

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND CITIZENS SENSE OF OWNERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF ADDIS ABABA

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Abstract

A very significant factor, which deserves a keen vigilance in achieving sustainable development, is local institutions and their simultaneous contribution. As the level of government who are closest to the public, local governments contribute significantly by educating the public, mobilizing resources and controlling their use with the aim of long term and sustainable development. This research work investigated the relationship between good local governance, a community sense of ownership and sustainable development in local governments of Addis Ababa by assessing whether strategies, initiatives, and practices of local governments (Woredas) are moving towards sustainable development. The research also examined the state of community participation and ownership of local development and the implications for sustainability with the aim of providing recommendations based on the findings. For this purpose, data were collected from officials of the target Woreda¹ as well as randomly selected residents. The research found out that the local governance system of the Woreda is not in line with the principles and practices of good governance, which is due to passive participation, weak transparency and accountability of local officials and top-down planning and decision-making process, which routinely neglects residents. These, in turn, have impacted the sense of community ownership in the Woreda which was found to be low. It was also found out that the sense of future in the community is weak which can be attributed to the poor sense of community ownership that emanates from lack of good governance. The research has forwarded recommendations based on these findings.

Keywords: *Good governance; Local governance; Community ownership; Sustainable development.*

1. Introduction

Literally, sustainable development denotes continuing development over time or as the capacity to support, maintain, or endure. Sustainable development has been defined by many authors in different ways however most of the definitions incorporate the three interdependent pillars, economic, social and environmental. Nevertheless, for the purpose this study, sustainable development is defined as long-term/continuous, all-inclusive and synergetic process affecting economic, social, environmental and institutional aspects of life at all levels (Ciegis, Ramanauskiene, & Martinkus, 2009; Colantonio, 2009; Gibson, 2005; Jennifer A. 2006).

Sustainability occurs when the present, as well as future generations, are supported by the current formal and informal systems, structures and interactions to build a healthy and livable environment. For sustainable development to happen, policy designs and frameworks must be transparent, and the government should provide an enabling environment and institutional arrangement whereby citizens can actively participate in the decision-making process. The active participation of citizens in the making of decisions, which affect them especially at local levels where people live, and work, where basic services

¹ An administrative division in Ethiopia (managed by a local government), equivalent to a district with an average population of 100,000.

are delivered and where initiatives are established, is very critical to make sustainable development a reality. As a result, being the level of government closest to the public, local governments play a significant role in mobilizing resources and promoting sustainable development to citizens (Ahmed, 2007; Gibson, 2005; Kardos, 2012; UNECA, 2005).

The government of Ethiopia has the ambition to become a middle-income country by 2025. To this end, it has been preparing and implementing ambitious national programs towards fast track economic growth leading to sustainable development with the aim of poverty reduction as its focal policy. The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), is the most famous program which aims to promote comprehensive development in a sustainable manner and eventually end poverty. It recognizes that sustainable development in Ethiopia can only be achieved if development is pursued at all levels of the country and especially, at the local level (MoFED, 2010). It is therefore very critical that institutional capacity and governance system is strengthened particularly at the local level for sustainable development to be a reality as indicated in the GTP.

Despite the government's efforts to empower and capacitate local governments and engage the community in decision making process as well as in public development affairs (at least in principle), as a strategy to achieving a continuous and sustainable development, local governments remain incapable of delivering this, while society, especially the young generation, lacks a sense of responsibility and ownership. There is a lack of trustworthiness between local governments and communities. Several alliances have been established and have been in business one day and disappeared the next. Projects and movements have started in communities but vanished overnight, promises made to people especially during elections, which however never saw the light of day, and changes assured but never delivered. Communities were excluded from the stake of ownership while receiving services and projects they did not have a say in or invest in. As a result, the consequences are the distraction of local infrastructures, misuse of government properties, abuse of common local resources, neglect of everything and pass observers of what goes around in their neighborhood, etc. which are indicators of poor sense of ownership in the community. Development can hardly happen without good governance, which is driven and owned by the people. Even if it does, it will not sustain (Kardos, 2012).

This study intends to investigate the relationship between good local governance, a community sense of ownership and sustainable development and presents the findings of a sample district (*Woreda*) of Addis Ababa. In doing so, the research aims to answer the following questions; what mechanisms do local governments use to achieve sustainable development? Do they have the capacity to promote this agenda? What are the major obstacles to adopting and implementing sustainability initiatives? The research also examines the state of community participation and ownership of local development and answer the questions: How does active participation and transparency affect the sense of future in the community? Is there a sense of ownership and belonging in the community? Is there a system for transmitting awareness of sustainability from one generation to the next? Further, it appraises the implications for sustainability with the aim of providing recommendations based on the findings.

2. Local governance, citizens sense of ownership and sustainability: The term of the debate

Good governance is an essential condition for sustainable development. Accessibility, accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency generally characterize good governance which ensures the rule of law at all levels of government. Good governance promotes sustainable development through efficient and comprehensive management of local resources including human and financial resources. Furthermore, good governance, especially at local levels, enables clear decision-making procedures with

the active engagement of residents, ensuring the legitimacy of benefits and obligations (Sachiko, and Durwood, 2007; Fukuyama, 2013; Kardos, 2012). Motivation and skills of individuals at the local level is important, however, the actions and initiatives of the community are critical for sustainable development. Some local strategies and programs acknowledge the importance of community participation, but the mechanisms applied are passive whereby people are motivated by strong incentives or quid pro quo (Dalal-Clayton & Dent 1993). Real community participation in local governance system and in the process of development is akin to the heartbeat and pulse rate of application of sustainable development. Genuine participation helps in mobilizing resources and support local programs and projects by creating local ownership of the initiatives and inspiring citizens to contribute towards the success of these projects aiming for continuous development. However, these require a local and institutional capacity to successfully achieve goals and sustain them. Thus, local capacity building is a means to achieving sustainable development. In the sustainable development context, community ownership means communities become active players of decision making instead of meager engagement in local activities. It could also mean communities become autonomous in all possible ways including finances to being fully dependent on external bodies. Hence, it is important to acknowledge how different circumstances impact the nature and level of participation, thus, the sense of ownership among residents (UNESCO, 2011).

