

On Behalf of Bischöfliches Hilfswerk MISEREOR e.V.

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Cross-section evaluation of MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia

Final Report

- Public Version -

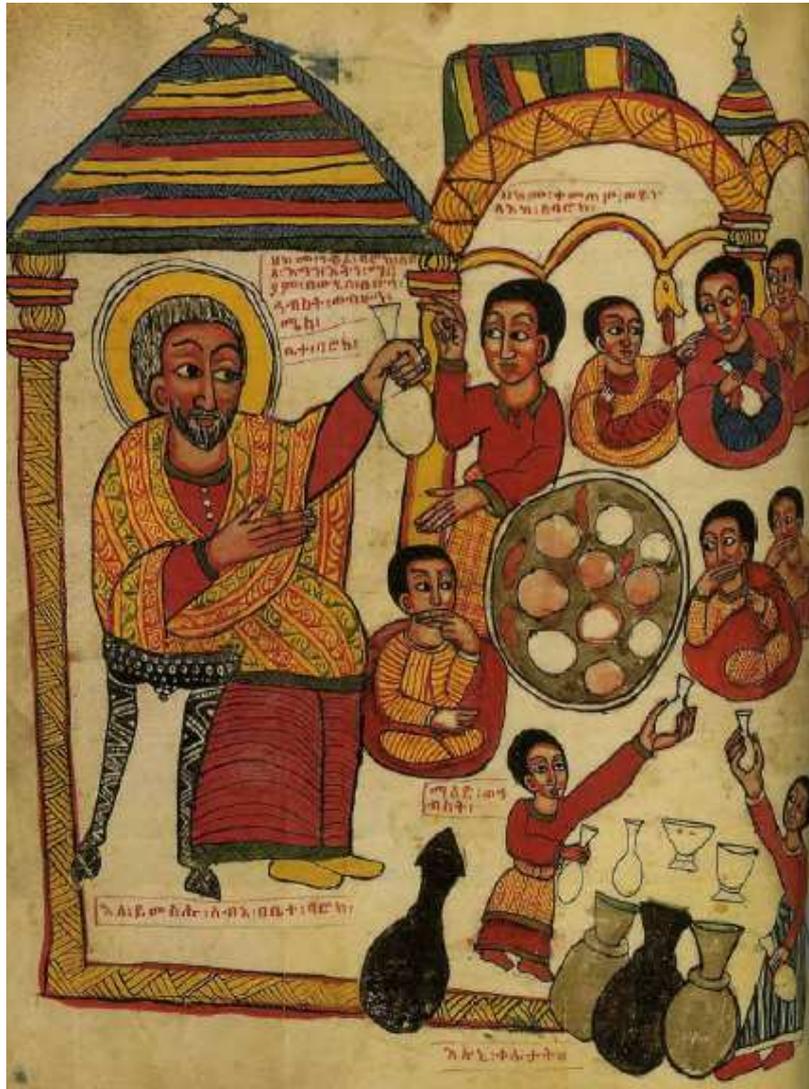
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An ancient food security approach



Barok invites the poor and the needy to a banquet.
Source: Berzock, 2002: The Miracles of Mary, A seventeenth Century Ethiopian Manuscript. The Art Institute of Chicago. p.26.

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Disclaimer

The authors are responsible for the contents of this report. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of MISEREOR or any of the institutions involved.

Abbreviations

Birr	Ethiopian currency, 1.00 EUR equals about 25.00 birr
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
CAFOD	Catholic Agency For Overseas Development, the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales
CBA	Cereal Bank Association
CF	Community Facilitator
ChSA	Charities and Societies Agency
ChSO	Charities and Societies Organization (NGO)
CoSAP	Consortium of Self-help Group Approach Promoters
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
CSO	Civil society organization
DA	Development Agent
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DLS	Diffuse light store
ECC	Ethiopian Catholic Church
ECC-SDCO-AA	Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Coordination Office of Addis Ababa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMO	Farmer Marketing Organization, before legalization: Cereal Bank Association, CBA
FS	Food Security
FSP	Food Security Programme
FTC	Farmer training center
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GO	Government organization
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Iddir	Traditional local group/institution established to support its members in times of need (e.g. death, fire, or wedding)
IDP	Internally displaced person
ITN	Insecticide-treated net
MISEREOR	Short for Bischöfliches Hilfswerk MISEREOR e.V. (The German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation, regd.)
MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

MPC	Multi-purpose cooperative
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RF	Revolving fund
SCIAF	Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
SDCO	Social Development Coordination Office
SHG	Self-help group
Shoat	Small ruminant (sheep and/or goat)
SILC	Saving and Internal Lending Community
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State
TECS	Tracking Trends in Ethiopia's Civil Society Sector – DFID Ethiopia
TOR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
Trócaire	The official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollars
WFP	UN World Food Programme

Summary

From October 2013 to May 2014, a cross-section evaluation of MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia was conducted. Projects of seven different partner organizations were analyzed in order to assess the effective contribution of the projects to improve food security by the beneficiaries in Ethiopia and to offer options for improvement – for the individual projects as well as for MISEREOR’s food security strategy in Ethiopia. The evaluation was figuratively a cross-section through Ethiopia, starting in the North and ending in the South.

Five of the partners involved are church organizations, two secular organizations. Three of the projects are supported through special funds to overcome the drought of 2010/2011. Three of the projects were found in midterm implementation, while one project’s present phase had started only a year ago; the three remaining projects had finished/were about finishing.

The evaluation was conducted in four phases, a preparation and inception phase including a start-up workshop in Addis Ababa attended by 13 participants of the seven partner organizations, two field phases for four and three evaluations, respectively – the break in between and afterwards was used for report writing, – and a sharing and consolidation phase including a final workshop in Addis Ababa attended by 18 staff from the partner organizations as well as a MISEREOR representative. In this workshop, the evaluation team presented the common findings of the seven project evaluations. It gave partners the opportunity to reflect jointly, learn from each other, get direct feedback from MISEREOR, and to define steps for applying the recommendations.

Each project evaluation lasted about ten days, comprising a one-day start-up workshop, one to two days of discussion with government stakeholders and project staff, three to four days of field visits, two to three days of analysis, and a debriefing workshop for presenting and discussing evaluation results. In the villages, key informant interviews, focus group discussions separately for men and for women, and visits of randomly selected individual beneficiaries were conducted. Other methods applied were interviews with staff of other organizations working in the field of food security in Ethiopia, literature review and secondary data analysis, participatory evaluations by project staff on project achievements and problems, direct observation during field visits and office discussions, as well as continuous cross-checking of information obtained (“triangulation”).

The evaluation team produced seven individual project evaluation reports as well as the present overall report which also comprises a brief overview about food security in Ethiopia and a brief description of NGO work in Ethiopia.

In order to improve the food security in the target villages, the projects evaluated worked in the sectors of livestock and crop production, natural resource management, health, institution building, off-farm income and capacity building. Examples for activities implemented by the projects evaluated are distribution of livestock, crop seeds and hand tools, livestock breed improvement, fodder production, establishment of irrigation systems, cereal banks and seed stores, nurseries, soil and water conservation structures, an outreach¹ programme of an agricultural college, potable water supply and other infrastructure measures, distribution of mosquito nets, income generating activities, nutrition training, self-help group strengthening in women saving and credit groups and establishment/strengthening of local institutions such as marketing organizations or traditional support groups.

The projects covered by the cross-section evaluation are very diverse. A common approach in tackling food security is not visible. Of the four pillars of food security – availability, access, utilization, and stability – all projects addressed adequate access to food. This was done mainly through increasing agricultural production, incomes, and to a small degree also by establishing/supporting local groups and organizations. With construction of stores two

¹ Outreach defined as linking knowledge available at the college with knowledge available at village level.

projects tried to improve availability of food at local level. One project tackled the utilization of food by providing training on nutrition, food preparation and hygiene; three other projects addressed food utilization indirectly by supporting health issues (water supply, pit latrines, mosquito nets). One project had planned to improve stability of access and supplies.

Besides in their activities, the projects differed considerably in their design, approach, and management. The priority issues of concern in the MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia – those areas where the evaluation team identified shortcomings and saw room for improvement – were (1) NGO food security promotion under the policy framework of the Ethiopian government, (2) emergency/development approach and self-help promotion, (3) beneficiary participation/role of beneficiaries², (4) role of project staff, (5) poverty focus (selection of project villages, selection of beneficiaries), (6) types of inputs distributed, (7) establishing/strengthening local groups or institutions for achieving sustainability and resilience, (8) revolving fund repayment, and (9) improvement/adjustment from one project phase to the next/learning. Each of the projects evaluated provided successful intervention strategies which other projects can learn from. These **best practices** represent a realm of valuable experiences which should be made use of.

The attainment of the five DAC criteria of the projects supported is evaluated as follows:

Relevance: All projects evaluated are relevant to the government and the local communities. To a large extent the projects are benefitting the poorer sections of the village communities despite some problems in village as well as in beneficiary selection. Most projects are replicating government interventions and have not introduced technical innovations to deal with the problems of the area.

Effectiveness: The projects have implemented activities which effectively contributed to increased food security, such as sheep, goat and heifer distribution for asset building, distribution of poultry, bee colonies and bee hives, vegetable seeds and fruit tree seedlings for income generation and/or nutrition, establishment of an irrigation system, and saving and credit promotion in women groups. However, the low cooperation with the government at all levels limited the effectiveness in many projects - by making better use of expertise and staff available at district and village level projects would have been more effective. Effectiveness could also increase through improved beneficiary selection, more intensive follow-up and monitoring by project staff, as well as applying a development instead of an emergency approach in some activities. In most projects, breed improvement, revolving fund repayment, group formation, self-help promotion, strengthening/establishment of local institutions, as well as capacity building of target beneficiaries, government stakeholders and project staff needed improvement to increase the effectiveness of the project.

Outcomes and impacts: All projects contributed to improved food security and livelihood of the beneficiaries. This especially applied to the projects which have been already or about being completed, but also those projects which are at mid-term showed some outcomes in that direction. Various socio-economic outcomes and impacts were obtained by the seven projects: increase of agricultural production (livestock ownership, improved cattle breeds, additional crop varieties, use of compost, introduction of mulching), area of irrigated/cultivated land, and income (sale of eggs, milk, honey, vegetables, compost, availability of credit in women saving groups). The vulnerability of households reduced (assets built through cattle and shoats; availability of credit in saving groups). Household nutrition improved (esp. due to vegetables and chicken), the availability of vegetables in the area increased, and food habits changed (vegetable consumption). Hygiene, sanitation and health improved (training, dry pit latrines, mosquito nets), drinking water availability increased, and time was saved for fetching water and borrowing hand tools from neighbors. In several projects women reported that the income received from sale of eggs made them independent from their husbands' money and reduced family conflicts to some degree.

² "From users and choosers to makers and shapers" as slogan for the changed role of beneficiaries.

Environmental outcomes and impacts were the creation of additional land and stored water by check dams, increased fodder availability through area closure and fodder site establishment on irrigated land, and improved honey bee flora. Biological conservation measures stabilized vegetation cover at hillsides. Institutional outcomes and impacts were limited. In some projects, new groups/institutions were established (women saving groups, cereal bank associations which became farmer marketing organizations after their legalization, water user association), and other projects strengthened existing local institutions, such as multi-purpose cooperatives and the traditional Iddir support groups. The livelihood of potters, marginalized people, discriminated by the local communities supported by two projects, did not improve as expected. An unintended negative outcome was that some land owners requested payment from the potters for taking clay from their land after the potters had got attention from the project.

If more consideration had been paid by the projects on proper targeting of beneficiaries, self-help promotion, community development, strengthening/setting up local groups and institutions, repayment and use of revolving funds, as well as to sustainable agriculture, higher outcomes and impacts had been achieved.

Efficiency: Some projects cooperated with the government in terms of training and input provision. Community contributions in terms of local material supply or labor was provided in some of the infrastructures created (water supply systems, ponds, cattle troughs). Different systems of revolving funds showed different efficiency: Fast and efficient was the in-cash repayment in small instalments. The in-kind repayment of the first female offspring (heifer system) was also good, but took longer time. Another project made shoat mothers transferred within a peer group of three women which can be completed within the project period; to secure the transfer a livestock insurance system among the beneficiaries was introduced. The in-cash repayment of livestock after a certain period of time was not successful. In-kind repayment of crops did not work efficiently. In general, salaries paid by the projects were rather small. This resulted in some cases to a high turn-over of project staff during the project period - staff left to better paying employments which negatively affected project efficiency. Further increase of project efficiency is expected if project management, planning, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation improved.

Sustainability: In order to assure sustainability, all projects supported local institutions (either by strengthening existing ones or establishing new ones like committees and groups), established a system of revolving funds, and capacitated farmers. However, many of these strategies did not lead to satisfying results. In most projects, the sense of ownership is not well developed, the adoption rate of the activities implemented is low, and, still, a large portion of the beneficiaries expect further project support (dependency syndrome). Often, beneficiaries are only willing to participate in project implementation when paid. These shortcomings are due to the low participation of beneficiaries in project and activity planning as well as in monitoring and evaluation, low own contributions requested, insufficient awareness creation and capacity building, payment of per diems to farmers for village-level training, insufficient self-help promotion, community development, and community empowerment, as well as staff's understanding of their own role as implementer instead of facilitator leading to a dominant role played by project staff.

There is no blueprint for improving MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia, different situations demand different actions. The individual project evaluation reports contain detailed recommendations how project design, approach, management and activities can be improved. The overall report of the cross-section evaluation provides ten recommendations for improving MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia.

