be living within the proximity of 30 minutes walking distance from the project centre. This was according to the organization selection criteria and approaches. While conducting field interviews, the researcher also realized that most of the project centers were established near Mukono town and or else a short distance from the town. For example, there were only 15 project centers in the district but around 13 of them were concentrating within four sub-counties near the district headquarters. These include Nyarusiza, Kahaha, Nyakabande and the town council. The remaining two were the newest established in the beginning of this year in Nombe found in Kirundo sub-county and Gitovu in Busanza sub-county. The remaining eight sub-counties in the district did not have a single project centre. This meant that

those poor households who lived far away from the project centres had no chance of being benefiting, yet most of the poor households were far in rural areas. Basing on this analysis thus, the researcher realized the approaches used to establish the project centers were not favouring the poorest of the poor since rural areas were neglected in favour of towns and accessible sub-counties. It was from such an alarm, that the researcher suggested that NGOs should always be flexible in adopting the needs of the people and need to always consider the poorest of the poor.

It was also established that little emphasis was taken to monitor and evaluate the project implemented by the NGO. This has made most of the projects collapse before the beneficiaries realized their impact in poverty reduction. For example, some of the beneficiaries would get gifts from their sponsors in form of money and they would establish income generating projects but because of poor management, they collapsed. In the households visited, some of them had houses constructed by Compassion; however, the researcher observed that these people were sleeping with their animals in the same house in fear of thieves to steal their animals. When asked the project worker about what she thought were supposed to be done about the issue of sleeping with animals in the same house, the worker seemed to not be aware of what to do. Because of this act, houses which were less than five years old were almost collapsing. The researcher realized that it was because of inadequate monitoring and evaluation as well as empowering in form of training in how to manage such programs. To realize their impact in reducing poverty therefore, there would be need for comprehensive empowerment and capacity building. This would go hand in hand with sensitization about the rights and responsibilities of every beneficiary in the organization. This would make key beneficiaries have a sense of responsibility and would be the beginning of project sustainability and thus poverty reduction.

Emphasis of the NGO was more on children than any other categories of needy people in the country, yet, there were other people in need such as elderly, disabled and widows. The organization's approach to *releasing children out of poverty in Jesus' name* may be limited to reduce poverty. This is because poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that needs a multidimensional approach. Children just comprise a single element among many that needed to be supported to realize the meaningful achievements of reducing poverty. For instance, there may be those people equally in need like children such as the elderly. This means that when the category of children was removed out of poverty, their grandparents remained poor, and this cannot necessarily reduce poverty in such households. Although the organization may have a belief that children will

support their elders when they have been supported, there is no guarantee on this perspective, because by the time they complete studies for instance, may also be mature to begin their own families.

4.7 Compassion International: Challenges in Reducing Poverty

Whereas NGOs should be an integral part of Uganda's struggle to fight poverty, different challenges have cropped up. These have been attributed to the nature of formation and their management in Uganda as well as the aim of which they were formed. It should be noted unreservedly that most of NGOs have been entirely relying on foreign aid. The study revealed that foreign aid being unsustainable and unpredictable, has been detrimental to the NGOs reduction of poverty. Therefore, the more the NGOs depend on donor funds, the less competent they become in performing their roles. Consequently, the data collected indicated that Compassion International have been affected by different challenges but the key ones included: a culture of dependency has developed in the organization due to constant expectation of donor hand-outs; the flow of donor funds has encouraged the founders to accumulate absolute power from the top; the scramble for foreign aid has fueled the unhealthy competition between Compassion International and the other NGOs and the district authorities; the organization has become more accountable to the donors than the local people; donor funds have encouraged partisan behavior to crop up in the NGO; the donor's tendency of supporting mainly short term programs has destructed Compassion from its duty of promoting long term development; and finally, the NGO has become a mere puppet of the donors, promoting foreign interests at the expense of national development.

Overreliance on foreign aid has created a culture of dependence syndrome among NGOs in Uganda. The study found out that the biggest proportion of Compassion's funding comes from abroad, especially from western donors and governments. Although attempts to obtain the exact amount of aid received by Compassion International every year were futile, analysis of budget of some of the project centers revealed that foreign donations were the most significant source of its funds. Many of its activities were financed by USA and European governments and donor agencies. For instance, in Muganza child development centre, all the 200 registered children got support from foreign funding.