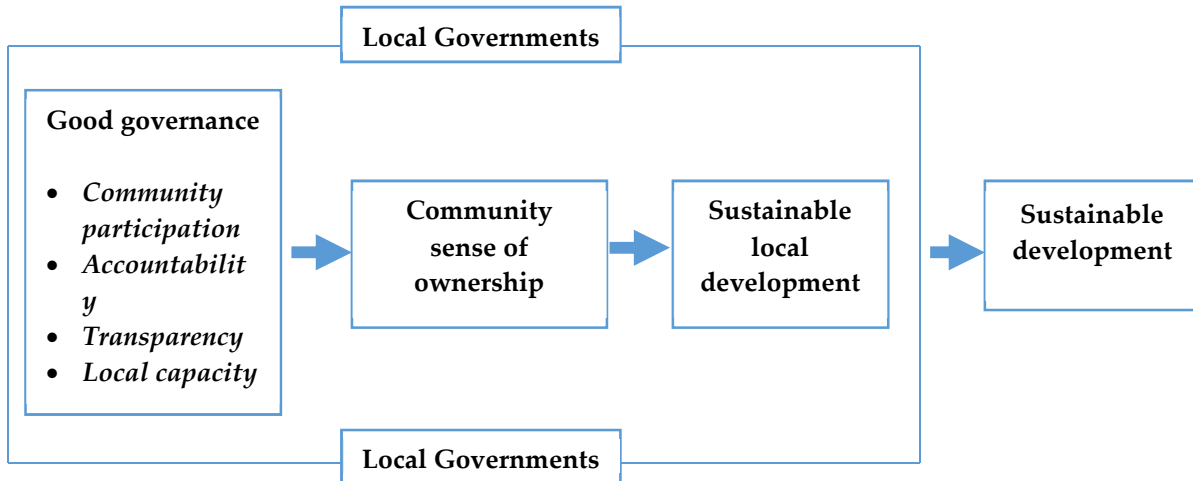
According to Kaye (1996), ownership comes from genuine participation of residents actively engaging from the planning and decision making to the final stages of monitoring and evaluation. Creating community ownership should be based on an attitude of grassroots approach by motivating people who are intimidated by the top-down approach which is led by the elites. He further proposes ways to creating community ownership which starts from the initial phase of engaging residents to provide inputs in the planning and decision-making process to make their involvement easier at later stages. Residents should also be involved in proposing strategies and forwarding solutions as they are most affected by the problem, they are in a better position to suggest solutions. Although the inputs and skills of professionals in solving problems are indispensable, community information and wisdom should be the basis to assure success and sustainability. Finally, Community members should be an integral part of the implementation process with the tools and resources provided to them. What happens usually is that residents draft the ideas and projects, however, they are left to watch outsiders implement them. Genuine ownership comes from enabling and allowing community members to take part in the implementation of their idea and create their vision on the ground. It is important to keep in mind that the community is the one who will live with the decisions and its outputs long after the ruling party, local officials or any external agency are gone.

There is a presumed relationship between participation, sense of community ownership and sustainable development. Genuine participation leads to a strong community sense of ownership which in turn leads to more sustained development. Real participation is a pre-requisite for ownership and ownership for sustainable development.

The conceptual framework given below presents the assumed relationships of concepts in the theories of good governance, sense of ownership and sustainable development and how they influence each other at a local level. Good governance in terms of active participation, transparency, and accountability leads to a sense of ownership in the community and community ownership ultimately leads to sustainable development. The conceptual framework also takes in to account the need for good local governance in terms of capacity.

Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



3. Materials and Methods

The research employed both quantitative and qualitative tools and analysis (triangulated) to produce a richer and more complete report. A case study approach was used as an appropriate strategy to gain an in-depth understanding of the local governance process of the selected *Woreda* as well as the state of resident's understanding and perception of community participation, sense of ownership and sustainable development. Both primary and secondary data were collected from eight departments of the *Woreda*: Department of health, education, law and justice, housing and infrastructure development department, capacity-building department, public relations/ communications department, and environmental protection. The case study approach also involved a multi-perspective analysis, which required the use of multiple data collection techniques and sources to reveal details that helped to understand the issue under investigation. Accordingly, multiple sources of information were employed to triangulate and provide robust evidence to enhance validity. Hence, experts and department heads of the target *Woreda* were interviewed until a point of saturation was reached. Overall, eight key informants were interviewed from the target *Woreda*.

On the other hand, community surveys have been undertaken for this study. The purpose of the community survey was to develop an understanding of how residents perceive the management of their local development, their sense of ownership towards the local development and how the local governance relates with and affects them. Data was gathered using questionnaires to randomly selected residents of the target *Woreda*. These questionnaires are composed of two parts. The first part contains structured questions with pre-set answers which enabled the researcher to collect numerical data. The second part consists of open-ended and semi-structured questions allowing respondents with the freedom to answer the questions in their own way also enabling the researcher to collect textual data. The questions were designed to collect a wide range of factual and attitudinal data on the research process. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 191 questionnaires were successfully collected.

In addition to this, the study has employed a review of relevant documents such as annual reports, strategic documents, communication documents, etc. to support findings from interviews and questionnaires.

4. Results

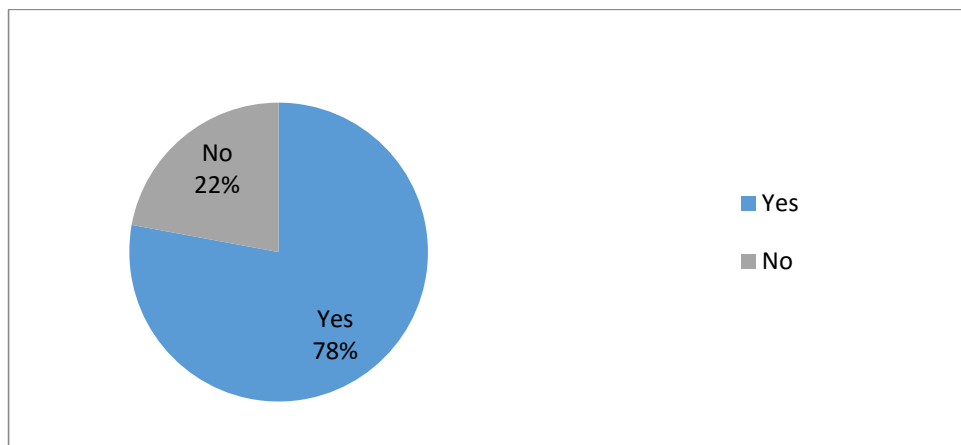
4.1. Local governance system and process

The local governance system of the *Woreda* is explained in terms of the local planning process, local community participation process, decision-making process, local capacity, accountability, and transparency. In doing so, data collected from officials as well as community members are used, responses are triangulated, and results are discussed. In what follows, the state of a community sense of ownership and future implications are discussed.

Community participation

Real community participation in local governance system and in the process of development is as the heartbeat and pulse rate of a sustainable development application. It is an indispensable mechanism to promote sustained and continuous development by creating a feeling of local belongingness of activities of the community. This, in turn, increases the contribution and commitment of the public towards a successful implementation of local initiatives. In trying to understand the state of community participation in the target *Woreda*, community members were solicited with a series of questions starting with whether they actively participate in the development activities of their neighborhood such as local infrastructure building, neighborhood watch, environmental protection activities and so on. As can be seen from the figure below, out of the total 190 responses, 78% of them said they actively participate while the rest 22% responded they do not.