1. Background of the cross-section evaluation

For many years, MISEREOR has supported food security projects in Ethiopia. Thus, the Africa Department of MISEREOR initiated a cross-section evaluation on food security in Ethiopia. The objective of the cross-section evaluation was to assess the effective contribution of the projects to improve food security by the beneficiaries in Ethiopia. The evaluation should evaluate current rural development/agricultural advisory support strategies and concepts and provide options for improvement. The results were also expected to support the new regional officer responsible for Ethiopia who took office in March 2014 to build future strategies in the field of rural development/food security in Ethiopia on an informed and evidence-based ground.

In detail, the cross-section evaluation should serve to:

- Point out successful intervention strategies (good practice),
- Analyze strengths and weaknesses of current project intervention strategies and implementation,
- Mutual learning on good practices between the evaluated projects,
- Assessment of the projects according to the DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability),
- Give recommendations for improvement of the projects as well as adjustment of MISEREOR support in the field of food security in Ethiopia.

Beyond, MISEREOR wanted to get an assessment of the influence of the government on strategies, concepts and implementation of the projects, learn about government regulations regarding material support to beneficiaries, provision of inputs and live animals, per diems of field workers etc., and beneficiary participation in initiating, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the projects. Also, MISEREOR was asking to assess the appropriateness of the current ratio between project staff and number of beneficiaries.

MISEREOR cross-section evaluations are meant to promote a lesson-learning culture in its partner dialogue. MISEREOR applies a partner-oriented approach and maintains a long-standing partnership to its partner organizations; MISEREOR is interested in partner development and learning together.³ The evaluation process gave opportunity to all project partners to reflect on the effectiveness and relevance of their interventions and drew individual as well as joint conclusions for their future intervention strategies. Still, the evaluation is an independent assessment of MISEREOR's support in the field of food security in Ethiopia. The consultants have neither been influenced by MISEREOR nor by its partners, but depended solely on their own professional judgment.

The present report of the cross-section evaluation of MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia covers seven evaluations. Five of the partners involved are church organizations, two secular organizations. Three of the projects are supported through special funds (private donations) to overcome the drought of 2010/2011. The time period under review differed - one project had started its present phase a year ago, three of the projects were in midterm implementation, one was about finishing, and two project phases had already finished. The evaluation focused on the present/latest project phase. Previous project phases back until 2004 were also considered in order to better understand the overall history and strategic orientation of the interventions. In total, the seven evaluations covered 14 different project phases. The cross-section evaluation was figuratively a cross-section through Ethiopia, starting in the North and ending in the South.

³ "MISEREOR is not only a donor, but also a learner, a partner in dialogue and a companion in solidarity. This creates a process of permanent exchange characterized by trust, an ability to express and deal with constructive criticism, and a willingness to learn." (www.misereor.de)

2. Evaluation process and methods

Three independent consultants were commissioned with the evaluation:

1. Mr. Tsegazeab Kidanemariam, Senior Consultant of the evaluation team, YITHAS Consultancy Services PLC, Mekelle,
2. Ms Bezawit Mohamed, Junior Consultant of the evaluation team, Rural Development Consultant, Addis Ababa,
3. Dr. Christine Martins, Team Leader of the evaluation team, Rural Development Consultant, Berlin.

The evaluation took place in four phases (see Table 1).

Table 1: Phases of the cross-section evaluation food security

Phase, Period	Activities	Objectives
Phase 1 (May 2013 to Oct. 2013)		
Preparation (May to September, 2013)	MISEREOR visits on 29.5. and 22.-23.8., Discussion with relevant MISEREOR staff, Collection of project documents, Planning of evaluation with partners	Preparation, transfer of information, common understanding on objectives, contents, procedure, etc.
Inception Phase (05/10/2013-16/10/2013)	Start-up workshop, Discussions with resource persons (multilateral, bilateral, GO, NGO, church), Writing inception report	Getting to know each other, overview of projects involved, finalizing evaluation design and TOR, Learning from experiences of others FS actors in Eth., Compiling the basis of the evaluation
Phase 2 (Oct. 2013 to Jan. 2014)		
Field Phase 1 (28/10/2013-12/12/2013)	Four project evaluations (Project 1-4) Drawing conclusions	Assessing relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the projects in a participatory way, Adjusting evaluation methods
Reporting Field Phase 1 (13/12/2013 – 17/01/2014)	Writing four evaluation reports	Compiling individual evaluation results
Conclusion of Field Phase 1 (09/01/2014)	Interim debriefing with MISEREOR (skype)	Overview of process and results, feed-back
Phase 3 (Jan. 2014 to April 2014)		
Field Phase 2 (18/01/2014-25/02/2014)	Three project evaluations (Project 5-7) Drawing conclusions	Assessing relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the projects in a participatory way, Assessing the overarching results of the evaluation
Reporting Field Phase 2 (26/02/2014-01/04/2014)	Writing three evaluation reports and cross-section evaluation report	Compiling individual and general/overarching evaluation results
Conclusion of the Field Phases (29/04/2014-30/04/2014)	Debriefing at MISEREOR	Discussion of the draft reports of the seven evaluations and the overall report, Preparation of final workshop
Phase 4 (May 2014)		
Sharing and Consolidation Phase (21/05/2014-23/05/2014)	Final Workshop involving partners and a MISEREOR representative in Addis Ababa	Share findings of the cross-section evaluation, Joint learning, Identify possible way forward (a) at partner level, (b) supported by MISEREOR.

On Oct. 7 to 8, 2013, a start-up workshop with 13 participants from the seven MISEREOR partners was conducted at a training center in Addis Ababa. At its end, the participants had got an overview of the different projects involved, and the evaluation design, the schedule of the field visits and the TOR were finalized. The remaining four days of that week were used for discussions among the consultants and meeting different organizations involved in food security in Ethiopia⁴. The phase ended with the delivery of an inception report which was shared among the partners and MISEREOR.

⁴ Organizations contacted during the cross-section evaluation (ordered in sequence of meetings):

1. Heinrich Böll Foundation, Berlin,
2. Ethiopia Catholic Church Social and Development Commission, Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS) of the Ethiopian Catholic Bishops' Conference,

The individual evaluations were conducted using a uniform format, adjusted to local conditions and available time. About ten days had been planned per evaluation; the actual time used was eleven days in Project 1, ten days in Project 7, eight days in Project 6, and nine days for each of the remaining four projects (travel time between the projects not included). The projects had been requested to send information on project staff and project villages before the arrival of the evaluation team. MISEROR and the partners had provided project proposals, contracts, narrative and audit reports, as well as other project documents (e.g. baseline survey data, survey reports, government terminal evaluation reports) which the evaluation team could read before/in the early days of the evaluation.

The first day of each evaluation was used for a start-up workshop comprising a project presentation by project staff, a brief introduction to the TOR by the evaluation team, a participatory evaluation done by project staff, and preparing the schedule for the field visits. The villages to be visited were selected jointly, based on criteria defined by the evaluation team in consultation with project staff according to the conditions of each project, such as villages supported since long and short time, large and small villages, close to the road and off-road villages, accessibility (excluding four hours and more driving/walking time one way), well-performing and not so well-performing villages, villages supported by different field staff, and villages covering all project activities.

The second day (sometimes one day more) was spent with different discussions at district level and with the project holder and project staff. The time travelling in the car to the villages was also spent with discussions with project staff.

The next four days (Project 3 three days) were used for village visits, with key informant interviews, focus group discussions, as well as visits of project structures established, groups set up and individual beneficiaries supported. Focus group discussions were separately conducted for men and for women to assure women's active participation in the talks. In order to obtain unbiased answers, project staff did not participate in the interviews.

In most cases, one village was covered per day, starting with key informant interview and focus group discussions and ending with visiting individual beneficiaries. While the participants of the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions were selected by project staff, sometimes supported by the government, the individual beneficiaries visited were selected at random by the evaluation team from beneficiary lists provided by the project.

After the village visits the evaluation team spent two days (Project 1 three days) with the documentation and analysis of findings, drawing conclusions, developing recommendations, and preparing the debriefing workshop handout/Minutes of Meeting. The handouts were photocopied for all workshop participants.

The debriefing workshop started in some cases with project-specific inputs moderated by the evaluation team, e.g. an exercise about the differences of emergency and development projects (see Table 9), or on wealth ranking. During the debriefing workshop, the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation team were presented and discussed

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3. UN World Food Programme (WFP),
 4. Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Addis Ababa,
 5. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.,
 6. FAO,
 7. CAFOD, SCIAF & Trócaire (CST) Working Together,
 8. Caritas International Belgium, Ethiopia Office,
 9. Ethiopian Apiculture Board,
 10. Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service,
 11. GIZ: Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Program, Strengthening Drought Resistance Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (SDR-ASAL),
 12. Institute for Sustainable Development,
 13. Tracking Trends in Ethiopia Civil Society Sector (TECS) Project, DFID Ethiopia,
 14. Aid Coordination Core Process, Bureau of Planning and Finance, Tigray Region, Mekelle,
 15. Consortium of Self-help Group Approach Promoters (CoSAP).

with project staff. Necessary adjustments were made directly in the text. Those aspects where the project staff had a different opinion than the evaluation team were listed at the end of the Minutes of Meeting. The workshops ended with signing the Minutes of Meeting. The duration of the workshop depended on the time available and the number of issues which needed to be discussed. Maximum was 10.5 hours (including lunch break), minimum 3.5 hours in a project where time was limited and most issues had already been discussed during the field visits.

The final workshop of the cross-section evaluation was conducted on May 21-23, 2014. Eighteen staff of the seven partner organizations involved attended, and MISEREOR's Advisor Rural Development Africa. Workshop objectives were to share the findings of the cross-section evaluation, joint learning and identification of possible ways forward at partner level as well as supported by MISEREOR. At the end of the workshop each partner prepared a road map on the next steps considering the results of the project evaluation and the final workshop.

Methods applied in the cross-section evaluation were of qualitative nature comprising:

- Literature review and secondary data analysis (background information on food security and civil society work in Ethiopia, project documents, audit reports),
- Workshops (at cross-section evaluation level: start-up workshop and final workshop; at project level: start-up workshop and debriefing workshop),
- Participatory evaluations during the project evaluations (brainstorming on project achievements and problems by project staff using metaplan cards),
- Interviews with other organizations (ECC, WFP, FAO, GIZ, and other government and non-governmental organizations),
- Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and individual interviews with different stakeholders during the project evaluations (government officials, village leaders, project beneficiaries, project staff, project holder, and if time allowed, also staff of other NGOs working in the area),
- Direct observation during field visits and office discussions,
- Continuous cross-checking of information obtained ("triangulation").

The objective of the present report - with comprehensive annexes in the internal version - is to share the findings of the cross-section evaluation among those involved – project partners in Ethiopia and MISEREOR staff supporting food security projects in Ethiopia. The report contains a brief overview about food security in Ethiopia (Chapter 3), a brief description of NGO work in Ethiopia (Chapter 4), and the main characteristics of the projects evaluated (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 comprises the results of the cross-section evaluation - the main issues of concern in the MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia, those areas where the evaluation team identified shortcomings and saw room for improvement. Successful intervention strategies/best practices are listed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 contains the conclusions of the cross-section evaluation - relevance, effectiveness, outcomes and impacts, efficiency, and sustainability. Finally, Chapter 9 provides ten recommendations for improving MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia.

The project partners involved got individual project evaluation reports. These reports contain the findings of the evaluation (frame conditions, coordination with the government, project design, project management, planning/monitoring and evaluation/reporting, project approach, and project activities). After illustrating positive factors and achievements in each section, hindrances, shortcomings or areas for improvement are pointed out. The chapter closes with the project's main strengths and weaknesses. The conclusions chapter provides an assessment of the achievement of the project objectives/indicators and the performance of the project according to the DAC criteria. The chapter closes with a list of the project's best practices for improving food security. Finally, the reports provide recommendations how the projects can improve.

3. Food security in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the most food insecure countries in the world. It has a long history of famine and food shortage that can be traced back to 250 BC (Ahmed Adem, 2010). The latest Human Development Report ranks Ethiopia 173 of 187 countries (UNDP, 2013). However, according to the Ethiopia MDGs Report 2012 (MoFED and UNDP, 2012), Ethiopia has made significant progress in development and is on track in achieving six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Off track are MDG 3 (promote gender equality and empower women) and MDG 5 (improve maternal health) – their achievement are hindered by a number of complex challenges linked to historic power imbalances and deep-rooted traditional beliefs, attitudes and cultural values. Box 1 lists key facts of Ethiopia.