Interviews conducted among Compassion International members revealed that the only significant domestic source of revenue was a membership fee of Ushs 30,000 per beneficiary per year. With a range of 200 beneficiaries on average per project, it shows that 15 project centers in the district

collect about Ushs 90 million from beneficiaries annually. Basing on the analysis of annual budgets of each project centre, this money cannot even support one project centre out of 15centres in the district. This is because the average budget for each CDC is around 156 millions. Surprisingly, 30,000 local contributions from each beneficiary had just been increased from 18,000 that have been contributed for a long time. The amount is also not uniform across all development centers because some beneficiaries cannot afford such amount. This was evidence enough that a culture of dependence has taken strong root among NGOs. In interviews conducted with beneficiaries, results revealed that they do not see any reason why they should contribute domestic revenue, when constant supply for donor money is already guaranteed. This explained the reason why some of the beneficiaries were not willing to pay local contributions, equating it as if they were in a SACCO. The study therefore concluded that the culture of depending on foreign aid is seriously undermining the autonomy of NGOs and seriously hampering local initiatives of people in Uganda. It is herefore a tongue in-check to suggest that an NGO which is dependent on foreign aid can empower people to attain economic self reliance.

The study established that there was a problem of undemocratic leadership emerging in NGOs. The huge sums of donor money have encouraged the founders of Compassion International to cling on to the lucrative leadership positions in the organization and to accumulative absolute financial and administrative powers. This was manifested in the tendency of managers who began the organization in Uganda to remain firmly in charge of the organization, and the unwillingness to relinquish their offices to new management. The study found it questionable as to why, since 1980s, the same members of the management have remained part of the leadership of Compassion despite the regular changes of leadership at other lower levels within the organization. Surprisingly, it was established from the field that there were inadequate technical staff in all the project centers visited to run and manage the programs of Compassion. Most of the projects visited had three instead of six officers. They included the project director, the officer in charge of health and the officer in charge of children. The rest of activities were not technically having any one to spearhead them. For example, there was no one in charge of monitoring and evaluation of projects. This meant that the three project officers available doubled their work as monitoring and evaluation officers. According to one of the officers in the project centers;

It is not easy for three staffs to cater for programs that affect more than 200 households because in case one of the staffs gets annoyed, around 70 families would be affected negatively.

To add gist to the point, the findings revealed that Compassion International considered only beneficiaries and sponsors; while the employees were just instruments of operation as one of the key informant lamented;

The fact that Compassion deals with the church not the project staffs; the church recruits staffs and they are paid by Compassion; so we are not sure whether we are employees of compassion or employees of the church; what a confusing employment relations is that? For us, we are just instruments of operation. This kind of relations affect our performance because it is natural to be motivated in different ways and most importantly, feeling a sense of belonging, the key informant added.

It can therefore logically be explained for the above phenomenon that top management struggle to remain with absolute power to control donor funds as they amass more and more powers over the years, while ignoring the lower technocrats who implement the organization programs. This demotivates them and thus, can have little impact towards reducing poverty in the district. It was the suggestion of the researcher that Compassion and the partner churches sort out this problem because project staffs would be motivated if they new whom they were working for. Since reducing poverty begins from the mindset, project staffs who implement the programs need to be given priority in order to deliver efficiently and effectively.

The study established that there was unhealthy competition among the NGOs and poor power relations with the local government authorities yet are supposed to congregate and cooperate for the common purpose. For instance the study discovered that Compassion International in Mukono district has not had any joint programs with other NGOs in the district since its operation in the district. Further still, interviews conducted among Compassion employees and the district authorities revealed that many of them are oblivious about one another's programs to reduce poverty in the district. When asked why there was low cooperation, key informants revealed that less cooperation and coordination was attached to the fear of losing foreign donation to the partners in the same areas of interests. This confirms the argument that NGOs in the same field like empowering communities to reduce poverty, perceive each other as rivals- all because of donor funds. In the same interviews, the majority of respondents perceived other NGOs as being money-minded, uncooperative, illiterate, and less organized. This would not have been the case if the working relationship among NGOs was good. The attitude of Compassion officials towards other

NGOs clearly indicated that there was a tradition of rivalry among Uganda's NGOs. Specifically, the working relations between Compassion and the district authorities, was characterized by poor coordination worsened by failure to implement laws concerning NGOs and the local government. This was confirmed when one of the organization employee revealed that the district officials check on them once in a year or even two years. The statement was also quoted from one of the key informant:

We do not know the work plan of the district because they do not know ours too..... our coordination with the district ends at the sub-county level because we have never had any meeting with them at the district level.