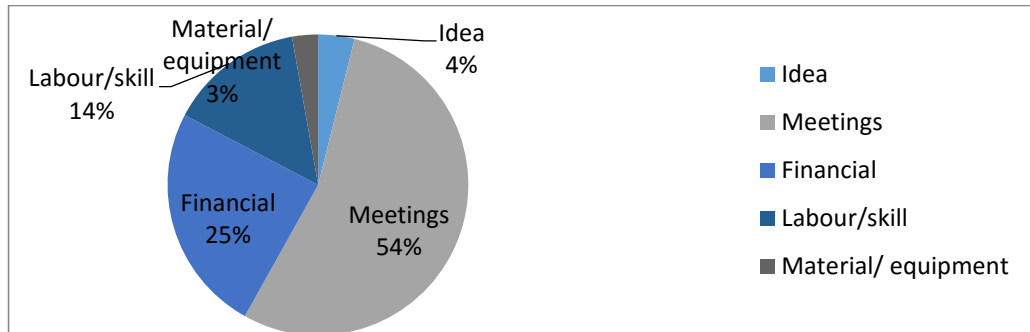
Figure 2: Participation of citizens in development-related activities of their *Woreda*



Field data, 2015

The question that followed tried to identify the ways of community participation. A total of 179 options were selected by the 148 respondents explaining how they participate in their local development activities. As displayed in the figure below, the most prevalent response was 'through meetings' at 54%. 'Financial contributions' was the second most prominent option at 25%, followed by 'labor/skill contribution' at 14%.

Figure 3: Ways of community participation in development activities of the Woreda

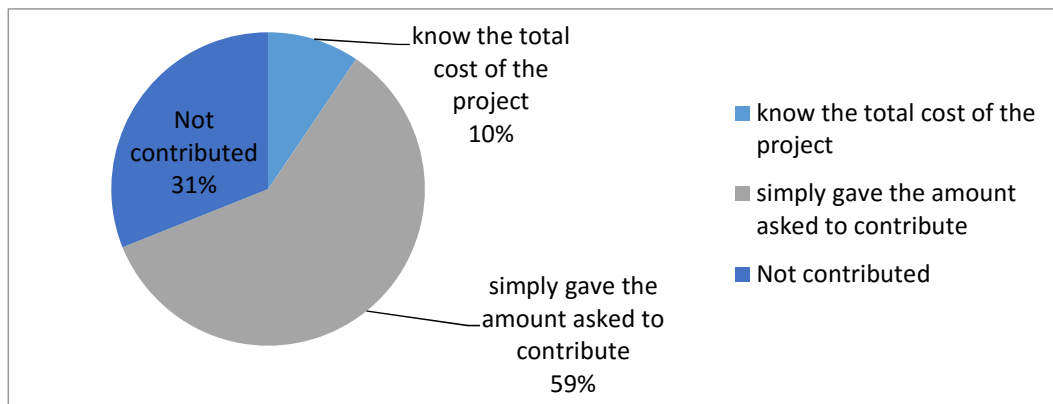


Field data, 2015

It was interesting to note that, in Figure 3, participating through the contribution of ideas received only 4% of the responses. Similarly, only 14% of responses suggested labor/skill contributions. This indicates that indirect or passive participation of the residents dominates as well as the perception that some residents hold toward participation as being tantamount to attending meetings (informative) and financial contributions.

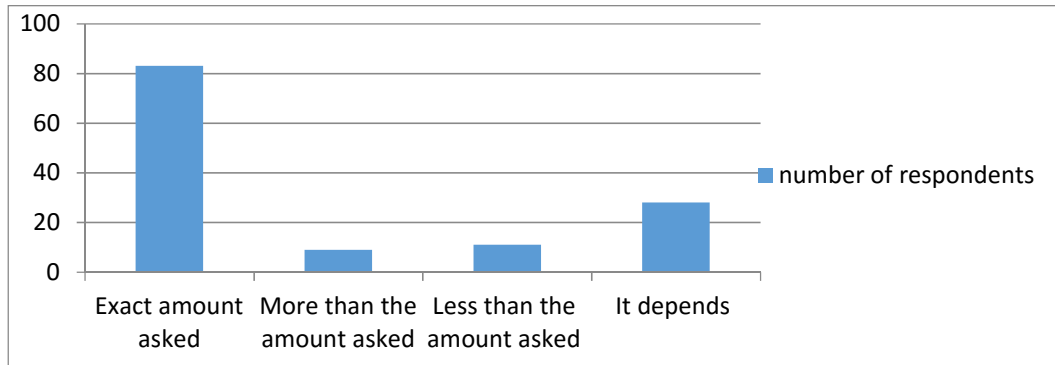
Even though a significant proportion of the respondents from the community (22%) said they do not actively participate in their local development activities in any way, there were situations where they were obliged to contribute financially for local projects. Following this, they were asked if they knew the total cost of the project or if they simply gave the amount they were asked to contribute. As illustrated in figure 4 below, only 10% of the respondents said they knew the total cost of the project while 59% of them simply gave the amount they were asked to contribute, having no information about the total cost and related financial information about the project. The rest 31% did not contribute at all. This again implies a passive type of participation where the people are being told how much they should contribute which involves a unilateral announcement by an administration without sharing the details of the projects, particularly financial details.

Figure 4: Community respondents' knowledge of project costs



Field data, 2015

Figure 5: Amount of contribution to local development projects



Field data, 2015

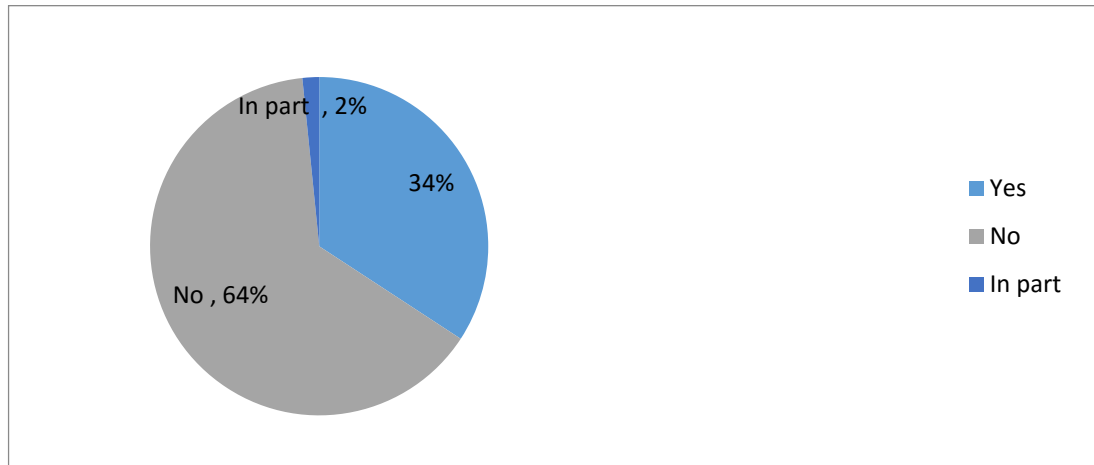
The results from the above figure also support the fact that majority of the respondents contribute the exact amount they were asked whereas a significant number of respondents replied that they contribute depending on the situation, leaving only 9 respondents who contributed more than they were asked. The essence of this information was to identify the level of community commitment and concern for their local development activities.