Box 1: Key facts Ethiopia

- Population growth: 2.89% (CIA, 2014) – Note: the population doubles every 26 years
- Population: 84,208,000 in 2010/2011 (MoFED, 2013b) – with 2.89% population growth this is 91,750,000 people in 2013/14; Note: At present, additional 2.6 million people to be fed each year
- Median age: 17.6 years (CIA, 2014)
- Life expectancy at birth: 59.7 years (UNDP, 2013)
- Average household size: 4.8 persons (rural 5.1, urban 3.7; MoFED, 2013b)
- Average population density: 82 persons per km²
- Average per capita income: 392 USD (2010/11; UNDP, 2014)
- Real GDP growth: Average 2005/06-2009/10: 11.0%; 2011/12: 8.5% (MoFED, 2013a)
- Mean years of schooling: 2.2 years (UNDP, 2013)
- Literacy rate of individuals aged ten and over in rural areas: 40% (male 50%, female 30%, MoFED, 2013b)
- Ownership of mobile phones: 40.8% (lowest Amhara 27.5%, next SNNP 29.6%, next Somali 29.9%; MoFED, 2013b)
- Ownership of TV: 21.7% (lowest SNNP 9.0%, next Somali 9.9%, next Amhara 11.9%; MoFED, 2013b)
- Female-headed households: 25% (UNDP, 2014)
- Maternal mortality: 676 per 100,000 births (2010/2011; Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey, 2011, cited in MoFED and UNDP, 2012)
- Female genital mutilation and circumcision amongst children aged 0-14: 23% (MoFED and UNDP, 2012)
- Median age at first marriage: 16.5 years (2010/11; MoFED and UNDP, 2012)
- Total fertility rate: 4.8 births per woman, varying significantly across regions (e.g., 1.5 in Addis Ababa, 7.1 in Somali Region; MoFED and UNDP, 2012)
- HIV/AIDS prevalence among people aged 15-49: 1.5% (MoFED and UNDP, 2012)
- Corruption perception index 2013: Rank 111 of 175 countries (Transparency International, 2013)

The agricultural sector remains the major source and focus of the country's growth, but service and industry are increasingly gaining importance. In 2011/2012, agriculture contributed by 44.0% to the GDP, industry 11.1% and service 45.6%. The growth rate in agriculture is lower than that in the other sectors (4.9% versus 13.6% and 11.1%; MoFED, 2013a; MoFED and UNDP, 2012).

Agriculture accounts for approximately 84% of employment and 90% of the goods exported. According to Woodeneh (2014), Ethiopia has significant agricultural potential because of its water resources, its fertile land areas, and its large labor pool, but the potential remains underdeveloped. Agriculture in Ethiopia is dominated by small-holder and largely subsistence farming with low productivity on often highly degraded lands. Farming systems are mainly

rain-fed. Farm holdings are small. According to the Agriculture Statistics Abstract of 2012 (CSA, 2013), there are about 14.3 million agricultural households (pastoralists excluded); 11.7 million (81.5%) operate on two hectare or less, 8.1 million (56.7%) on one hectare or less, and 4.9 million (34.0%) on 0.5 ha or less.

According to MoFED and UNDP (2012) MDG 1 “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” is on track. Over the past decade, the rate of people living in poverty⁵ has considerably reduced (see Table 4). While in 1995/96, 45.5% of the population lived below the poverty line (47.5% in rural and 33.2% in urban areas), this rate was 29.6% in 2010/11 (30.4% in rural and 25.7% in urban areas; MoFED and UNDP, 2012).

However, when it comes to absolute numbers of poor a different picture appears. MoFED (2013b) provides data of the total population and of poor people for 1995/1996, 1999/2000, 2004/2005 and 2010/2011 for the eleven regions (see Tables 2 and 3). According to these data, the number of poor has not changed in Ethiopia – it was about 25 million in 1995/96 and still is in 2010/11. The high population growth has dampened some of the positive impacts of the high and sustained economic growth. Population growth is higher amongst the poorer segments of the population (MoFED and UNDP, 2012). The region with the largest number of poor people is Oromia (36% of all Ethiopian living in poverty in 2010/11); large numbers of poor people are also found in Amhara (23% of the poor) and SNNP (21%). These three regions accommodate 79.2% of the poor – and 80.2% of the total population.

Large regional differences over the period 1995/96 to 2010/11 become evident (see Table 3, last column). While five regions could reduce their number of poor, in seven regions it is today higher than 15 years ago. The number of poor increased especially in Gambela (89%), Somali (64%) and Afar (58%), regions which host 0.5%, 6.1% and 1.9% of the population, respectively.

The proportion of households living below the food poverty line in Ethiopia has declined from 49.5% in 1995/96 to 33.6% in 2010/11 (rural 34.7%, urban 27.9%), and 32.7% 2011/12 (MoFED and UNDP, 2012; MoFED, 2012).

Table 2: Population (in '000) in 1995/96, 1999/2000, 2004/05 and 2010/11

Region	1995/96	1999/00	2004/05	2010/11	% of pop. in 2010/11	% change 1995/96-2010/11	% annual change 1995/96-2010/11
Tigray	3,299	3,694	4,113	4,930	5.9	49.4	3.3
Afar	1,106	1,216	1,330	1,603	1.9	44.9	3.0
Amhara	14,552	16,295	18,143	18,866	22.4	29.6	2.0
Oromia	19,779	22,354	25,098	31,295	37.2	58.2	3.9
Somali	3,332	3,698	4,109	5,149	6.1	54.5	3.6
B-Gumuz	483	537	594	982	1.2	103.3	6.9
SNNP	11,001	12,515	14,085	17,359	20.6	57.8	3.9
Gambela	190	211	234	386	0.5	103.2	6.9
Harari	139	160	185	210	0.2	51.1	3.4
Addis Ababa	2,220	2,495	2,805	3,041	3.6	37.0	2.5
Dire Dawa	271	318	370	387	0.5	42.8	2.9
Total	56,372	63,493	71,066	84,208	100.0	49.4	3.3

Source: Based on MoFED (2013b), page 38, Table 5.10.

⁵ According to MoFED (2012, p. 6-7), total poverty and food poverty lines are based on the cost of 2.200 kcal per day per adult food consumption with an allowance for essential nonfood items, updated by deflating all items by spatial and temporal prices indices. The food poverty line per adult was 648 birr in 1995/96 and 1,985 birr in 2010/2011, the total poverty line 1,075 birr in 1995/96 and 3,781 birr in 2010/11.

Table 3: Number of poor people in 1995/96, 1999/2000, 2004/05 and 2010/11

Region	1995/96	1999/00	2004/05	2010/11	% of poor in 2010/11	% change 1995/96-2010/11
Tigray	1,850,739	2,268,116	1,994,674	1,568,396	6.2	-15.3
Afar	366,086	680,960	487,305	578,120	2.3	57.9
Amhara	7,901,736	6,811,310	7,281,720	5,757,027	22.9	-27.1
Oromia	6,724,860	8,919,246	9,279,662	8,981,694	35.8	33.6
Somali	1,029,588	1,401,542	1,723,139	1,687,327	6.7	63.9
B-Gumuz	226,044	289,980	264,232	283,827	1.1	25.6
SNNP	6,138,558	6,370,135	5,380,722	5,135,774	20.5	-16.3
Gambela	65,170	106,555	NA	123,375	0.5	89.3
Harari	30,580	41,280	50,038	23,214	0.1	-24.1
Addis Ababa	670,440	900,695	912,594	854,091	3.4	27.4
Dire Dawa	79,945	105,258	130,057	109,364	0.4	36.8
Total*	25,649,260	28,063,906	27,523,414	25,102,210	100.0	-2.1
<i>Own calc.</i>	<i>25,083,746</i>	<i>27,895,077</i>	<i>27,504,143</i>	<i>25,102,209</i>		0.1

* Calculation or typing mistakes in the MoFED table.

Source: Based on MoFED (2013b), page 38, Table 5.10.

Table 4: Percentage of poor people in 1995/96, 1999/2000, 2004/05 and 2010/11 (in %)

Region	1995/96	1999/00	2004/05	2010/11
Tigray	56.1	61.4	48.5	31.8
Afar	33.1	56.0	36.6	36.1
Amhara	54.3	41.8	40.1	30.5
Oromia	34.0	39.9	37.0	28.7
Somali	30.9	37.9	41.9	32.8
B-Gumuz	46.8	54.0	44.5	28.9
SNNP	55.8	50.9	38.2	29.6
Gambela	34.3	50.5		32.0
Harari	22.0	25.8	27.0	11.1
Addis Ababa	30.2	36.1	32.5	28.1
Dire Dawa	29.5	33.1	35.2	28.3
Total	45.5	44.2	38.7	29.8

Source: Own calculations, based on MoFED (2013b), page 38, Table 5.10.

Prevalence of child malnutrition, an indicator for food insecurity, is still very high. In 2011/12, 44% of children under five were chronically malnourished (stunting, low height for age), and 10% suffered from acute malnutrition (wasting, low weight-for-height; MoFED and UNDP, 2012). Also here, there are huge regional differences. Rates of stunting (chronic malnutrition) are lowest in Addis (22.0%), but above 50% in Afar, Tigray and Amhara. Rates of wasting (acute malnutrition) are lowest in Addis (4.6%), and highest in Afar (19.5%) and Somali (22.2%; Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey, 2011, cited in MoFED, 2013b, p. 20). When it comes to child malnutrition, de-worming of children and education of mothers could be more effective than producing food (as long as sufficient food is available).

These numbers do not support the assessment of MoFED and UNDP (2012) that MDG 1 “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” is on track. Even though the proportions have improved, the absolute numbers have not.

Ethiopia’s latest five year poverty reduction strategy paper, the **Growth and Transformation Plan, GTP (2011-2015)**, aims to foster broad based development in a sustainable manner to achieve the MDGs. The GTP envisages a major transformation of the economic structure, seeking to double agricultural production and significantly increase the share of industry in the economy. Expansion will open up opportunities for advanced farming technology, high value crops, progressive irrigation techniques, improved seeds, increased fertilizer use, and strategies to yield multiple harvests each year (MoFED, no date). Commercial farming

investors are invited, also from abroad. Insufficient attention is given to smallholders and to sustainable agriculture.

In order to improve the food security situation of the country, successive national **Food Security Strategies** have been designed in 1996, 2002 and 2003/04. The major components involve improving productivity and production of rural households, developing the contribution of the livestock sector in food security, expanding and strengthening irrigation schemes, implementing sustainable land-use practices, building-up human and institutional capacity, improving the provision of clean drinking water, expanding rural credit services, expanding rural market services, expanding and strengthening off-farm employment opportunities, and implementing the resettlement program (Aduugna Eneyew, 2010).

Since 2003, the Government of Ethiopia has been implementing a new **Food Security Programme (FSP)** to enable chronically food insecure people to attain food security. In 2009, this programme was reviewed and reformulated. The complementary components of the FSP are: the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP), Complementary Community Investments (CCI) and the Resettlement Program.⁶ Together, these components of the FSP are designed to move households into food security. According to WFP (2013, pers. communication), about 24 million people are presently supported by these four programs, almost 30% of the Ethiopian population.

The **PSNP**, a multi-donor funded flagship programme of the government, aims at the chronically food insecure to enable them to meet their consumption needs, reducing the risk they face and providing them with alternative options to protect them from selling their productive assets. Its third phase will end in June 2015. At present, the programme supports 6.8 million people for a period of five years, six month each year (January to June).⁷ About 15% unable to work for health or age reasons are directly supported, 85% get food-for-work or cash-for-work (50:50), mainly used for public works in watershed management on public land.

At district level, targets are set that PSNP beneficiaries “graduate out” of poverty so that the number of PSNP beneficiaries reduces over time. Numbers are manipulated at each level leading to the situation that needs are underestimated. Almost 0.5 million PSNP beneficiaries have graduated out of poverty so far (WFP, 2013, pers. communication).

With annually 500 million USD, PSNP is according to WFP (2013, pers. communication) the biggest green economy business in Africa; however, it does not build resilience of the people involved. 60% of the agricultural budget of Ethiopia is spent on PSNP, only 40% remaining for agricultural extension and research (FAO, 2013, pers. communication).

Improving the food and nutritional security of the poor is made difficult by Ethiopia’s population growth. Other causes of the high level of food insecurity are degradation of natural resources and associated deterioration of land fertility, dependency of 90% of agriculture on rainfall, poor infrastructure, lack of rural credit opportunities, dependency of the country’s 85% of labour force on agriculture, reliance on traditional technology, fragmented landholdings, lack of economic development opportunities in rural areas, climatic hazards (increasing with climate change) and conflicts.

Other aspects worth mentioning are that no free input distribution is allowed by the government (inputs are provided as a loan and have to be repaid); the dependency syndrome found in large parts of the community; 20 to 40 days per year free labor which has to be provided for the government (mainly for soil and water conservation work, started in Tigray, now country-wide); and the increasing cultivation of chat (*Catha edulis*; fresh leaves and tops are chewed as a stimulant) which presently replaces coffee as main cash crop in many areas of Ethiopia.

⁶ According to Berhanu Woldemichael (2013), up to 2012, more than 7 million people have benefitted from the PSNP, more than 2 million from the HABP, and 228,343 from the Resettlement Programme. Numerous people have benefitted from the capital intensive community infrastructure such as potable water and irrigation schemes established under the CCI in selected chronically food insecure districts.

⁷ Note: In addition, 2.7 million people got relief support in 2013; 3.0 million in 2012 (WFP, 2013, pers. comm..).

Each village in Ethiopia is equipped with a farmer training center (FTC) and field level staff (Development Agents, DAs). Most of the FTCs visited were rather well equipped with demonstration sites for chicken and bee keeping, others were bare, just the building. The DAs, agricultural college graduates (diploma holders), young, mainly male, in most cases three, depending on the nature of the village and the government's budget, are responsible for different sectors, e.g., livestock, crops, natural resource management, irrigation, or marketing. One of the village DAs is acting as team leader for the other DAs; that person is also a member of the village council.

4. NGO work in Ethiopia

Since February 2009, the Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009⁸, the so-called CSO law, regulates the work of NGOs ("charities and societies") in Ethiopia. This law is not applicable to religious organizations and to international organizations operating in Ethiopia based on government agreements. As embodied in the CSO law, a Charities and Societies Agency (ChSA)⁹ was established afterwards tasked with taking forward implementation of the CSO law. The ChSA is responsible for registering and supervising charities, societies, charitable endowments and charitable trusts.