From the district perspectives, one of the local government officials testified that NGOs officials attend the meetings when they know there is lunch and transport allowances. Basing on this analysis therefore, there was high possibility that NGOs implemented duplicated projects since the district work plans were not known to them, neither did the district authorities knew those of Compassion; in any case, their meetings if attended ended at the sub-county level once in one or two years.

The study found out that NGOs consider accountability to the foreign donors than the beneficiaries. Interviews conducted with the beneficiaries revealed that since the masses do not contribute significant money to the programs, there has been little concern to create mechanisms of downward accountability. For example, it was discovered that Compassion International conceptualizes, plan, and organizes most programs in collaboration with the donors. The local people were only engaged during the implementation stage. This implied that they have no say in the process of determining the nature or the content of the programs to move them out of poverty- Their participation was narrowly defined in terms of the attendance during the general meetings. It was therefore questionable how NGOs can effectively represent people's interests and therefore reduce poverty among them when their ideas were ignored.

On the other hand, it emerged that there exists a high degree of accountability by Compassion International to the donors. For instance all the programs conducted by the organization have specific donors who must receive bio-annual assessment reports. Moreover, in the implementation of the projects, Compassion International was supposed to partner with local churches: however,

the nature of this partnership raises eye brows: Compassion international is in charge of formulating projects and paying salaries to the staffs while churches take the management aspects of the projects. In simple, it is a case of American NGO (Compassion International) supervising Uganda NGO (in this case local churches). This illustrates how far the donors have gone to ensure that NGOs are accountable to them. However, the question remains; how viable are the projects superimposed on the local population towards reducing poverty? Moreover, during the study, emerged that most of the decisions taken and the activities carried out by Compassion were informed by a western perspective. Thus most of Compassion's programs rotate around the concepts like "spiritual development" a concept that rooted in western intellectual discourse. For NGO to help in reducing poverty, needed to understand the historical context of Uganda's development and explore concepts such as Nationalism and Pan-Africanism through which most ideas to indigenous development in developing countries originates. In any case, the geneusness of the local knowledge is more important because it allows the project implementers understand the real issues on the ground through which they use to implement appropriate poverty reduction programs.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

Compassion International's activities in the district, for example, were important poverty reduction interventions. However, they are overwhelmed by dependence on foreign support and its negative consequences. These activities are categorized into physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development. Key components of these developments include education, health, child protection, environmental conservation, and livelihood and skills trainings in carpentry, tailoring, crocheting, knitting, and bakery.

In some instances, money is given to beneficiaries in form of gifts from individual benefactors. Such money is used to initiate income-generating activities like goat rearing, piggery, and poultry keeping. Other than this, the organization also buys goats and hens directly and distributes them to selected beneficiaries. These initiatives were important in raising household income and hence reducing poverty. Consequently, more than 3000 orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Mukono district are attending primary and secondary education with support from Compassion International. Around thirteen project centers out of the fifteen centres in the district sponsor students pursuing different courses at tertiary institutions and universities. The health of OVCs and some of their caregivers has been improved through medical support. The environment conservation interventions encourage beneficiaries to plant trees such as *gilverias*, *Imibunda*, *eucalyptus*, *avocadoes* and *Pawpaws*. By the time the researcher visited the area, most of the project centers had tree seedbeds from which beneficiaries picked seedlings for planting.

Nonetheless, the performance of the NGO in poverty reduction has been seriously hampered by over-reliance on foreign funding and its pejorative implications. Thus, where as it has been theoretically analyzed that NGOs can reduce poverty through appropriate approaches, such as local people's participation, working in close relationship with local authorities and changing people's perceptions toward the development prospects of NGOs, this argument was found lacking in some aspects. The evidence supporting this argument from the study was overwhelming. There is increased dependency syndrome from western donors to support the NGO projects. Unsustainable programs collapse as soon as donors cut off their funds: this is seen in the housing and sanitation

program the organization had began and dismissed in 5 years ago. The use of pseudo-tokens and rhetoric participation is common. This results from the fact that key planning and decision-making regarding projects and beneficiaries, are pre-determined by the founders. This may encourage upward accountability and neglects key beneficiaries. There were elitist and corrupt NGO leaders with absolute powers over projects and programs. These were not only rigid in the way they dealt with beneficiaries but in how they related with local government authorities. There were poor working relations between the NGO and district authorities due to the fear of exposing the sources of funds. The NGO officials also fear that may lead to loss of funders to competing NGOs. Two conjectures suffice here: first, either the NGO did not want its funding sources to be known; or, second, some funders did not wish to be known beyond the groups they supported. Either way, this secrecy negates the notion of participatory development. This occurs because neither the beneficiaries nor the government actors in affected areas can understand and engage meaningfully with both the funders, the funded, and beneficiaries. Thus, the NGO appears to create a parallel governance structure to the state while remaining too remote to be held accountable even by its very beneficiaries.