Local development agendas and projects could be initiated by either residents or the government. However, their sustainability could only be insured if programs and projects are transferred to the community to own and run them regardless of governmental or other changes. As learned from the interviews of key informants, there are no projects which are transferred and currently administered by the community. There are locally initiated activities and movements but most of the time these initiatives are one-time motives such as cleaning sewerage lines when they are filled with solid wastes or hiring securities guards when individuals are robbed, etc.

Local plans and planning process

Local plans and the planning process have implications for achieving sustained and people-centered development. According to the interviews conducted, all the departments have plans at a departmental level, however, the longest planning period for all departments is one year. The presence of a short-term plan is, of course, important, yet long-term plans are very critical when talking about sustainable development, which is a multi-dimensional bridging concept, which tries to link present and future generations among others. In trying to unleash the local planning process in the *Woreda*, key informants were presented with a series of questions to elaborate on the local planning process. All key informants from the eight departments unanimously responded that mainly the department heads themselves prepare their respective department's plan using the previous year's plan, performance reports, and guidelines from the sub-city as inputs. Responses from the community survey support these findings. Residents were asked if they are aware of the local plans or process related to it. As displayed in the figure below, the most prevalent response was 'No' at 64%.

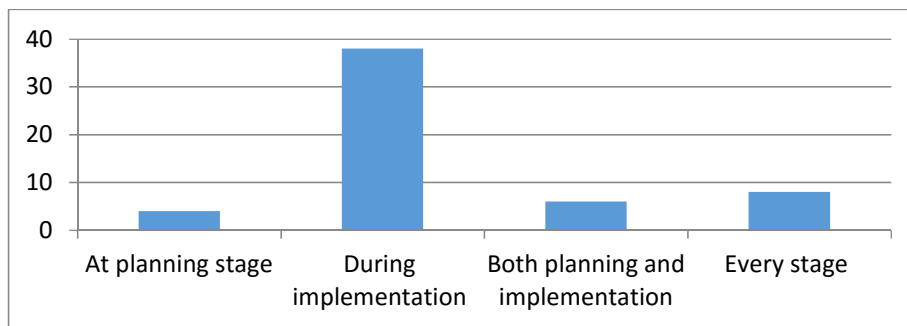
Figure 6: Community survey respondents' awareness of the local plan



Source: Field data, 2015

Similarly, Figure 7 below indicates that residents of the *Woreda* are less aware of the local plans; let alone participating in the process. Out of the total of 65 respondents who said they are aware of what was going on their locality, 38 of them got the information during implementation, while 18 of them said that they have heard about the local plans and activities mainly through meetings.

Figure 7: Timing of information sharing by the *Woreda*



Field data, 2015

This indicates that residents of the *Woreda* simply participate in actions the type of which *Woreda* officials have already decided. They contribute resources in terms of finance and labor, for the implementation of what has been planned by the local officials rather than engaging in the preparation of local plans, as their right, and not just as the means to achieve them. In the case of local governments and governance, sustainability must be indicated in the strategic plans as their core objective and needs to be integrated with the decision-making process. To this effect, all the key informants were asked how they incorporate the idea of sustainability in their respective plans and consider the future generation in their actions. The local plans carry a maximum duration of one year, which can be generalized as a short-term planning period, making it difficult to incorporate the idea of sustainability and future generations. The interview results, as well as the review of documents, substantiate this argument; in this regard, the word 'sustainable' or 'sustainable development' was not mentioned in the plans. Having only short-term plans

and being limited by factors including annual budgeting system, one-year-old initiatives pose a challenge for sustainability.

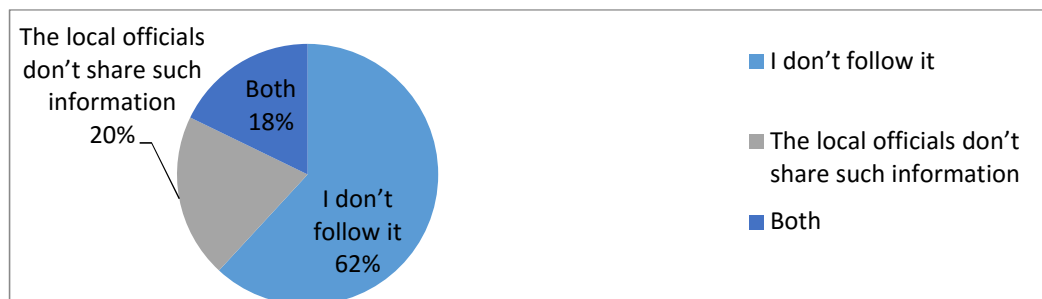
One of the key factors in making development enduring is the active participation of citizens in the decision-making and policy evaluation process of the local governance system. The closer the government is to the people and the more the people participate, the better their contribution, commitment and sense of ownership, leading to sustained development. It was noted by the key informants unanimously that they communicate with residents through the department of public relations and meetings regarding decisions made or local plans. Nevertheless, the meetings are more informative types whereby the departments inform their decisions, plans, and reports to the community and receive feedback from the residents. Thus, the community participates in giving feedback on already made decisions and implemented projects rather than having inputs in the decision-making process, without a guarantee that residents' feedback will be duly considered. Only officials of the *Woreda* attend decision-making meetings where information concerning topics that carry decision-making attributes are made available only to these officials. The researcher also asked key informants if there was a system by which the children of the community could have input in the decision-making process, as appropriate. In a local governance system where there is no system by which adult members of the community have a say in the decision-making process, it seems a mere dream for children of the community to have input in the decision-making process, which results from the interviews substantiates.

Transparency and Accountability

Transparent and accountable governance system enables local institutions to be more responsive to the needs of the people by empowering them to exercise their voices and influence the process. If transparency and accountability are not in place, it is more likely that local institutions will end up being corrupt and totalitarian. According to the informants, the type of information that they usually share with residents includes the annual budget of the *Woreda* and performances in percentages. They usually use meetings and notice boards to communicate such information. Furthermore, all the key informants argue that any member of the community can have access to any documentation available, including annual plans, progress reports and minutes of meetings held.

Following the responses of residents regarding their participation in the preparation of local plans where a significant number of have no knowledge about the local plans, it was necessary to identify the possible reasons. Figure 8 below highlights that majority of the respondents do not actively follow what is happening in their surroundings while approximately half of those remaining believe that the local administration does not share such information, while the other half believes both.

Figure 8: Reasons for community survey respondents' lack of awareness of the local plan



Source: Field data, 2015

Accountability ensures citizens that local institutions are loyal to the needs of the people by reducing corruption. Community survey respondents were asked a series of indirect questions regarding local officials' accountability – the purpose was to prevent non-responses or people responding 'I don't know' just because they feel unsafe or do not feel comfortable. The first question was if they are aware of any plans or projects where the community has contributed to monetary and other terms but was not implemented. Only 65 of the 190 respondents replied yes to the question, leaving 79 unaware of the situations with another 46 respondents choosing not to answer the question. Of the total 65 respondents who are aware of failed plans and projects, 56 of them believe the local officials are accountable while two of them blamed the committee purposefully arranged to facilitate the projects leaving seven of the respondents with no response.