The CSO law provides, among other things, that NGOs working in Ethiopia must not engage in work in politically sensitive areas if more than 10% of their budget comes from foreign sources.¹⁰ "Which areas are meant by the new law are very broadly defined, so that it is impossible for NGOs to undertake any kind of meaningful work with regard to human rights issues, women's empowerment or conflict resolution within society." (BMZ, 2012)

With the new CSO law, the role of civil society has been reduced to implementing the government's development policies. NGOs have to concentrate on development measures at grassroots level and on supporting the goals of the government ("gap filling"). The Heinrich Böll Foundation closed its office in Ethiopia end of 2012 as it could not fulfill its mission of promoting democratization, gender justice and sustainable development under the CSO law (see Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2012).

NGOs have to register and have their license renewed every three years. The Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Coordination Office of Addis Ababa (ECC-SDCO-AA) is registered at ChSA in Addis Ababa as an Ethiopian Residents Charity in accordance with the CSO law. The Social Development Coordination Offices of the 13 dioceses in the country are registered as branch offices of ECC-SDCO-AA and do not have own licenses. The other partner organizations are registered in Addis Ababa and in Somali Region.

For each project planned, agreements have to be obtained from the government – either at district level, at zone level, or at regional level, depending on the amount of project budget. The relevant office was in the past the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Desk of the Food Security Coordination Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), now it is under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED). Approval of projects takes some time as also the relevant sector offices are involved. In some cases, projects have to adjust their plan before government approval is granted.

Every three months project reports and every six months audit reports are to be delivered to the government. Activities, finances and inventory are monitored. The government has the

⁸ www.molsa.gov.et/Amharic/Resources/Documents/Charities%20and%20Societies%20Proclamation.pdf

⁹ See also www.chsa.gov.et.

¹⁰ Ethiopia 2013 Human Rights Report: "The CSO law prohibits charities, societies, and associations (NGOs or CSOs) that receive more than 10 percent of their funding from foreign sources from engaging in activities that advance human and democratic rights or promote equality of nations, nationalities, peoples, genders, and religions; the rights of children and persons with disabilities; conflict resolution or reconciliation; or the efficiency of justice and law enforcement services. The implementation of the law continued to result in the severe curtailment of NGO activities related to human rights. In July 2012 the UN high commissioner for human rights expressed concern that civil society space "has rapidly shrunk" since the CSO law's enactment." (US Department of State, 2013, p. 23)

task to conduct mid-term and terminal evaluations of each project. After the end of the project, project assets have to be handed over to the government unless the organization continues to work in that area. The offices responsible for NGO coordination have been recently set up, are understaffed and less experienced.

In July 2011, the ChSA board approved eight directives/guidelines for the CSO law. One of them determines the operational and administrative costs of NGOs (GoE, 2011). This directive, commonly known as the 70/30 guideline, limits administrative spending at 30% of the NGO's budget.¹¹ The challenge to the guideline lies not on the rule itself but on the definitions and the allocation of the cost categories which must fall under each category (operational versus administrative). The guideline outlines a number of costs of actually operational nature to be allocated as administrative costs, such as staff training, training of trainers (ToT), consultancy fees, monitoring and evaluation, transport and maintenance costs, as well as project vehicles. In order to comply with the guideline, the projects change their approach (e.g. work in less remote areas, employ less qualified staff, conduct less capacity building and M&E) which negatively affects the project implementation and results (see TECS, 2012 and 2013).

However, there seems to be room for discussion. The evaluation team heard about a case where ChSA could be convinced to consider fuel which was used for drilling wells as operational and not as administration costs. Good connectedness and good relations to the sectoral offices involved are very important to smoothen the process of obtaining the government agreement and for project implementation.

According to Tracking Trends in Ethiopian Civil Society (TECS)¹², there is at present a discussion regarding an improvement of the 70/30 directive going on. The charities and societies sector working group (CSSWG) which includes CSOs, the Ethiopian government and development partners has assigned a thematic working group to improve the 70/30 guideline. Among others, the transport and capacity building cost aspects should be looked at, which are at present considered as administration costs. However, by early May 2014, there was no official amendment of the directive.

The visit of the NGO-coordinating office of BoFED in one of the regions revealed that the office is insufficiently equipped for its tasks. Until recently only two staff (now four) was responsible for coordination, monitoring of objectives and financial breakdown for 160 projects of about 90 NGOs in that region. Folders and files are stored in large piles on the floor. According to the head of the agency his offices coordinates, advises and makes sure that government guidelines are followed; however, the technical agencies are responsible for checking and, finally, have the last say. He pointed out that NGOs fulfill the gap of the government.

In Ethiopia, the ownership of the government on NGO work is high. Government funds are very limited and are mainly spent on salaries; the ratio of administration to operational costs was reported to be about 80:20. NGOs are invited to give their contribution to the development of the country. The government is well aware that NGOs are important for the development of the country. Especially in the health sector, NGOs provide major inputs. The Catholic Church is known for its outstanding contributions in the education sector.

¹¹ CSO law, Art. 88 (1): "Any charity or society shall allocate not less than 70 percent of the expenses in the budget year for the implementation of its purposes and an amount not exceeding 30 percent for its administrative activities." (GoE, 2009, p. 4556)

70/30 Guideline: "Any ChSO, if it works based on one or more than one cluster mentioned in article 5 of this guidelines, must present to the Agency within the first 30 days of the budget year, an annual budget detailing its activity plans. The budget should be delineated as operational and should not be less than 70 percent and for administrative costs which should not exceed 30 percent per the provisions listed under Appendix 1 of this guideline." (GoE, 2011, page 20)

¹² TECS is funded by DFID (until Nov. 2014). TECS helps to monitor and research emerging issues, changes and trends in the civil society sector in Ethiopia including issues arising from the implementation, enforcement and impact of the CSO law. TECS supports constructive evidence-based dialogue among stakeholders and particularly for civil society to support national development goals. See also http://www.dagethiopia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=84&Itemid=131.

5. Main characteristics of the projects evaluated

The projects covered in the cross-section evaluation are very different in many aspects. They differ in topography (from mountainous with very steep slopes to mainly flat), accessibility (from very remote to relatively well accessible), rainfall (from 260 mm to 1200 mm average annual rainfall), literacy rate, population density (from 25 to 712 persons per km²), family size (from 4.0 to 7.7 persons), and the proportion of female-headed households (from 4% to 41%). Furthermore, the projects vary in the proportion of cultivated land (from 1.4% in very dry areas to above 50% in areas with sufficient rainfall), the proportion of irrigation land out of cultivated land (from below 1% to more than 50%), the percentage of landless households (from very low up to 40%), and the average landholding per household (from 0.17 ha up to 2.1 ha cultivated land per household). The beneficiaries supported by the projects are sedentary and make their living from crop production and livestock. In arid areas livestock farming contributes a larger proportion to the livelihood than in areas with more rainfall.

The different frame conditions have led to a different degree of food insecurity in the project areas. While sufficient food is produced in two project areas, food insecurity is high in a project with high population density and extremely high in two projects affected by low rainfall and recurrent droughts, one of them additionally affected by steep slopes and stony soils. Among the project beneficiaries, the households supported by an irrigation scheme have a better food security than non-irrigation households. In contrast, people of a discriminated community¹³ in one project are especially in need.

The government supports the project districts of four projects with PNSP, and a few households in one district of another project. The other project areas do not receive PSNP support. The proportion of the population which receives support from the government (PSNP plus emergency support) ranges from 0% to above 80% in two projects. The evaluation team visited one village where all households received government support in the year of the visit.

Major reasons hindering the target groups to achieve food security are often natural factors such as recurrent drought, topography and inaccessibility, but also other factors such as low rate of illiteracy, high rate of female-headed households, large family size, high population pressure, high ratio of landless households, shortage of arable land and small landholdings, lack of animal feed, as well as dependency on rainfed agriculture. Special cases are the discriminated community in one project area and ethnic conflicts and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in another.

The seven evaluations covered projects located in five regions, Tigray, Amahara, Oromia, SNNP, and Somali. Five projects worked in one administrative region, two projects covered two administrative regions making cooperation with the local governments more difficult. Four projects worked in one district only, three projects covered two districts. One project covered one hamlet only (irrigation scheme), now adding other hamlets; others projects covered two, six, seven, and eight villages, and two projects twelve villages. The number of direct beneficiaries differs accordingly – from 150 to almost 10,000 households.

The project holders implement a different number of projects. One organization only recently established is with two projects at the low end, while others run 21 and 35 projects. The projects have employed two to eight project staff (not including support staff), including zero to seven field staff. The field staff is called Development Agent (DA; same name as government field staff), Community Development Worker, or Natural Resource Management Officer. One project has no own DAs but supports the government DAs with project technical experts; another project has employed Community Facilitators (CFs, women from the project villages supporting the project's self-help groups only receiving a very small salary). One of

¹³ These people came to the project area some 50 years ago. They are highly discriminated and most of them have a low economic status. Besides small-scale farming they undertake different cottage industries such as pottery, blacksmith, or tannery – jobs which are perceived as dirty by the other community. They marry within their own community - men use to marry several wives which results in large family size.

the projects has no field staff; most of field work is done by the Accountant, supported by the Program Coordinator and the Executive Director. In average, one project field staff is responsible for around 500 beneficiary households (minimum 150, maximum 3,000 households).

According to the information obtained by the evaluation team, two projects do not pay per diem for project staff (not field staff) going to the project area as this is part of their job, all other projects pay. All projects pay per diem to government staff, some less often than others, based on a case by case basis.

Table 5 provides an overview on the activities implemented under the different sectors. The projects provide support in different sectors – livestock, crop production, natural resource management, health, institution building, off-farm income generation, and capacity building. Project activities range from promotion of livestock through distribution of animals, breed improvement or fodder production via crops production activities such as distribution of vegetable seeds and fruit tree seedlings, promotion of compost production, and establishment of irrigation systems, cereal banks and seed stores, soil and water conservation measures, water supply, construction of washing basins and pit latrines, and mosquito net distribution. Most projects tried in one way or another to establish or strengthen local groups and institutions and organized training and exchange visits for farmers, government and project staff. One project linked to an agricultural college had planned outreach activities - linking knowledge available at the agricultural college with knowledge available at village level.

Table 5: Activities aimed at improving food security of the MISEREOR-supported projects

Sector	Activity
Livestock	Distribution of livestock (heifers, sheep and goats ["shoats"], and chicken)
	Promotion of bee keeping (distribution of bee colonies and bee hives)
	Breed improvement (bull service, improved heifer distribution, sheep and goat ram service, improved shoat distribution)
	Promotion of forage production (distribution of grass cuttings, grass seeds)
	Area enclosure
	Construction of cattle troughs, animal health posts
Crop production	Distribution of crop seeds
	Distribution of vegetable seeds
	Distribution of fruit tree seedlings
	Promotion of compost production
	Construction of irrigation scheme
	Distribution of hand tools
	Construction of stores
Natural resource management	Soil and water conservation (physical constructions, biological conservation)
	Establishment of nurseries
Health	Promoting water supply (potable water supply, hand-dug wells, ponds)
	Construction of washing basins, pit latrines
	Distribution of mosquito nets
Institution building	Establishing/strengthening local groups (women saving and credit groups/SHGs, pottery groups) and institutions (multi-purpose cooperatives, cereal bank associations (CBAs)/farmer marketing organizations (FMOs), bee cooperatives, water user associations, Iddir)
Off-farm income	Pottery (training, distribution of donkey and cart)
Capacity building	Formal and informal training courses on production techniques
	Exchange visits for farmers, government and project staff
	Training courses in nutrition, food preparation, family planning, sanitation and hygiene, do-no-harm, HIV/AIDS awareness, cooperative management
	Outreach (exchange between agricultural college and farmers)

The projects covered by the cross-section evaluation are very diverse. One is directed at livestock production, another at irrigation, a third at cereal banks and self-help groups, other projects cover different fields. The projects do not follow a common approach tackling food security. Of the four pillars of food security – availability, access, utilization, and stability (see Table 6) – all projects addressed the **access** to food (see Table 7). This was done mainly through increasing the agricultural production, raising incomes, and to a small degree also by establishing/supporting local groups and organizations. Two projects tried to improve **availability** of food at local level through the construction of stores for agricultural produce. One project tackled the **utilization** of food with training on nutrition and food preparation, other projects more indirectly through potable water supply systems/pond construction. One project intended to address **stability of access and supplies** by setting up cereal banks, but in reality, they aimed at profit maximization and did not contribute to stability of access and supplies.

Table 6: The four pillars of food security

1. Sufficient AVAILABILITY of food (nation, region)	Food supplies, in quantitative and qualitative terms, national, regional Sources of Food Supplies: - Domestic food production (subsistence plus marketed production, fisheries), - Available food stocks (public, commercial, household stocks), - Commercial food imports, - Food aid deliveries.
2. Adequate ACCESS to food (household, individual)	Means and ways which enable households and individuals to obtain the food they need: - Economic access (own (subsistence) production, income from sales of agricultural produce, sales of goods and services, employment (on farm and off-farm, in cash and kind), transfers (public and private), - Physical access, - Social access
3. Effective UTILISATION (individual)	Ability to utilize the food in a manner that the nutritive contents and value of the food consumed are maintained, and fully absorbed and utilized by the body, Knowledge
4. STABILITY of access and supplies	Ensured over time

Source: Metz (2011), adjusted.

Table 7: Addressing the four pillars of food security by the projects evaluated

Four pillars of food security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sufficient AVAILABILITY of food (nation, region)				(x)		(x)	
Adequate ACCESS to food (household, individual)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Effective UTILISATION (individual)			(x)		X	(x)	(x)
STABILITY of access and supplies				(x)			

Project number (1-7) relates to the sequence of project evaluation.