Consequently, since western donors have absolute decision-making powers, the proportion of the population which benefits from the organization was very small compared to the whole population in the district and therefore to the whole country. In addition, there was an element of religious discrimination: mainly, people who benefited from Compassion International's services and interventions belonged to one religious denomination (Anglican Protestants). While this is attributed to the fact that the NGO belongs to the same denomination, its isolation of non-Protestant poor households is intriguing. Similarly, far-to-reach poor people have no chance of being considered because the NGO mainly concentrates in urban areas. Beneficiaries must live near the NGO's project centers. There was also duplication of projects because of lack of harmony between different NGOs and government authorities. Most of the beneficiaries were not responsive to the programs because of rhetoric participation: these results into the unsustainability of NGO programs as evidenced by housing project.

It can, therefore, be summed up that the proliferation of NGOs is not a universal remedy to poverty reduction. They, instead, carry the flag that promotes dependency syndrome. This sustains poverty not only in Uganda but also in other developing countries. NGOs - especially International NGOs - come with westernized pre-determined goals and objectives to achieve other than poverty reduction

in developing countries. For instance, it may appear as though Compassion International aims at three objectives unrelated to poverty reduction: sustaining dependence through gift-giving and non-self-sustaining programs and projects; religious discrimination through the systematic privileging of members of one religious community against others; and alienation of NGO-related development workers from government's development interventions on the ground through noncooperation between the NGO and local government. However, due to continued poverty, NGOs whose overt objectives may not be related to development are allowed to operate under the guise of fighting against poverty and doing humanitarian work. When they reach their operational areas (on the ground), the original westernized pre-determined goals take precedence over local priorities and realities irrespective of whether they help in reducing poverty or end up indirectly sowing seeds of discrimination and alienating other development practitioners. In simple terms, no single development approach – if ever such a program as Compassion International's can be so called - designed by outsiders can help to solve a local problem whatsoever. Likewise, NGO objectives designed by foreigners can hardly reduce poverty in Uganda let alone anywhere else in the developing world.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Compassion International needs to intensify its socio-economic empowerment programs so that beneficiaries can be equipped with knowledge to reduce poverty. The organization needs to improve vocational and life skills training such as in carpentry, crocheting, tailoring and bakery and higher education.
2. There is need for Compassion International to meet all the monetary expenses related to projects and programs executed. In case of need for local raw materials, beneficiaries should contribute locally available materials such as labour, stones and sand in case there is need for constructing a project office or kitchen or any other project that may deem to need their efforts, rather than demanding for money from beneficiaries.
4. There is need for the organization to allow for full and meaningful beneficiary participation. Involving beneficiaries in active participation allow them to make right choices of intervention and becomes responsive to such interventions. Consequently, sustainability of organizational projects may be enhanced and promoted, leading to poverty reduction.

5. Compassion International needs to grant full autonomy to the project centers so that they can plan and implement projects that suit local beneficiary needs. The NGO's country office should only perform the coordinating role between different projects in different districts but leave the projects to be determined by the independent project teams in each district. This is because some areas have unique needs that may need unique approaches.
6. Compassion International should devise means of motivating its employees intrinsically and extrinsically, especially those working in project centers and upcountry offices. The argument that "Compassion considers only the beneficiary - and more specifically a child - and the sponsor" is a self-defeating principle. The top management of the NGO needs to rectify this deceptive norm, if the organization desires to maintain its image in reducing poverty in the country.
7. NGOs need to expand on the number of beneficiaries in order to reduce poverty in the areas of their operation. For example, Compassion considers at least one beneficiary from each household considered as poor. In addition, such members should be living within the short distance from the project centre. However, it was established that some of the households had around 15 members per household. This meant that it may be hard for one beneficiary to help in reducing poverty in such a large family even if the principle of trickle-down effect were to apply.
8. Proper coordination between the district local government and the NGOs is paramount in poverty reduction processes. Poor coordination between Compassion International and the district local governments leads to duplication of projects in the district. Both parties should expose their work plans to each other so that the problem of duplication is minimized.
9. There is need for NGOs to improve monitoring and evaluation strategies for the projects they implement for sustainability reasons. From the field, the researcher discovered that beneficiaries sleep with their animals in the same house. Animals destroy houses. This is also dangerous in terms of human health, for human beings sleeping with animals could catch certain complicated animal infections that may defy conventional human health services management. It is therefore the responsibility of the organization to monitor,

evaluate, train and encourage beneficiaries to maintain hygiene. This would go hand in hand with sensitizing them about the rights and responsibilities of every beneficiary in the organization. This would enable key beneficiaries to have a sense of responsibility, hence promoting project sustainability and sustainable poverty reduction.