For further investigation of officials' accountability, community survey respondents were asked if they are aware of what happened to the officials whom they believe were/are accountable to the failure of the plans/projects.

Figure 9: Accountability and consequences (Officials, individuals, departments...)



Source: Field data, 2015

Results from community surveys reveal that there were no actions taken against the responsible bodies or individuals to hold them accountable. This suggests that there was scope for improvements in building a local governance system, which was responsive and accountable to the needs and concerns of the local citizens.

4.2. Local capacity

Institutional and local capacity is the most determinant factor for poor administration and governance, which in turn will have a negative implication in achieving planned goals and sustaining them. Hence, while sustainable development is the goal, Local capacity building is a means to achieving it. One of the main questions that this study tries to answer is if the local government has the capacity to promote and implement sustainability. This was done in terms of the human capital, financial capacity and operational capacity in the *Woreda*.

Officials' knowledge and experience regarding sustainable development

The reality of sustainable development relies on, among other things, the capacity of local governments to promote and implement the agenda. It is therefore very critical to strengthen institutional capacity and governance systems, particularly at the local level, for sustainable development to be a reality. In this regard, key informants were asked what sustainable development means as to their understanding of the concept.

The responses from the key informants' interviews reveal that they lack a clear understanding of the concept.

"There are lots of development programs being implemented in our country in every sector. I think this is related to sustainable development" (key informant 5).

Even if they say they are familiar with the current development plan of the country, GTP, most of them found it difficult to define or explain the term. It was agreed by the interviewees that of all the training they received and the meetings they attended, none of them were devoted to introducing and familiarizing them with the concept and practice of sustainable development. Furthermore, the educational background of the informants could also be one factor for their blurred view of the concept. Education as one of humanity's cultural needs is the most important factor to bring forth all round development. Moreover, it is a key to enhance the level of capability to see the bigger picture, while working together with others can also influence the process of continuous development and sustainability at certain levels. Assigning the right person to the right position has a positive effect in achieving goals effectively, efficiently, and further sustaining them. To see the correlation between educational status and the current position of the respondents, the researcher asked questions that inquired of these relationships.

Table 1 Educational background of key informants

Key informants (department heads)	Educational background
Education department	Diploma in HPE (health and physical education)
Health department	BA degree in land range management and eco-tourism
Housing and construction	Diploma in law
Environmental protection	high school complete
Budget and finance office	Certificate
Justice office	LLB in Law
Chief executive officer	BA degree in History

Source: Field data, 2015

As can be seen from the above table, most of the department heads have a different educational background than what their position requires. This can affect the process of planning and implementing departmental goals as well as developing long-term strategies to sustain what has been started. In addition to key informant interviews, the research also reviewed relevant and related documents to investigate how capable the target *Woreda* was in terms of finance and human capital.

Decentralizing authorities and responsibilities to local governments should go along with fiscal decentralization in terms of taxing and spending powers. Therefore, local government should have revenue collection and spending power respective to the number of functions they are assigned to cover. In addition, they should be allowed to charge and collect charges and fees for the services they provide to the public, the main reason being financial independence and autonomy of local governments towards ensuring accountability to the public. However, *Woreda* hardly has any internal sources of revenue. Even if *Woreda* can collect land use fees and fees for services they provide, they do not have the power to spend it by themselves, rather they directly transfer it to the sub-city treasury. Therefore, they are dependent on the annual budget. This implies a challenge faced by the *Woreda* which adversely affects the delivery of social services and implementations of local economic activities and development in the *Woreda*.

Concerning human capital, currently, there are 155 employees working in the *Woreda*. 35 employees have resigned in 2013 and 33 employees have resigned in the year 2015. During the time of data collection, there were 65 open vacancies in the *Woreda* indicating that there was a high turnover in the *Woreda* and

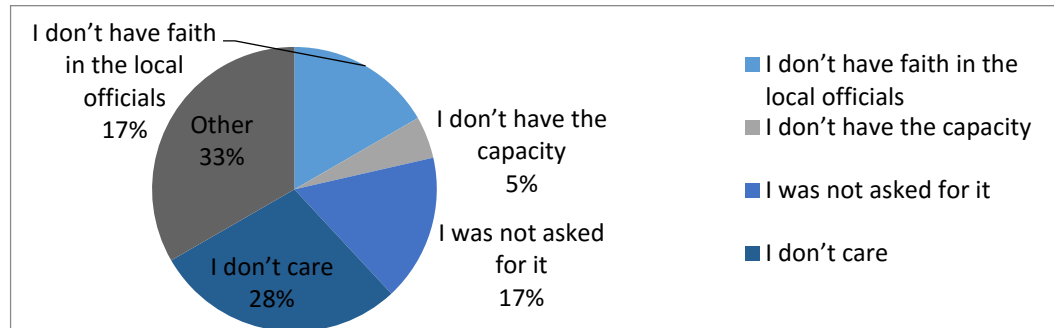
as learned from the key informants, they are suffering from the shortage of human resource in their respective departments. There are departments which are closed because of a lack of human resources. The interview with the capacity-building department revealed that employees receive training in a haphazard way rather than in a planned and scheduled way mainly because training is provided by the sub-city and other external institutions. This has caused the officials and employees to miss working hours on short notices, leaving their scheduled programs unfinished and late. Furthermore, the key informants have agreed that the training they received are more short-term oriented and none of them were devoted to introducing and informing them of the concept and application of sustainable development.

In trying to investigate the ways of transferring awareness of sustainability from one generation to the next in the *Woreda*, key informants were presented with a series of questions. It was agreed by all interviewees that they all document their activities, meetings, plans, and performances. However, a review of the documents revealed that most of the documents are simply copies of the past plans and reports with a simple modification of dates and outlines. Every department files its reports and documents in box files. They do not have any documentation center established for such purposes. Furthermore, they were asked for the availability of specific documents and the issue of accessibility. All the key informants argued that every necessary/relevant document was available, and every member of the community and every eligible individual can have access to the documents. Unfortunately, the frequent visits and observations of the researcher revealed the opposite. Their documents are not organized as employees themselves find it difficult to locate specific documents in either hard or soft copies. In addition, most of the available documents are from the current years. The past two- or three-year reports, for instance, are almost unavailable including the local organizational structure (chart) which was not available during the researcher's visit to the *Woreda*. Without enough information about the past, it is difficult to measure any progress, forecast the future and plan for sustainability.

4.3. Community sense of ownership

A series of questions were provided to community survey respondents to understand the state of community ownership towards their local development and its implications for sustainability. To this regard, the first question presented was whether they participate in the local development activities of their neighborhood. Accordingly, 148 of the respondents said they actively participate while the remaining 42 said they do not participate at all. All the 148 respondents unanimously responded that they all participated willingly. The researcher further asked the rest of the 42 respondents to indicate reasons for not participating in the development activities of their locality. Figure 10 below presents the results from community survey respondents that chose four possible reasons causing them not to participate and the possibility to explain if they have other reasons. 28% of the respondents replied that they do not participate because they do not care. Those who do not participate because they do not have faith in the local officials and who said they were not asked for it comprise 17% each, leaving 5% of them who do not have the capacity to participate. The remaining 33% gave reasons such as 'I don't have time'. This suggests a lower concern and sense of ownership in the community as well as the weakness of local officials in motivating and inspiring the community.