6. Results of the cross-section evaluation

The results of the seven project evaluations are summarized in Table 8 below, oriented towards the chronology of a project cycle. The table contains the main issues of concern in the MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia, those areas where the evaluation team identified shortcomings and saw room for improvement. Individual projects are not of concern, but serve as examples to back up the overall results of the cross-section evaluation. Some issues are described more in detail depending on the need for explanations and on the ToR. The chapter describes the challenges met by the MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia and identifies opportunities to support the development of a strategy for future work in the field of food security in Ethiopia supported by MISEREOR.

The many positive aspects of the projects are dealt with under Chapter 7, Best practices, and Chapter 8, Conclusions, as well as in the individual evaluation reports.

Table 8: Main issues of concern in MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia

Section	Main issue
1. General issues	1.1 NGO food security promotion under the policy framework of the Ethiopian government 1.1.1 Cooperation with the government 1.1.2 Cooperation with other NGOs
2. Profound project planning process (from analysis to concept; components)	2.1 Problem and situational analysis 2.1.1 Project planning (needs assessment)
	2.2 Livelihood analysis and analysis of production systems
	2.3 Differentiation of the target group (e.g. IDPs, potters)
	2.4 Village selection
3. Design of project components	3.1 Establishing/strengthening local groups/institutions
	3.2 Revolving fund repayment
	3.3 Local contribution, collaboration and role of beneficiaries
<i>(Signing of project agreement)</i>	
4. Project approach	4.1 Participatory approach 4.1.1 Beneficiary participation etc.
	4.2 Emergency/development approach, self-help promotion 4.2.1 Phasing out/exit strategy 4.2.2 Sustainable agriculture
	4.3 Poverty focus
	4.4 Role of partner as facilitator
	4.5 Good governance
5. Project management, project staff management	5.1 Project administration, financial management,
	5.2 Project staff management
	5.3 Staff soft skills (cross-cutting) 5.3.1 Staff selection, capacity building
	5.4 Monitoring & Evaluation 5.4.1 Baseline survey (quality) 5.4.2 SMART indicators 5.4.3 Impact monitoring (methods)
	5.5 Institutional learning
6. Project implementation	6.1 Beneficiary selection
	6.2 Revolving fund repayment
	6.3 Capacity building beneficiaries
7. Area of work/expertise	7.1 Technical innovations and adoption of project activities

Section 1: General issues

Main issue 1.1: NGO food security promotion under the policy framework of the Ethiopian government

A general issue of concern is how NGOs can promote food security under the policy framework of the Ethiopian government. This covers the cooperation with the government, but also the cooperation with other NGOs. As described in Chapter 4, NGOs in Ethiopia have a different role and acceptance by the government than in other countries. Certainly, the 70/30 regulation has an impact on the work of the NGOs.

Main issue 1.1.1: Cooperation with the government

The projects cooperated with the government to a differing degree. The range was from almost no cooperation to a close cooperation with high transparency including joint quarterly review meetings and joint field visits.

Proclamation No. 621/2009 does not contain regulations regarding material support to beneficiaries, provision of inputs and live animals, per diems of field workers, etc.. There is some influence of the government possible on strategies, concepts and implementation of the projects as the projects have to get individual approval, are monitored (by quarterly reports and semi-annual audits) and evaluated (mid-term and terminal evaluation) by the government. Certain rules have to be followed, the law respected, and the project agreement has to be kept.

Different experiences have been made regarding material support such as which variety of crop seeds to be distributed, which breed of livestock to be used, and from where to obtain inputs. In one project, the government wanted the project to promote packages of improved seeds and fertilizer. The project refused to get involved in the fertilizer promotion but had to agree on the improved seeds (which only show their performance in combination with fertilizer and other external inputs) and left the fertilizer distribution for the government.

Another project had distributed seed potatoes from a research center of a neighboring region. As soon as the government heard this the import of these potatoes was stopped in order to prevent the introduction of potato diseases. Instead, potatoes from the region's own potato research center were distributed.

Another example regarding material support is from a project where the type of latrine to be constructed had not been discussed with the district level Health Office. The project built dry pit latrines of very solid structure (50,000 birr each, ca. 2,000 EUR). Once they are full, they are to be abandoned and villagers will go to the bush as they did before. These expensive structures cannot serve as model for replication. The District Health Officer would have preferred low-cost latrines of the type supported by an international NGO in the area which are constructed with labour and material support of the beneficiary household. The project's type of latrine was constructed without community participation which is not in line with government policy.

Regarding the cattle breed introduced by bull service and heifer distribution, the government bodies responsible in each project had different levels of cooperation and influence. In most projects, government and project were of the same opinion which cattle breed to use. In one project, the government apparently had insisted not to use 100% purebred improved breeds but crosses with local cows which is very reasonable. In another project, the livestock office had not been involved in the selection of the cattle breed; the officers in charge complained that the breed introduced by the project would not be suitable to the region; however, all heifers visited by the evaluation team were found at good physical condition.

The government has determined packages for its support to enable poor households to substantially improve their livelihood; these differ among the regions. For example, in one region, a household supported by the government was reported to get a package of 22 shoats, 50 chicken, or five bee colonies and bee hives. These packages do not have to be provided by projects in full; the amount of animals provided is discussed on a case by case basis. One project in that region had planned to distribute three shoats, ten chicken or one bee colony plus bee hive. The government accepted the numbers for shoats and chicken, but insisted on two bee colonies plus hives. In a second project in the same region, however, the project had planned to distribute six shoats, ten chicken and two bee colonies; here, the number of chicken and bee colonies was allowed, but the number of shoats had to increase from six to twelve - even though another NGO in the same district was allowed to distribute two sheep per household (was not known by the project).

All these examples show that it depends on the project and its relationship to the government if the government has a say in the type of material support provided. It also depends on if the project negotiates with the government or simply accepts, and also on the government officer in charge for decision making. For example, one project reported that it was allowed to test the heifer approach in cattle and shoaat repayment instead of repayment in cash because at that time there was a progressive head of the agricultural office.

There is room for discussion before signing the agreement, but in some cases the partner had to accept the changes “suggested” by the government which were in contrast to the agreement made with MISEREOR; however, in these cases the partners informed MISEREOR in their narrative reports about the changes required.

In many cases, government and project worked hand in hand. For example, in one project, the government provided the gabion wire mesh needed for check dam construction which was not originally planned by the project. Project funds were spent for cash-for-work for check dam construction.

Payment of per diems for government staff is regulated on a case by case basis by the projects. Government staff is often involved in providing training to beneficiary communities. When a project requests a trainer, e.g. from the District Agricultural Office, per diem is required, but not for the follow-up visits. Also for attending project meetings and the government evaluations, per diems have to be paid. The amount paid is according to the directives of the organization.

However, it is always a question of communication, relationship and negotiation. The government and the NGO have the same objectives, the projects support the work of the government (achieving food security), and it is the task of government staff to do – within their area of duty – whatever is needed. All project agreements state that the government sector offices have the responsibility to assist project implementation technically, without payment.

In one project with limited funds for per diems, the government joined project staff to the field or in trainings without requesting per diem. The government staff knows that the project staff does not get per diem themselves; however, they complained, and if another project asked for their attendance paying per diem it will get priority. This project used the government DAs for project work, technically supported by project experts; this approach led in some cases to delays as the government DAs also have other duties and staff turn-over is high.

In the seven projects evaluated there was only one incident reported where a government agency had asked too much per diem for a staff not eligible (1.5 month per diem for a field staff who was living in the area). The project rejected because it did not have the funds for that and that office stopped cooperation with the project. The office head refused to accept the handing over of the structure created, and even the involvement of the Chief Administrator could not solve the problem. At the end, the structure was handed over to the Administration Office and the NGO Coordination Office of the Department of Finance and Economic Development.

In many cases, the project was taking over the role of the government and employed own field staff for doing the same work as the field staff of the government.

It is not the case that the government prepares a project proposal and asks an NGO to implement it. What might happen is, if there is a certain need or potential for support, that the government – seeing its own limitations and knowing that it depends on external support – approaches an NGO and asks for help.

According to the consultants, the frame conditions with the Ethiopian government are no obstacle for supporting sound development work improving the livelihood of the rural poor. There is room for innovation and change, and this room should be used. Instead of opposing to government policies in areas not matching with the principles of MISEREOR, successful practices should be shown which can be scaled up by the government. However, most project staff has worked before for the government and do not see any difference in their work as government staff and their work for an NGO. They are not aware that MISEREOR’s approach is not defined by filling the gap of the government. For example, distribution of fertilizer and pesticides cannot be supported by MISEREOR. See also Main issue 4.4, Role of partner as facilitator, and 5.3, Staff soft skills (cross-cutting).

Wording is very important in cooperation with the government. Terms liked by many donors such as rights-based approach, empowerment or organic farming are not liked by the Ethiopian government. Instead it is better to use more open terms such as community participation and sustainable agriculture. The promotion of fertilizer¹⁴ should not be opposed to, but it is no problem to offer additional options better suited to poor smallholders, such as composting, mulching and intercropping.

Main issue 1.1.2: Cooperation with other NGOs

The project evaluations revealed that there is insufficient cooperation with other NGOs, beyond their own direct network. For example, as mentioned before, one project accepted that the government imposed the distribution of twelve shoats per beneficiary households instead of the six animals originally planned. Project staff did not know that another NGO working in the district distributed two shoats only. Another example is the location of exchange visits/study tours. The few study tours which were conducted went to government sites or to sites of other dioceses. The projects are insufficiently aware what other NGOs are doing. There is no active network to other NGOs in the region and in other parts of Ethiopia.

Section 2: Profound project planning process (from analysis to concept; components)

“The more time is spent in project preparation, the better the results.”

Main issue 2.1: Problem and situational analysis

Main issue 2.1.1: Project planning (needs assessment)

The evaluations revealed that planning the project concept/design was in many projects insufficiently based on a profound project planning process. Only one project conducted a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) before designing the project and writing the project proposal. Two other projects conducted “needs assessments” for preparing the next phase. There is a difference if a project holder gets a thorough understanding of the problems of an area and designs a project to overcome the problems of the poor accordingly or if people in the project villages are asked about their needs and the project tries to fulfil these needs. More immediate needs are looked at than longer-lasting effects, and less innovation will be introduced.

Main issue 2.2: Livelihood analysis and analysis of production systems

Most of the projects were not based on a profound livelihood analysis and analysis of the production systems. There was no thorough identification of constraints and identification of ways to overcome them; also, the potentials available in the project area were not strategically analysed (see also Main issue 2.1.1 above).

Main issue 2.3: Differentiation of the target group (e.g. IDPs, potters)

In project planning, most projects did not sufficiently differentiate the target group. Different target groups have different needs. “The poor” are not a uniform group in the village. Their unique situation requires special responses and options for support. Each subgroup has different requirements which need to be addressed, be it IDPs, potters, female-headed households, PSNP beneficiaries or others.

Main issue 2.4: Village selection

An important question for any project is the selection of the villages it is going to support – who decides about the project villages? In the projects evaluated, the project villages were

¹⁴ Fertilizer is strongly promoted by the Ethiopian government. Each government level (zone, district, village) has to fulfil a certain quota of fertilizer sold. The main task of the multi-purpose cooperatives is fertilizer distribution (as loan). In 2005, the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi received a controversial price of Yara, the world's biggest nitrogen fertilizer producer, which is a major supplier of fertilizer to Ethiopia.

either selected by the government or by the project holder. In both cases the evaluation team observed a limitation in addressing the neediest villages – the selection was affected by various factors like accessibility, distribution of resources, linkage with existing natural resources (water), emergency issues, etc.. Unless there are special reasons why a project wants to work in certain villages the district government will allocate the project villages for the NGO considering the requirements of the NGO, the coverage of villages by other NGOs and other factors. Poverty does not seem to be always a criterion for allocating villages for being supported by a certain NGO. For example, one village of two project villages supported by a project was well developed as another NGO had established a large irrigation scheme in that village. It might be that this village was allocated to the project to assure proper use of the facilities created.

On the other hand, other projects had selected their villages after an assessment they made before the start of the project. In one of these projects, the project holder had reduced the number of villages from nine suggested by the government to six by excluding the relatively better-off villages.

Section 3: Design of project components

The evaluation team identified as major shortcoming in designing the project components (1) insufficient establishing/strengthening local groups/institutions, (2) revolving fund repayment, as well as (3) insufficient local contribution, collaboration and role of the beneficiaries.

Main issue 3.1: Establishing/strengthening local groups/institutions

Besides distributing inputs to individuals most projects also tried to establish local groups or organizations or strengthen existing ones. New groups established were women groups for saving and credit and women self-help groups, new associations a water user association, bee cooperatives, and cereal bank associations (CBAs) which became farmer marketing organizations (FMOs) after their legalization. All these groups/institutions were set up with certain promises (“if you form a group, the project will support you”). In one project, the saving groups got “seed money”, about 300 birr (12 EUR) per member, in order to speed up the process of accumulating funds for internal lending. Other projects tried to strengthen existing institutions for fund revolving, such as multi-purpose cooperatives and traditional support groups (“Iddir”¹⁵). However, all these approaches showed that attempts were insignificant to build strong local groups and institutions which are capable of sustaining the project activities/stand on their own after the project has ended.