10. In order to reduce poverty, in addition to holistic approaches, the NGO needs to tackle it dynamically, strategically and comprehensively. This is because poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that needs a multidimensional approach. There is a need to look at other categories of needy people in the society such as the elderly, widows and disabled persons, rather than placing emphasis on one category. Children that Compassion supports, for instance, just comprise a single element among many that need to be supported to realize the meaningful achievements of the NGO in reducing poverty in the country.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRES, FGDs AND INTERVIEW GUIDES ON NGOs AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN UGANDA: A CASE OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL IN MUKONO DISTRICT

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BENEFICIARIES (60 PARTICIPANTS)

Age..... Sex.....Level of education.....

Marital status.....Religion.....

Occupation.....Village.....

Sub-county.....District.....

NO	Question	Coding Category	Code
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1	How many family members live in this household?	Give complete numbers	
2	What is the major source of income and livelihoods?	Farming Formal employment Business/ trading Others, specify	1 2 3 4
	Which condition (s) qualifies your household as a beneficiary? (Multiple choices allowed)	Landlessness Widow/widowed Disability	1 2 3

		Orphanage	4
		Lack of food	5
		Lack of shelter	6
4	How many school going children live in this household?	Give complete numbers	
5	How many children go to school	Give complete number	
6	What are the most pressing needs of your household?	Food and nutrition Shelter Health care services Education Clothing and beddings Others, specify	1 2 3 4 5 6
7	How many meals do you take a day? What about children bellow 10 years?	Give complete number	
8	If less than two, why? For children, if less than three why?	Lack of enough food Family norm Save food for another day Others, specify	1 2 3 4

9	Has any of the household members suffered any illness necessitating any medical attention in the last two months?	Yes No	1 0
10	If yes, did the household seek healthcare of any form?	Yes No	1 0
11	If yes, who paid the medical bills?	Household head It was a government hospital NGO Others, specify	1 2 3 4
11	If an NGO, which one?	Compassion World vision Pan Uganda Others, specify	1 2 3 4
2	If Compassion International, how long has it been supporting your household in accessing health services?	Since ten years ago Since five years ago Since two years ago Bellow one year	1 2 3 4
3	What else has Compassion International been helping your	Educational support Income generating	1 2

	household with? (Multiple choices allowed)	projects (IGP) Training in saving habits Spiritual training Food and nutrition Shelter Health Legal and protection Others, specify	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
14	If education, how many children does the NGO sponsor in your household?	Give Complete number	
15	At what educational level does the NGO stop sponsoring your child (ren)?	Primary level Secondary level University Others, specify	1 2 3 4
16	Does the NGO call you for the meetings?	Yes No	1 0
17	If yes, How often do you attend the meetings?	Once a month Thrice a year Twice a year Once a year	1 2 3 4

18	What type of meetings do you normally attend?	Planning meetings Consultative meetings General meetings Both	1 2 3 4
19	Do you think your opinions are always considered by Compassion International in the planning process?	Yes No	1 0
20	If yes, explain why you think so?	Explain in details please	
21	If no, explain why you think so?	Explain in details please	
22	In your opinion, do you feel Compassion is addressing the most critical needs of your household?	Yes No	1 0
23	If no, which critical needs do you feel are left out by Compassion? (multiple Choices allowed)	Food Shelter and other raw materials Health care services	1 2 3

		Education	4
		Training and empowerment	5
		Income generating projects	6
		Others, specify	7
24	How does the household cope with the unmet needs?	Household support	1
		Community effort	2
		Government	3
		Another NGO (specify)	4
		Others, specify	5
25	Do you feel satisfied with the services Compassion International is offering to your household?	Yes	1
		No	0
26	If yes, why are you satisfied with its services?	Explain in details please	

27	If no, why are you not satisfied with its services?	Explain in details please	
28	Any other challenge you think is hindering Compassion to provide quality services to you?	Explain in details please	
29	In your opinion, how do you think Compassion International can improve its support in your household?	Explain in details please	