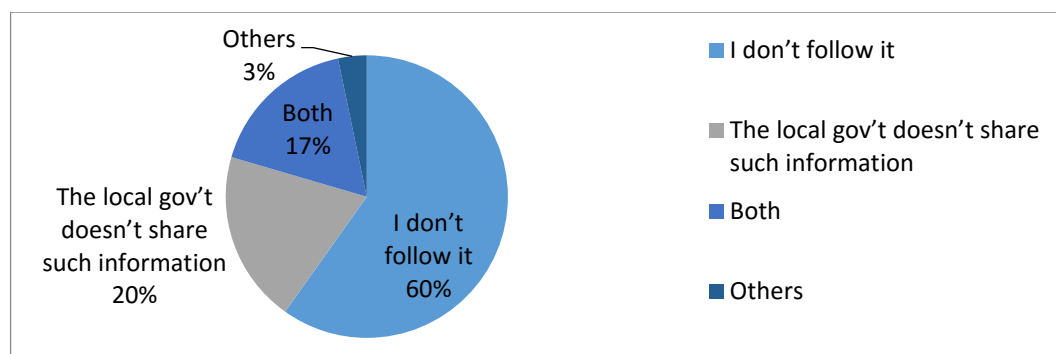
Figure 10: Reasons of community respondents for not contributing to local projects



Source: Field data, 2015

The other question forwarded to the survey respondents in the community, related to trying to understand the state of community commitment and concern towards the local development activities, namely whether they have information about the progress of currently active projects. Of the total respondents, 122 of them do not have any information. Hence, they were further asked to indicate the reasons behind this. Figure 11 below illustrates how many of the respondents (60%) replied that they do not know the progress of the current projects ongoing in their local area because they do not follow them. Half of those remaining believe that the local administration does not share such information while the other half replies both. The rest (3%) provided reasons such as 'I don't have time'. This implies that the local community lacks the commitment to follow up and check how and where all their money and other contributions are spent and whether the projects are being implemented as they were planned in terms of time, cost and quality. And on the other hand, it implies the weakness of the local administration system to create a sense of ownership in the community through various mechanisms.

Figure 11: Information regarding the progress of active projects

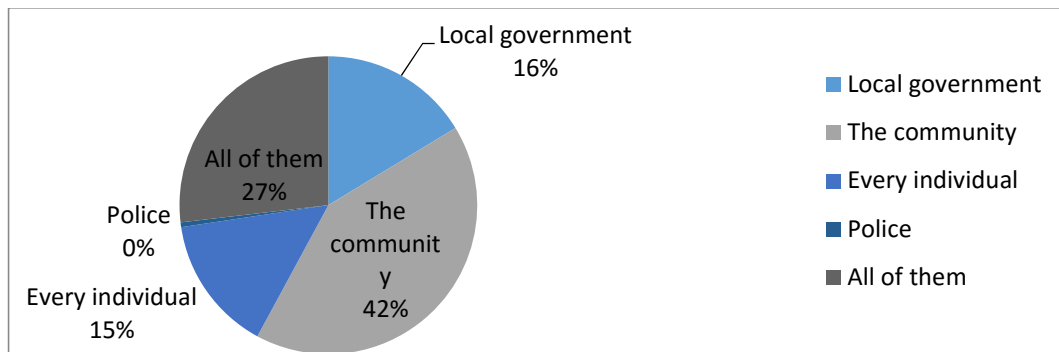


Source: Field data, 2015

To further investigate the community's sense of ownership, community respondents were requested to explain their motivation for visiting the local offices. The 190 respondents explaining their main reasons for visiting the local offices contains more than 400 responses. The most prevalent and dominant responses were 'for local ID services', 'annual tax payments and house rent payments/particularly those who live in government-owned houses. This was followed by a few responses, such as 'for attending meetings'. It was interesting to note that most of the responses indicate personal and individual interests and reasons. It was more surprising that options which are typical of a community's sense of commitment

and belonging such as ‘to share important ideas’, ‘to report dysfunctional and destroyed local properties’, ‘for contributions /monetary, skill, material, etc.’, were not mentioned by respondents. This suggests lower community commitment and sense of ownership.

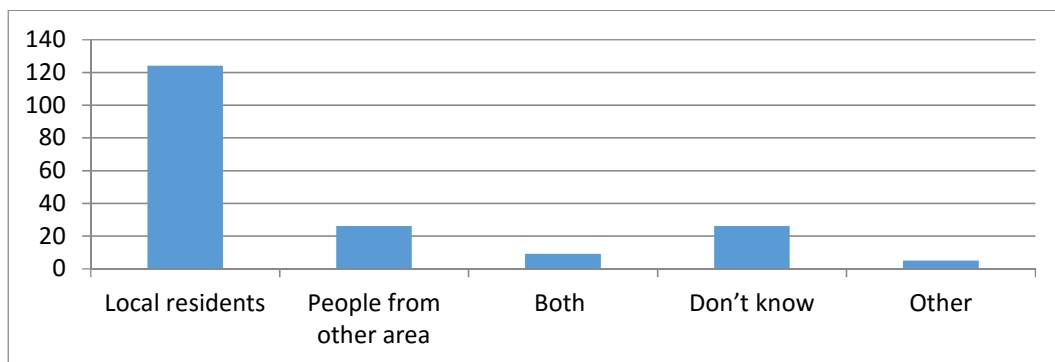
Figure 12: Who is responsible to build, develop and protect the environment?



Source: Field data, 2015

Community survey respondents generally agree that mainly members of the community, in coordination with the local government, are responsible to build, develop and protect the local environment (See figure 12 above). The findings also suggest that community survey respondents believe that local and public property damages, sources of noise, waste and other pollutions in the locality, local criminal activities are mainly exercised by the residents themselves (See figure 13).

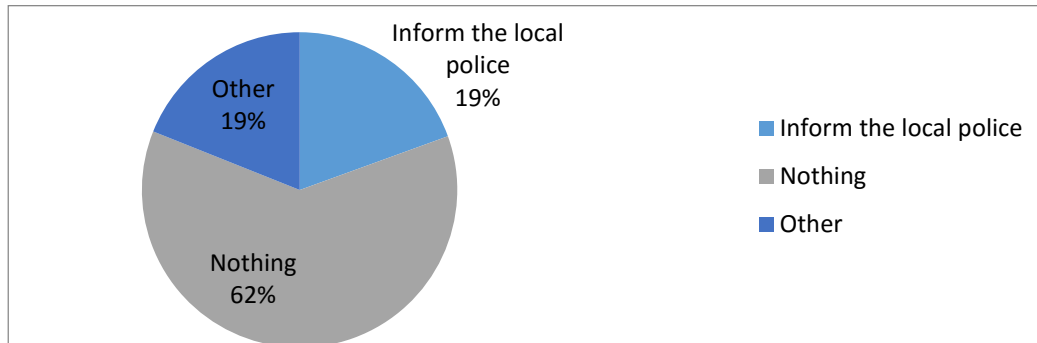
Figure 13: Who is responsible for the distraction of local properties?