Main issue 3.2: Revolving fund repayment

Free input supply is against the government policy and project inputs – such as livestock, crop seeds, the working capital for cereal banks, and, in some projects, fruit tree seedlings and hand tools – are handed out as a loan and have to be repaid. Government input repayment goes directly back to the government, project input repayment – how (in cash/in kind), to whom and when – can be decided by the project and is stated in the government agreement. As MISEREOR policies do not allow repayment to the project partner or to the government, all projects had to find a solution on how, to whom and when the funds are to be repaid. The seven projects dealt with this in different ways and with different success (see Main issue 6.2).

Main issue 3.3: Local contribution, collaboration and role of beneficiaries

Other shortcomings in the project arrangement are local contribution, collaboration and role of beneficiaries. While some project activities had been planned with villagers contributing labour and/or material, and beneficiary contribution was high in community infrastructure

¹⁵ Iddir: Traditional local institutions established to support their members in the case of death of family members and cooperation in other social services as wedding ceremonies and house construction after fire. Each household is member of several Iddirs. Some Iddirs exist already since more than 40 years.

construction such as a cattle trough, site clearing for the irrigation scheme, canal digging for the potable water supply system, many activities were planned without the beneficiaries having to provide local contributions, be it material or work. Instead, beneficiaries received project support without own efforts (see also Chapter 8.5, Sustainability). Most projects did not sufficiently request local contributions. In one project, a large proportion of project funds was spent on cash-for-work for check dam construction, in another, beneficiary households got paid for their labour to dig their own hand-dug wells. In many projects, beneficiaries seek payment for their involvement in project implementation.

However, in some cases, the community could be convinced to provide labour contributions. For example, in the irrigation project, where the beneficiaries were paid for their labour contributions in the establishment of the scheme, the community agreed after a long process of negotiations also involving the MISREOR desk officer to dig a night storage pond without payment.

Many of the project inputs are planned to be provided as a kind of charity following an emergency project approach and do not support active development of the beneficiaries (see also Main issue 4.2, Emergency/development approach, self-help promotion).

The design of the projects shows that the beneficiaries are not treated as equal partners, able in thoughtful decision making. They have been insufficiently planned to be included in project planning, monitoring and evaluation (see also Main issue 4.4, Role of partner as facilitator). Beneficiaries' role is more that of a passive recipient of project inputs than that of an active and responsible person able to influence his/her own development/solve own problems. Their role should change according to the slogan "from users and choosers to makers and shapers".

Section 4: Project approach

After the contract with MISEREOR and the government agreement is signed main issues of concern in the approach followed by the MISEREOR-supported food security projects are the application of a participatory approach (beneficiary participation), focusing on self-help promotion, development-oriented not acting as emergency project, poverty focus, the role of project staff as facilitator, and good governance.

Main issue 4.1: Participatory approach

Main issue 4.1.1: Beneficiary participation etc.

The cross-section evaluation revealed that beneficiaries' degree of participation was high in implementing, but low in initiating, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the projects. Only one project conducted a PRA before writing the project proposal for including the ideas of the beneficiaries in project planning. Also, participatory monitoring and evaluation was insufficiently applied (see also Main issue 3.3, Local contribution, collaboration and role of beneficiaries).

Main issue 4.2: Emergency/development approach, self-help promotion

*"Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today.
Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime."*

Almost all projects applied, at least in some of their activities, an emergency approach and did not put sufficient attention on capacity building and enabling beneficiaries to stand on their own after the end of the project. The approach followed is similar to that shown on the inside cover of the present report from the Book of Miracles of Mary from the seventeenth century – distribution of goods to the poor and needy.

Inputs were distributed without enabling or making the beneficiaries aware about replicating these inputs. Chicken were distributed without motivating beneficiaries to produce new chicken, vegetable seeds were distributed without teaching farmers how they can be

multiplied. Project design was insufficiently promoting self-help and community development. Project staff felt very responsible for distributing inputs, but less for facilitating development processes at village level. In projects where the emergency project approach was especially pronounced the evaluation team conducted an exercise on differences of emergency projects and development projects to help the project overcome its shortcomings. A result of such exercise is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Difference of emergency and development projects

	Emergency project	Development project
Problems, reasons	Drought, flood, conflict, outbreak	To alleviate poverty, to improve living standard
Purpose	Saving lives	Change livelihood, sustainability, capacity building
Process	Assessment, giving	Participation, sensitization, awareness
Source of input	Donors, external	- Donors, external - Internal (mobilization)
Time frame	Immediate, short time	Medium-term to long-term
Type of inputs	Food, medicine, water	Training, agricultural inputs
Relationship, role	Distributor, giver, provider	Facilitator
Resulting in ...	Dependency	Independence, self-reliance

Main issue 4.2.1: Phasing out/exit strategy

Most projects did not comprise a phasing out or exit strategy. With insufficient focus on self-help promotion and on establishing/strengthening of local groups or institutions (see Main issues 3.1 and 4.2), no concept is visible for the situation after the end of the project. It is not clear who will take over the role of the project/provide follow-up of project activities.

Main issue 4.2.2: Sustainable agriculture

In the seven projects evaluated, insufficient attention was given to sustainable agriculture. Only very few projects promoted compost production, mulching, intercropping, and other practices of sustainable agriculture. The agricultural offices concentrate on promoting improved varieties and use of external inputs such as chemical fertilizer and pesticides. Low external input agriculture is better suited to overcome the problems of poor small-holder farmers.

Main issue 4.3: Poverty focus

The evaluation team realized insufficient poverty focus in many of the projects. This refers to the selection of activities as well as beneficiary selection (for latter, see Main issue 6.1). One of the projects realized that heifer distribution is not an appropriate activity to support the poor and changed its approach to shoat distribution and was better able to meet the needs of the poor. In the irrigation system established, the government did not support re-distribution of the land covered by the irrigation scheme. People which had land in the area which is now served by the irrigation scheme are benefiting to a very high degree, while others with land further away did not profit from the system. Also distribution of fruit tree seedling, vegetable seeds, as well as of hand-dug wells/rope and washer pump/drip irrigation accessories are lacking in poverty focus. Two projects tried to support potters, a marginalized group of the society. One project trained 30 women in energy saving stove production, but did not provide any follow-up so that the group fell apart after a short time without any benefit for the participating women. Another project set up 20 potter groups, five members each group, and supported each group with potter's wheels, a donkey and (planned) donkey cart, so far

without significant impact. Even though the projects had identified these groups as needy they did not manage to improve their livelihoods.

Main issue 4.4: Role of partner as facilitator

In Ethiopia, there is a profound difference in hierarchy between educated external supporters, be it government or project staff, and poor, often illiterate villagers. As already mentioned, most project staff members have worked before for the government and have insufficient knowledge and experience in development approaches and self-help promotion. They are not aware of any difference between government and NGO work and act the same way as they did as government staff. They often understand their role as implementer instead of facilitator and occupy a dominant role in project implementation. They do not sufficiently facilitate development processes at village level and enable people standing on their own. The projects do not put sufficient attention on staff capacity building (see also 1.1.2, Cooperation with other NGOs, and 5.3.1, Staff soft skills/staff capacity building).

During the start-up workshop of the cross-section evaluation in Addis Ababa on Oct. 7-8, 2013, there was a discussion about the role of the government in project initiation. One of the workshop participants stated "We cannot clearly differentiate community and government, it is the same". He was not aware that communities could have different ideas and priorities than the government – and that also project staff could have own ideas.

The evaluation team got the impression that project staff paid by MISEREOR is insufficiently aware that government staff and NGO staff should play different roles. Critical self-reflection, thinking about one's role, the way to act in a village and how to approach beneficiaries seem to be new ways of thinking for many of the project staff met.

Main issue 4.5: Good governance

Good governance is insufficiently applied resp. promoted by most projects under evaluation. This refers to transparency in project implementation (monitoring), transparency in financial issues, demanding and showing accountability, promoting participation, introducing complaint mechanisms, enabling/motivating project staff as well as beneficiaries to rise up their voice and discuss problems openly, listening to each other, respecting each other, and accepting different opinions. Senior staff looking down at their subordinates, feeling superior, shouting at each other as it was experienced during the evaluation in one project are no good example for a culture of good governance of an organization.

Section 5: Project management, project staff management

This section deals with issues which are not directly related to food security but which have a direct impact on the quality of the projects promoting food security and on achieving the project objectives.

Main issue 5.1: Project administration, financial management

As discussed in detail in the individual reports, many projects lack in project administration and financial management. These issues were discussed with the individual projects. MISEREOR included the questions raised on financial management in a finance workshop which is organized by MISEREOR in Addis Ababa the week after the final workshop of the cross-section evaluation. Other issues of common concern are record keeping/filing, the quality of semi-annual progress reports, and transparency in project activities including financial issues.

Main issue 5.2: Project staff management

Another area to tackle is project staff management. In many projects, superiors did not know about activities of their staff. Work planning is insufficient and, accordingly, subsequent monitoring of staff is not possible. There is no systematic staff capacity building (see Main issue 5.3.1).

Main issue 5.3: Staff soft skills (cross-cutting)

A cross-cutting issue identified in the evaluation is staff soft skills - the ability and willingness of staff to facilitate development processes in the villages, to promote self-help, to critically reflect about oneself, one's attitude, and one's work (see also Main Issues 1.1 and 4.4).

Main issue 5.3.1: Staff selection, capacity building

"An organization is only as good as its front staff is."

Most projects had highly motivated staff dedicated to their work. However, some projects were affected by frequent staff transfer. A leader of one partner organization explained to the evaluation team that his organization pays very small salaries and sees itself as transit station for young staff leaving the organization after a short while to the next, better paid assignment in another organization. Staff only accepted the low salaries as chance for learning/getting experience. For new projects, new staff has to be found, which is often former government staff or comes directly from the university.

In the projects evaluated, insufficient staff capacity building was organized. Only one project conducted annual staff performance evaluations, but quality was low. In the projects evaluated, weaknesses of staff are not addressed; there is insufficient assistance provided in improving staff performance. One organization had recently conducted a training course on PRA and PCM for its food security/rural development projects but did not invite all relevant projects under its responsibility. Another partner organization had attended training on monitoring data management (invitation organized by Caritas Belgium) and directly applied the learning. The evaluation team was impressed by the household-level monitoring system used in the project.

In general, projects do not actively request donors for capacity building; this position is often forgotten in the project proposal. Also, the 70/30 regulation limits funds allocation for capacity building (will be changed in future, see Chapter 4).

Main issue 5.4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring (incl. participatory monitoring, record keeping) and evaluation (incl. village level reviews), follow-up and reporting (incl. reporting on achievement of objectives and indicators) was a short-coming in many projects. Regular monitoring was not done, and there were only two projects among the seven of the cross-section evaluation which reported on the achievement of project objectives and indicators.

Main issue 5.4.1: Baseline survey (quality)

Three projects did a baseline survey at the start of the project. One project contracted an external consultant for conducting the baseline survey and did not try to do this with own resources with the result that a professional report has been produced.¹⁶ The other two projects collected baseline data but did not analyze them. Also, the quality of the questionnaire was insufficient.

Main issue 5.4.2: SMART indicators

All projects except one had defined indicators for measuring the achievement of the project objectives which are part of the contract with MISEREOR. There are two problems with these indicators; first, most indicators are not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) and difficult to be measured, and second, most projects do not regularly measure the achievement of the indicators and report it to MISEREOR as part of the semi-annual narrative reports.

¹⁶ Survey data were collected by six enumerator teams of two people each, and two supervisors. The enumerators, university students with first degree qualifications, participated in a one-day training and a pre-test of the questionnaire. The 304 survey households were selected at random (by Excel) from the list of 9,525 village households of the six project villages.

Main issue 5.4.3: Impact monitoring (methods)

Impact monitoring is not done by many projects. Two projects conducted surveys to assess the impact of their measures, but did not analyze the data. Survey design was insufficient in one case. Since long MISEREOR has planned a workshop for its partners on impact monitoring. It is now scheduled for mid-2014.

Main issue 5.5: Institutional learning

Most partner organizations visited have not much what can be called a “culture of learning”. Only one project practiced regular exchange among its food security projects and actively drew lessons from the experiences made. A second project also actively improved their performance, even though not supported by the partner organization - here, the positive attitude of the staff towards improvement could overcome shortcomings of institutional learning.

The willingness of the partner organizations to accept critique of the evaluation team varied. One organization was very grateful for the intensive process of jointly looking at strengths and weaknesses and in-depth discussions about possible improvements, two others organizations had problems in accepting the assessment of the evaluation team and did not feel supported, at least they did not show it.

Robert Chambers talks about “embracing error” - welcoming and sharing mistakes as opportunities for learning.

Section 6: Project implementation

Main issue 6.1: Beneficiary selection

Many projects tried to focus on the poor and, among the poor, especially on women and female-headed households; however, some projects also had activities where poverty was no criterion for receiving project support, such as one project restricted the distribution of crop seeds to households owning more than 0.25 ha land. Often, also fruit tree seedlings and vegetable seeds distributed are not limited to poor households.

All projects set certain criteria which had to be met by the beneficiaries to be supported, e.g. no livestock owned, female-headed household, or landless. Nevertheless, in practice, targeting was a problem in many projects. Some households supported did not fulfil the criteria set by the project. Especially those beneficiaries visited by the evaluation team selected at random often owned livestock while receiving support.

In some projects, beneficiary selection worked better, in others less, depending on the transparency of the selection process. Selection was handed over to the village government, in many cases the hamlet leaders. Often, the local leaders did not adhere to the criteria and the selection results were in most cases not cross-checked by the project. One of the projects had invented a proper system for targeting poor households, but the village discussions of the evaluation team revealed that in reality a quota system at hamlet level was used, not sufficiently considering poverty. In this project, the district government as well as the village government of some villages had decided that PSNP beneficiaries should not get project support. This was known by the field staff, but not by higher level project staff.