Source: Field data, 2015

However, figure 14 below illustrates the majority of respondents' negligence and reluctance to take actions towards correcting the above-mentioned problems as rightful and responsible citizens.

Figure 14: Response action taken



Source: Field data, 2015

Majority of key informants also noted that residents themselves are responsible for the short life span of the local/public properties and infrastructure. They are also the main parties to complain and report illegal and criminal activities, and the main cover-ups for those whom the *Woreda* must bring to justice.

"We prepare awareness creation conferences about solid waste management and environmental protection and at the end of the program, you see papers and plastic water bottles served in the conferences disposed of everywhere" (key informant 4).

4.4. The future

Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept connecting present and future generations to each other. One of the indicators of sustainable development is equity among generations, meaning that the activities and actions of the present generations will not compromise and disadvantage future generations. Thus, the younger generation should have a say in the current plans and local activities, which will likely have either positive or negative effect in the future and should be encouraged and capacitated so that they can take over and administer their locality in the future. In this regard, the key informants were asked if they have deliberately planned and strategically designed youth development schemes. None of the selected departments had strategically designed plans tailored for the local youth. Consequently, they were asked who they think will take over in the future given that they currently have no schemes/initiatives to capacitate and work with the local youth. Many of the key informants forwarded an honest response; "I don't know". This suggests that there is a room for improvement in engaging and working with the local youth if sustainable development is to be a reality in the *Woreda*.

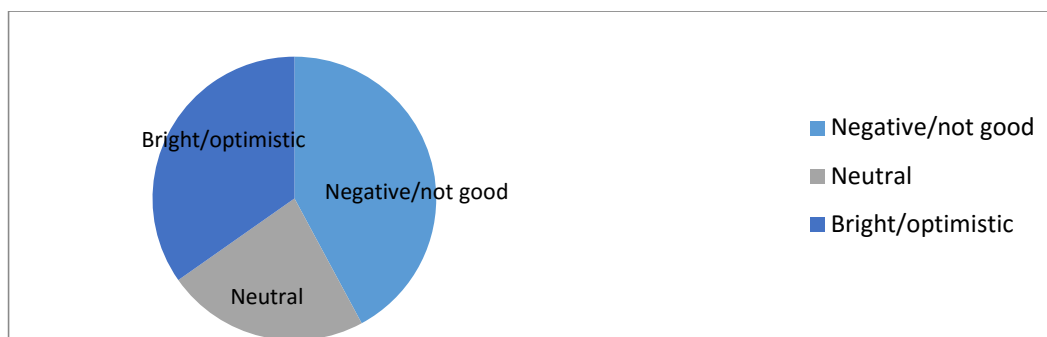
Vision statements play a critical role in conveying where an individual or an institution wants to see their organization or locality in the long run. In the local government context, their vision is where they direct all the efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable development in the future. That is why we usually see departmental and *Woreda* vision, mission and value statements posted and displayed at every corner of every local office. To ascertain the direction of all their efforts and the sense of future in the community, participants were asked whether they know the *Woreda*'s vision and if they can spell it. It was a surprising fact that none of the key informants were able to spell their own department's vision statement let alone the *Woreda*'s.

Likewise, community survey respondents were approached with the same question and only 10 (5%) of the 190 respondents tried to guess the vision of the *Woreda* while the rest (95%) replied that they don't know. This suggests that the future has not been given as much emphasis as short-term problems and goals. The fact that the vision of the *Woreda* is almost unrecognized both by the local officials, as well as

the community, has a negative implication on the community's sense of future and it also puts a question mark on what the efforts of the local offices are geared to.

Key informants were also requested to evaluate the current administrative system and local situation in bringing a visible change in the next five years. It was agreed by all interviewees that there are challenges hindering them from achieving their goals and bringing tangible changes in their activities, but the respondents hold two views regarding the future of the local development. Half of them feel pessimistic about the future due to the challenges they are currently facing and the current administrative system. They expect no positive changes in the next five years considering the current administrative process and development pace. Some of them shared their worries that the current problems might even get worse. While others of them feel optimistic about the future and they expect to see improvements. For the same reason, community survey respondents were also asked the same question about the future of their locality. As illustrated in figure 16 below, 35% of the community survey respondents feel optimistic about the future, 23% responded as feeling neutral and 42% view the future as negative or not good.

Figure 15: perception of respondents on the future of their Woreda



Source: Field data, 2015

There are a variety of reasons why respondents hold these views with regards to the future of their local development. Some people feel optimistic because they think the community was more aware of local development than before, while a few youngsters are trying their best. Also, there are good officials, and then it is also believed that simply being optimistic will result in favorable outcomes.

“Some youths of the community are doing a good job. I think some changes will happen”

“The current officials are much better than the previous ones. I expect construction of new clinics and other infrastructures in the next five years”

Other people feel pessimistic about the future due to corruption, poor governance, bureaucratic procedures, etc.

“There will be no change unless the people’s voice is heard”

“... There is no justice, they are very slow in decision-making and the local officials are corrupt.... I don’t think it will move an inch”

“Let alone in five years, it won’t change in ten years, it’s a good thing if it doesn’t get worse”

And, some were neutral,

“Only God knows what will happen”

“We will see when the time comes”.

Among the challenges identified by key informants and the number of respondents who acknowledged each as a challenge, the most frequently mentioned were lack of human resource and high turnover followed by a shortage of budget and issues regarding working place and environment. Identifying these

challenges highlights the areas where the local government should aim to improve the local administration.

Both key informants and community survey respondents were also requested for their opinion as to where they want to see the *Woreda* in the future. Most of the responses obtained both from key informant interviews as well as from community surveys were very bright and optimistic. Some of the responses are;

"I want to see our children live a better life working and improving themselves here than going abroad"

"I wish for good governance and justice"

"... accessible and equal distribution of basic services plus better infrastructure"

"I want to see our Woreda administered by people who are educated and who really care for the society"

"What I want is an appropriate place for kids, a nice place for senior citizens and employment opportunities for the youth"

"I want the voice of the people to be heard and taken seriously"

Community survey respondents also forwarded their opinion on what should be improved for better and more sustainable local development. Most of the responses opt for a more responsive, transparent, accountable, and participatory local administration and governance.

"We need educated, mature, responsible and accountable officials"

"The local government should motivate and encourage youth and support community-based initiatives because society is willing to participate"

5. Discussion

While many factors influence the process of sustainable development, good governance has always been acknowledged as the most critical which should be integrated into development policies and strategies. One cannot fully guarantee sustainable development due to good governance, however, its absence would make its reality difficult, if not impossible. Good governance is characterized by its constituent elements which include participation, accountability, and transparency, all of which were used in this study as assessment factors of the state of local governance in the target area of study. The study triangulated responses from both local officials and community members in assessing the state of good governance as the basis for community ownership and ultimately sustainable development.

Even though the new development paradigm adopted by the government advocates a bottom-up approach, whereby the community should actively participate in the local planning and decision-making process, the reality is different as the study found the *Woreda* has not yet realized. Findings of this study revealed that residents participate passively in the local planning as well as the decision-making process. The approach followed by the local government authorities is clearly top-down whereby plans are prepared and decisions are made solely by officials with no input or engagement from residents. Community members participate mainly through meetings, financial and labor contributions. However, as learned from the officials and residents, the meetings are mainly held by officials for the purposes of informing community members what has been decided or has already happened rather than engaging them in every step and decision affecting them. Residents of the *Woreda* simply participate in actions that the officials of the *Woreda* have already decided upon. They contribute resources in terms of finance and labor for the implementation of what has been planned by the local officials rather than engaging in the preparation of local plans, as their right, and not just as the means to achieve them. An interesting finding in this regard was that both officials and residents perceive participation as tantamount to attending informative meetings and making financial contributions.

The issues of community participation in local planning and decision-making process are strongly linked to a transparent local governance system. Transparent information sharing is the basis for active citizen participation in the planning and decision-making process which in turn empowers citizens and makes local institutions more responsive and accountable. Although officials argued that any member of society can have access to any information or documentation, responses from community members showed otherwise. One of the reasons indicating residents' lack of awareness was inaccessibility and unavailability of information from the local authorities. The researcher's frequent visit to the local offices is additional evidence of this situation. More importantly, it is not ideal that citizens must go to local offices frequently to be informed of the local plans and agendas, as rather the local government should proactively disseminate and make information available for residents in an accessible way. Furthermore, only selected information is made available to the public which does not include performance reports, agendas for future planning and decision making, and budget for local projects as residents are usually informed during project implementations concerning the purposes of monetary contributions.

Transparency and accountability go hand in hand, transparency without accountability becomes meaningless and without transparency, there will be no accountability. Based on the responses of residents, direct accountability was found to be very low. This was due to the absence of information in the public scrutiny and the failure of the administration to allow society to be involved in examining and improving its overall performance.

Although the local government failed to actively engage its residents and to be transparent and accountable, it was necessary to investigate the causes regarding their local capacity. The reality of good governance and sustainable development is highly dependent on the capacity of local governments. Institutional, human and financial capacity are pre-requisites for successful implementation of good governance and ultimately achieving sustained development. The *Woreda* suffers from a high turnover of employees for several reasons and almost all the departments are headed by political appointees who are assigned to lead based on their political affiliations with the ruling party. Data revealed that most of the department head acquired a different educational background than what their position requires. The strategy that the government follows in this regard is assigning members of the party in various positions, and subsequently training them in order to meet the requirements. However, this usually takes more than four years coupled with the frequent turnovers posing a challenge to the administration. Also, a common trend is for local governments to invest in the training and education of their employees for three to four years, however, after graduating, employees leave or get promoted to be again replaced by new employees. With regards to financial capacity, local governments are totally dependent on their annual budget. The lack of additional sources of revenue is often mentioned as a challenge. Lack of human and financial capacity affects the day to day operation of the *Woreda* and influences the process of good governance.

There is an acknowledged relationship between good governance and community ownership: mainly real community participation increases the contribution and commitment of residents towards a successful implementation of local initiatives. This study assessed the state of community ownership and how good governance, in terms of active participation, transparency, and accountability, affects community ownership.

It was also realized from the community survey respondents that there was lower community sense of ownership and belonging towards their local development because of low and passive participation of community at different stages of local planning and decision-making processes. Residents lack genuine ownership because they do not take part in initiating ideas and creating their vision as well as

implementing their ideas. The only way community members participate is financial contributions which usually comes as an obligation. Lack of transparency for instance, in sharing the financial details of projects adds to the problem. On the other hand, community members are also negligent and reluctant in taking reactive actions if not proactive, in notifying local authorities or protecting local properties as rightful and responsible citizens. Although it is partly lack of awareness and capacity from the community, low sense of ownership of the public is mainly the weakness of the local government in making sure that people are an integral part of local development at all stages, as this is their main responsibility. Local governments can never ensure sustainable development without first ensuring community ownership through good governance. Finally, the study examined the sense of future in the community and found out there were no means of transmitting awareness and responsibility to the younger generation and the sense of future in the community is weak. The lack of knowledge of the *Woreda's* vision by both the officials and residents is one of the indicators of a weak sense of future.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between good local governance, a community sense of ownership and sustainable development and presents the findings of a sample district (*Woreda*) of Addis Ababa. The research-based its analysis on the assumed relationship of good governance, sense of community ownership and sustainable development. Good governance, especially genuine participation leads to a strong community sense of ownership which in turn leads to more sustained development. Hence, real participation is a pre-requisite for ownership and ownership for sustainable development. The research found out that the local governance system of the *Woreda* is not in line with the principles and practices of good governance reflected by passive participation, weak transparency and accountability of local officials and top-down planning and decision-making process which neglects residents. These, in turn, have impacted the sense of community ownership in the *Woreda* which was found to be low. It was also found that the sense of future in the community is weak which can be attributed to the poor sense of community ownership that emanates from lack of good governance. These conclusions call for several recommendations. Although, this article focuses on a single case study, we believe the results and findings of the study can be considered as an interesting example for (other) local governments in Addis Ababa as well as in the context of developing countries, where challenges are present that relate to good governance, community ownership and sustained development. For a sustained and enduring local development, the target *Woreda* (as well as other local governments of Addis Ababa facing similar challenges) should give due attention to promoting good local governance. To create a sense of belongingness and ownership in the community, the local administrations should create an institutional mechanism which can empower residents to make direct participation in decisions affecting them and their local area. The community should properly participate in local plan preparation and implementation processes rather than simply requesting the funding of limited activities. Accordingly, the administration should provide information to the public in an accessible way. By the same token, the meetings conducted by the *Woreda* administration should be participatory and should let the residents reflect their ideas and opinions as opposed to the usual informative meetings. To improve direct accountability to the community, the *Woreda* should allow and invite residents to scrutinize and measure the progress of its performance by publicizing important information and broadening the sphere of participation.

However, simply disseminating information does not allow people to make decisions; the type and level of information, discussions, involvement, alliance, and empowerment of the community must be assured. Of course, promoting the above agendas and activities will only be possible with the human, financial and institutional capacity of the administration. With this regard, it is necessary to stress the personal and professional development of the *Woreda's* human resources through tailor-made training and education

for its employees. The local officials should be able to see the broader picture of the *Woreda* and should incorporate the ideas of sustainable development and consider the future generation in their plans and actions. To further affirm the agenda of sustainable and enduring local development, youth development programs should be deliberately designed to create responsible, committed and capable citizens who will take over and administer the *Woreda* in the future. This can be done by creating a system whereby adult members of the community can have input in the decision-making process as well as children of the community, as appropriate. Perhaps the key one is the endorsement of youth as the 'front-leaders' to solve the problems they are facing. Additional strategic directions include: 'enabling the youth to understand its leading role', 'enhancing young people's educational, vocational and leadership skills for improved participation', and 'organizing the youth depending on their interests'.

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