Projects tried to focus on women. In one project with mainly Muslim population, the project struggled hard to see to that really women got the inputs. In all projects, targeting of women worked well in chicken support because women are traditionally responsible for chicken. Bee keeping support was provided to landless poor youth, with the exception of one project where hamlet leaders also benefitted. Selection criteria were in many cases the ability to manage the input and to repay, and poverty was less considered. In two projects, focus on input distribution was given to model farmers of the government.

Main issue 6.2: Revolving fund repayment

As mentioned in Main Issue 3.2, revolving fund repayment – how (in cash/in kind), to whom and when – was done by the seven projects in different ways and with different success.

Livestock has either been repaid in kind – (1) the “heifer system”¹⁷, see Box 2, and (2) transfer of shoat mother after first lamb has been weaned, see Box 3 – or in cash (see Box 4). In crop production, both in-kind and in-cash repayment has been applied (see Box 5). Repayment of small monthly amounts is easier for villagers than paying the whole amount at the end of the credit period. Repayment was either to existing local institutions (village-level multi-purpose cooperatives [MPCs], traditional support groups [Iddir]) or to newly formed institutions (women saving and credit groups, bee cooperatives).

Two projects conducted capacity building for the existing local institutions to increase their capacity in dealing with revolving funds. However, there was no agreement between the project and these bodies (MPC, Iddir) on the use of revolved funds. The funds collected by the MPCs are merged with other MPC funds and spent as decided by the MPC, but not necessarily on measures improving food security of poor households, the objective of the project. The funds collected by the Iddir have not been handed over to the Iddir (see below).

Box 2: In-kind repayment of livestock: The “heifer system”

One project distributed in an earlier phase heifers which have been revolved within the community applying the so-called heifer system – the first female offspring was handed over to another poor household. The evaluation team visited beneficiaries which had received a heifer of the third generation. This system seems to work very well. Unfortunately, handing-over records are not complete (responsibility was handed over to the multi-purpose cooperatives of the respective village). The project also uses the heifer system for the repayment of the shoats which are distributed in the present phase.

Another project holder applies this system with the heifers distributed (repayment not yet due). In addition, the heifer beneficiaries are grouped in “Debere” groups to share information, to control each other and for monthly saving and credit. This project holder has practiced the heifer system very successfully since almost 20 years.

Box 3: In-kind repayment of livestock: Transfer of shoat mothers

One project applied a different system for shoat repayment: Instead of handing over the first female offspring to the next beneficiary, the shoat mother is to be handed over after the first lamb has been weaned. Transfer is done within a peer group of three women who are identified when distributing the shoats (otherwise there is no contact among the three peer group members). In order to assure that the transfer will work until the third beneficiary, the project established an insurance system at village level: All three peer group members have to pay a small monthly fee (2 birr, 0.08 EUR) so that in case an animal dies replacement can be bought. Strange enough, morale for paying the monthly insurance fees is especially low among second and third level beneficiaries – it seems they do not trust in benefitting from the system. The advantage of mother transfer within peer groups is that the repayment can be finished within a three year project period.

The project provided the following numbers: 2,650 shoats (all female) have been distributed to 1,325 households in the first six months of 2013. By end of December 2013, 583 had given birth (22.0%) and 231 mothers (8.7%) were transferred already to the second level beneficiary. 160 shoats provided by the project had died (6.0%), 80 animals (50%) were replaced using funds from the insurance system (total collected: 43,553 birr; 25,158 birr, 57.8% of funds collected, was paid for replacement).

¹⁷ “Invented” by the American NGO Heifer Project International, some 30 years ago; first female offspring is to be given to another poor household (“passing on the gift”).

Box 4: In-cash repayment of livestock

One project involved the Iddir groups in input distribution and revolving fund collection. This system worked very well. Repayment conditions were suitable for local conditions: small items such as chicken had to be paid at once, larger ones such as shoats and beehives had to be paid by a down-payment when receiving the inputs plus small monthly instalments in the following months (up to two years).

In another project, repayment of heifers, shoats, chicken and bee colonies/hives had to be made in cash to the village multi-purpose cooperative after a certain period of time (e.g. chicken 50% after the first, 50% after the second year). There was no follow-up from the project regarding repayment as it did not feel responsible as the cooperative had the task to enforce repayment. Not a single birr has been repaid since the project started in 2006. MISEREOR tried hard to convince the project holder to introduce the heifer approach, which had been successfully introduced in another MISEREOR-supported project near-by in 2004, but could not convince the project. Different talks with project beneficiaries during the evaluation revealed that in-kind repayment is preferred against in-cash repayment. Also the government stakeholders had no objections to the heifer system.

In a third project, chicken were distributed to members of a women saving and credit group. Credits had to be repaid within the women group. The repayment had been collected few days before the arrival of the evaluation team even though it had been due already since a few months. The women group and the project had agreed that only 84 of the 200 chicken distributed had to be repaid as the others had died at the time of repayment.

Box 5: Repayment of crop seeds

Five projects distributed vegetable seeds; two for free, another to be repaid in cash within the water user association (loan repayment has been due since a few months, not yet paid back), a fourth distributed cans of seeds for free to model farmers and sold small quantities of seeds to other interested farmers (these seeds were directly paid), and a fifth project had given the option to repay the vegetable seeds distributed – tomato, potato, onion, cabbage – either in cash or in kind, to the local multi-purpose cooperative, but experienced problems with in-kind repayment as crops delivered had often been of bad quality combined with poor storage and transportation facilities.

One project distributed improved crop seeds (teff, wheat, Haricot bean, taro, potatoes) which had to be repaid in kind with 20% interest to two project-constructed seed banks and diffuse light stores. According to the talks in three villages, the visit of the seed bank and diffuse light store in one village, and the project records, repayment is not yet convincing. This project distributed other items for free, such as fruit tree seedlings and vegetable seeds as part of a package of hand-dug well/rope and washer pump/drip irrigation set.

Most projects distributed fruit tree seedlings for free. One project requested in kind repayment after the trees start bearing fruits (not yet due). The evaluation team observed insufficient protection of tree seedlings with quite some farmers. This indicates that people give insufficient value to items distributed for free.

One project holder, an organization with emergency aid background, only thought about repayment after the goats were distributed. As the government contract did not mention repayment the organization did not put much pressure on the beneficiaries but appealed to their social consciousness that they should pass on some of their animals after 2.5 years. Some beneficiaries reported to the evaluation team that they gave already some animals away, e.g. to the wedding of the brother. As local officials were not involved in beneficiary selection, and transfers were not reported/recorded anywhere, such transfers cannot be called revolving fund repayment.

Two projects have not been in line with MISEREOR policies. One organization used the funds repaid as general funds of the organization to strengthen institutions established by the organization all over the region. The funds collected are pooled in the general bank account of the organization and re-allocated according to need. The institutions created with MISEREOR support received actually more funds than provided by MISEREOR, but do not

own these funds. The money has to be repaid after a certain period to the project holder who will give out new loans to the institution a short time later. MISEREOR had informed the organization several times that it is against their policies that MISEREOR funds are re-collected by the project holder; finally, the project holder has agreed to hand over the money to the institutions established.

In another project, the traditional support groups (Iddir) collected the loans and handed them over to the project holder. These funds are still stored at four different bank accounts of the diocese especially set up for that reason. MISEREOR's instructions to hand the funds back to the community were not followed – the project holder felt the Iddir were not strong enough to handle the funds in a responsible way, in line with the project objectives¹⁸. Instead, the money is still lying idle at the bank, more than one year after the project has ended, without any use.

Main issue 6.3: Capacity building of beneficiaries

While some projects provided trainings at district level, others used the village-level farmer training centers (FTCs), farm site nurseries/model farms, or natural shade. Some projects provided per diems to farmers, also for village level training, others only provided drinks and snacks. In most cases, the trainings were provided in cooperation with government technical experts from district or village level. Some projects conducted exposure visits for government stakeholders and project staff. Most projects also provided input-related trainings, often with low follow-up. In general, capacity building of beneficiaries was not sufficient.

Section 7: Area of work/expertise

Main issue 7.1: Technical innovations and adoption of project activities

In general, the projects follow/replicate activities of the government instead of showing good examples for influencing the government, e.g. to adjust its agricultural promotion into a direction more suitable for poor smallholders. There were some technical innovations introduced by the projects, practices which were not known in the area before and which were not promoted by the government. One was the successful introduction of Elephant grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*) to the area, planted on irrigated fodder sites which was also new to the area. Another innovation was the heifer system introduced to an area where this system has not been known, a third one self-help groups which differ from the government-promoted women credit and saving groups. Also, the farm site nurseries established by a project are an innovation as the government only promotes community-based nurseries, but not nurseries run by individuals. One project introduced rope and washer pumps and drip irrigation accessories, seed banks and diffuse light stores for storage of seeds, and potter's wheels as innovation.

MISEREOR staff stated during the debriefing workshop in Aachen in May 2014 that MISEREOR assesses a strategy rather on its achievements of the expected outcome, independently whether a project applies well-known measures or innovations.

The adoption of project activities by the benefitting households was rather low. Only in one project, farmers adopted budding of apple trees, mulching, and vegetable production and consumption. Data on adoption rate is not available.

Conclusion of Chapter 6 – Priority issues

The sections above describe in detail the main issues of concern in the MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia - those areas where the evaluation team identified shortcomings and saw room for improvement. Priority issues identified by the

¹⁸ Some Iddirs met by the evaluation team plan to buy a large tent which can be used for funerals and marriages, one planned to construct a kindergarten building.

evaluation team are (1) NGO food security promotion under the policy framework of the Ethiopian government, (2) emergency/development approach and self-help promotion, (3) beneficiary participation/role of beneficiaries, (4) role of project staff, (5) poverty focus (selection of project villages, selection of beneficiaries), (6) types of inputs distributed, (7) establishing/strengthening local groups or institutions for achieving sustainability and resilience, (8) revolving fund repayment, and (9) improvement/adjustment from one project phase to the next/learning.

7. Successful intervention strategies (best practices)

The evaluation team identified in each of the projects evaluated successful intervention strategies which other projects could learn. They represent a realm of valuable experiences which should be made use of in a systematic way. Most of the best practices deal with the areas identified as main issue in Chapter 6. This indicates that even though projects have shortcomings in a certain area, other projects exist which can serve as learning ground in that aspect. A detailed description of each best practice goes beyond the scope of the present report.

Table 10: Best practices identified during the cross-section evaluation

Project planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting PRA, participatory formulation workshop together with all stakeholders, and baseline survey, • Rapid need assessment before project proposal, household survey at the project start, • Baseline survey before intervention of Phase 2
Poverty focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on female-headed households and landless youth
Establishing/strengthening local groups/institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to establish local organizations, • Working through existing local institutions (Iddir), • Strengthening of and working through cooperatives, • Self-help group promotion, • Establishment of women groups for saving and lending
Distribution of inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on small units and offering diversified options (vegetables, fruit trees, chicken, shoats), • Distribution of a small number of sheep and goats (local breed) per household well adapted to the agro-ecological zone, • Focussing on small ruminants instead of cows, • Buying goats locally instead of from outside, • Increasing land availability by check dam construction on eroded and degraded land (water and soil trapping), distribution of some of the land created among food insecure households for fodder production (with land titles)
Revolving fund repayment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind repayment of revolving fund (“heifer system”), • Heifer transfer approach, • Introducing approach to transfer shoat mothers, • Small monthly repayments of credits instead of a large amount at the end of the credit period, • Introducing insurance system and peer group approach for livestock transfer
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training at FTC level, • Using model farmers for practical training of farmers at their own locality, • Training on family planning, nutrition, food preparation, sanitation and hygiene - for both men and women
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperating closely with the government, transparency, • Working through government DA, • Systematic monitoring and follow-up of activities at beneficiary level, • No per diem for project staff
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment of project design from phase to phase, learning from experiences, • Learning from best practices of other projects implemented by the project holder

8. Conclusions

8.1 Relevance

All projects covered are relevant to the government and the local communities. They are in line with government strategies and plans (GTP). The projects reflect the needs of the local people. The number of people benefitting from the project interventions range from 1,500 to 5,000 direct beneficiary households; only exception is an irrigation project with 150 irrigation households (Phase 2: 200 households). The projects are benefitting to a large extent to the poorer sections of the village communities despite some problems/irregularities in beneficiary selection with certain degree of differences in all project areas. Most projects are replicating government interventions and have not introduced technical innovations to deal with the problems of the area.

8.2 Effectiveness

The projects have implemented activities which effectively contributed to increased food security, such as shoat and heifer distribution for asset building, distribution of poultry, bee colony/hives, vegetable seeds and fruit tree seedlings for income generation and nutrition, and saving and credit promotion in women groups. However, the low cooperation with the government at all levels limited the effectiveness in many projects - by making better use of expertise and staff available at district and village level projects would have been more effective. Effectiveness could also increase through improved beneficiary selection, more intensive follow-up and monitoring by project staff, as well as applying a development instead of an emergency approach in some activities. In most projects, breed improvement, revolving fund repayment, group formation, self-help promotion, strengthening/establishment of local institutions, as well as capacity building of target beneficiaries, government stakeholders and project staff was insufficient.

8.3 Outcomes and impacts

All projects contributed to an improvement of food security and livelihood of the beneficiaries. This especially applies to the projects which have been already or about being completed. Those projects which are at mid-term also showed some outcomes in that direction.

Various outcomes and impacts were obtained by the seven projects. In general, agricultural production improved, income increased, vulnerability of households reduced, household nutrition improved, availability of vegetables in the area increased, food habits changed, hygiene, sanitation and health improved, drinking water availability increased, time was saved for fetching water and borrowing hand tools from neighbors, incidence of Malaria reduced, and family conflicts reduced. Environmental outcomes and impacts were the creation of additional land and stored water by check dams, increased fodder availability, improved honey bee flora, and stabilized vegetation cover at hillsides. Institutional outcomes and impacts were limited (establishing new groups/institutions, strengthened existing local institution). If more consideration had been paid by the projects on targeting of beneficiaries, self-help promotion, community development, strengthening/setting up local groups and institutions, repayment and use of revolving funds, and sustainable agriculture, higher outcomes and impacts had been achieved.

The following section goes more into detail of the achievement of outcomes and impacts.

Shoat and heifer distribution led to asset building of the beneficiary households and, in some cases, also to secondary and higher-level beneficiary households. This reduced their vulnerability in times of crisis. Milk of cows, sheep and goats¹⁹ improved household nutrition and, in the case of most cows, led to increased income. Improved chicken distribution aimed in most projects at women only, and brought during the chicken's lifetime some improvement

¹⁹ Only in the very dry project areas, shoats are milked. In one of these areas, the goat breed distributed had a very low milk performance; here, most goats were not milked in order not to endanger survival of the goat kid(s).

of income and nutrition, especially for children. In several projects women reported that the income received from sale of eggs made them independent from their husbands' money and reduced family conflicts to some degree.

Livestock breed improvement through bull service, improved heifer distribution, sheep and goat ram service and distribution of male and female improved chicken has brought differing results. In general, the bull service has not been well accepted by the local farmers as they feared mating and birth problems due to the large size of the bull. Distribution of improved heifers can only show slow breed improvement effects. The sheep ram service only started recently, goat ram service not yet. The distribution of improved chicken only showed insignificant effects on breed improvement as there was not much multiplication of the improved chicken done (hatching by local chicken) – chicken distribution mainly aimed at income and nutrition effects and not at breed improvement. One project distributed infertile hybrid chickens.

Honey production through distribution of bee colonies and/or bee hives slightly increased the income of landless young households. With more rains, this income is expected to rise considerably. In one project, some beneficiary households specialized on bee colony production after colony splitting had been trained by the project. The advantage of bee keeping is that it requires little labour and no arable land.

Only one project promoted improved crop seeds (teff, wheat, Haricot bean, taro, potatoes), related to the government's fertilizer promotion. The seeds were expected to be revolved through diffuse light stores (tuber crops) and seed banks (grains, pulses). However, after the first round of repayment has almost been completed, results are not convincing and only little impacts on food security are expected.

Vegetable seed distribution increased nutrition and income of the beneficiary households, and also led to an increase of vegetables available in the project area. Food habits changed, especially in one project area where food preparation and nutrition training was provided. However, insufficient focus on seed multiplication and expectations of the beneficiaries to get additional seeds from the projects affected further outcomes.

Distribution of fruit tree seedlings (apples, bananas, mango, avocado, guava, papaya) did not yet lead to outcomes and impacts due to the perennial nature of most of these plants, but in future, improved income and nutrition is expected.

The construction of the small-scale irrigation scheme, construction of hand-dug wells, installation of rope and washer pumps and distribution of family drip irrigation systems and credit-based supply of a motor pump to a group of twelve farmers in one project increased the area of irrigated land, reduced production risks due to drought, and improved income and nutrition of the benefiting households. The night storage pond constructed in one project is not used (leakage) and did not increase the amount of water available for irrigation and area under irrigation.

Compost production promoted in one project resulted in that some households could increase their agricultural production and reduce their expenses for chemical fertilizer. A few households received additional income through the sale of compost. Even though at the farm of the agricultural college compost is produced, the outreach project did not promote this at farmer field level. Other projects also showed potential for compost production but did not engage in this activity.

The distribution of hand tools in an upland area led to positive effects in terms of additionally cultivated land as most households do not plough with oxen but cultivate their land by hand. In this project, the wholesale price and repayment in small installments allowed poor farmers to access these instruments. The hand tools provided in the irrigation project reduced the time to borrow tools from others.

Some of the nurseries established are producing fodder grass cuttings, fodder trees, fruit tree seedlings, and multi-purpose trees for hillside plantation and gully treatment. Distribution of

grass cuttings increased fodder availability on irrigated land in one project, on rainfed land in another project, but distribution of grass seeds did not prove successful in any project. Fodder trees grew well in one project along river sites.

Gully treatment created additional land and stored water which could, in turn, increase fodder, nutrition and income. Area enclosure resulted in increased fodder and bee keeping flora availability. Biological conservation measures showed promising results in one project area (high survival rate).

Regarding the various infrastructure constructions, one cattle trough visited was reported to serve livestock of about 400 households and to reduce traveling and waiting/watering time. The cereal banks constructed facilitated storage of grains and other produce of the Farmer Marketing Organization (FMOs) and resulted in profit generation of the FMOs. Diffuse light stores (DLS) and seed banks visited in another project seem to be not in a position to maintain quality seeds for further utilization. Pit latrines established in two villages are used by the local population and improved hygiene and sanitation. The animal health posts to be run by the government will improve livestock health.

Drinking water availability increased/will increase due to support in potable water supply by three projects. Furthermore, drinking water is also taken/will be taken from 50 hand-dug wells constructed by one project and from ponds constructed/rehabilitated in another project. However, the outcome and impacts are not as expected as the performance of most water points which have already been established is not satisfactory – in one project, only one out of four potable water supply systems set up is functional, and in another project, only one of the two ponds constructed by now provides water for livestock and humans. The water quality of the ponds is poor but the local population has no alternative sources of water.

The 1,000 insecticide-treated mosquito nets distributed to households with pregnant and lactating women are expected to have reduced the incidence of Malaria to some extent.

The institutions/groups established and/or strengthened by the projects resulted in different outcomes and impacts. The involvement of Iddir in revolving fund (RF) collection (in-cash, repayment in small installments) led to very good results in RF repayment; however, as the funds collected were stored on diocese-managed bank accounts they could not further produce impacts. The Iddirs are now better able to mobilize the community and to collect funds. The multi-purpose cooperatives (MPCs) need further support before they can effectively serve their members; only one of the four MPCs supported is functioning well, but not due to project efforts. The cereal bank associations (CBAs) established which became farmer marketing organizations (FMOs) after their legalization generate some profit after first losses. In spite of the original plans, they do not contribute to food security of their members but focus on maximizing profit for the organizations – the FMO members did not participate in these profits yet. The water user associations established still need further capacity building before they can effectively manage water affairs on their own.

Outcomes and impacts on the potters which are supported by two projects are not as expected. A pottery group of 30 women trained in energy saving stove production dissolved after a short time as the group did not receive any follow-up – no income was generated and the knowledge created is not applied by the women as they were not equipped with the production molds. Also a second project which supported 20 potter groups with potter's wheels, a donkey and (planned) donkey cart, could not improve their livelihoods to a significant degree yet; here, an unintended negative outcome occurred as some land owners requested payment from the potters for taking clay from their land after the potters had got attention from the project.

The potential for increased self-help was used in none of the women saving and credit groups/self-help groups (SHGs)/saving and internal lending community (SILC) groups established at its maximum. In one project, internal lending did not yet start, in another project, groups received seed money from the project and are not standing on their own. Most promising are the SHGs set up by one project as women are weekly contributing small

amounts of money and use it for internal lending; however, outcomes are reduced by too many groups being established in short time and the community facilitators receiving monthly salaries instead of doing voluntary work which might make them leave their groups as soon as higher salaries are paid somewhere else.

Outreach activities did not lead to outcomes and impacts as insufficient outreach activities were implemented and follow-up from the project was low.

In general, the projects did not put sufficient attention on capacity building for beneficiary households, government stakeholders and project staff, and, accordingly, outcomes and impacts of the projects were lower than could have been expected. Worth mentioning is a training on nutrition, food preparation, sanitation, hygiene and family planning which resulted in changed food habits, a training on HIV/AIDS, and a training on do-no-harm/conflict mediation. The impact of the latter two trainings could not be assessed during the evaluation.

8.4 Efficiency

Project management was in many cases weak, and planning, follow-up/monitoring, and evaluation as well as impact monitoring systems were insufficient. However, one project used a good monitoring system at beneficiary level, and another project had developed a good reporting format. Some projects learned from past experiences and systematically improved their performance. Most projects welcomed the present evaluation as opportunity for learning.

The different systems of revolving funds showed different efficiency. Fast and efficient was the in-cash transfer in small instalments. The in-kind transfer of the first female offspring (heifer system) was also good, but took longer time – however, transfer might continue after the project has ended. Transfer of the shoat mother within a peer group of three women is possible within the project period; to secure the transfer the project has introduced a livestock insurance system among the beneficiaries. The in-cash transfer after a certain period of time was not successful. In-kind repayment of crops did not work efficiently.

Regarding project efficiency, some projects cooperated with the government in terms of training and sometimes also input provision (e.g. gabion wire for check dam construction provided by the government). Local contributions in terms of labor or local material were in many cases low. Often, the projects paid beneficiaries for their work or used the free labor mobilization or PSNP of the government.

The projects have shortcomings in efficiency during implementation of project activities which affected the appropriate use of project funds (value for money). For example, in one project a large portion of project funds was spent on physical conservation (check dams, cash-for-work); another project concentrated on 150 irrigation households only; a third project purchased very young heifers; and one project implemented insufficient activities, esp. in one of its project areas.

The low level of salaries paid led in some cases to a high turn-over of project staff during the project period - staff left to better paying employments which negatively affected project efficiency.

8.5 Sustainability

A common mistake in implementation of development projects is that the withdrawal and handing-over process only starts towards the end of the project. In principle it should be kept in mind right from day one and preparation for withdrawal should begin right at the start. If it is done from the beginning, community institutions would be in place that are capable of sustaining the activities for food security after the external support of the project comes to an end.

All projects have tried to work with local institutions, either by strengthening existing ones or establishing new ones like committees and groups, revolving funds, and capacitating farmers. However, in reality many of these strategies did not work well (insufficient capacity

building, dominant role plaid by project staff). The MPCs and Iddir supported as well as the women saving and credit groups, the bee cooperatives, the water user association, and the pottery groups established are not yet in the position to sustainably maintain the project activities and support food security after the project's end.

In most projects, the sense of ownership is not well developed, adoption rate of activities implemented is low, and, still, a large portion of the beneficiaries expect further project support (dependency syndrome). This attitude is due to low participation of beneficiaries in project and activity planning as well as in monitoring and evaluation, low own contributions requested, payment of per diems to farmers for village-level training, insufficient awareness creation, staff's understanding of its own role as implementer instead of facilitator, as well as insufficient self-help promotion, community development, and community empowerment.

The evaluation team expects the revolving funds (in-kind as well as in-cash) to run only during the project period. None of the institutions established/strengthened (cooperatives, Iddir, livestock husbandry groups) is strong enough to continue the management of the revolving funds without project support. The in-kind transfer of shoat mothers within peer groups of three beneficiaries supported by one project is not designed to continue after the end of the project.

9. Recommendations for improving MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia

There is no blueprint for improving MISEREOR-financed food security projects in Ethiopia, different situations demand different actions. The individual project evaluation reports contain detailed recommendations how project design, approach, management and activities can be improved. The ten recommendations below tackle the main issues of concern in the MISEREOR-supported food security projects in Ethiopia – those areas where the evaluation team identified shortcomings and saw room for improvement (compare Chapter 6):

1. Improve project planning, design the project and its components based on a profound analysis of the local production and livelihood systems (differentiation of the target group, identification of support measures with the strongest effects in improving the livelihood of the poor),
2. Broaden the food security approach applied, also consider other important aspects of food security such as nutrition, food preparation, sanitation, hygiene, and family planning, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS,
3. Assure that project staff understand its role in the project as a facilitating/enabling one and not a managing/implementing one,
4. Intensify poverty focus:
 - in village selection: Assure that project villages are needy, negotiate for exchange if a village selected by the government is less suitable,
 - in activity selection: Assure that support activities fit the situation of each target group,
 - in beneficiary selection: Assure poverty-oriented beneficiary selection – community-based, transparent, different cross-checks within the community and by the project,
5. Improve community participation in planning, monitoring and evaluating project activities; abandon the emergency approach and intensify a development approach by promoting soft skill orientation, self-help, and establishing/strengthening local groups and institutions
 - according to the slogan “from users and choosers to makers and shapers” (e.g. by promoting reproduction and multiplication of inputs distributed, weekly saving in women groups, no seed money, CoSAP for back-stopping or exposure),

6. Work towards sustainable agriculture (low external input agriculture) to reduce dependency on external inputs, promote diversification of agricultural production, avoid inputs which are bound to chemical fertilizer,
7. Improve revolving fund management of community groups or local institutions (continuous use of funds revolved, transparency, accountability),
8. Intensify capacity building for beneficiaries, conduct training at village level including practice, arrange training at a time which is suitable for the poor and for women, avoid paying per diems to farmers, conduct exchange visits among beneficiaries,
9. Organize staff capacity building (formal and informal, e.g. exchange visits) based on regular staff performance evaluations, strive for continuous improvement – of staff, of the project, and of the organization (institutionalized learning),
10. Improve project management, M+E, reporting, as well as financial administration.

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