Think Tanks and University Relations in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between think tanks and universities in terms of research, training, policy dialogue and consultancy activities. Think tanks in this study considered as 'organizations that produce research products with the aim of creating policy debates, informing decision-makers and making appropriate interventions in the policy process directly/indirectly. The growth of think tanks in Ethiopia accelerated in 1990s owing to the change in the government system from a dictatorship to the current federal arrangement and the Global Go to Think Tanks Report 2011 indicated that there are 25 think-tanks in Ethiopia. In order to investigate the relationship between think-tanks and universities, this study has employed the descriptive type of research and collected primary data from 10 think-tank institutions, two private universities and six public universities of social science education programs.Subsequently, the study found that the collaboration of universities and think tanks in research is mainly based on interactions between individuals where there is no formally established network between universities and think tanks for undertaking collaborative research. Universities based outside the country's capital lack access to information about think tanks to undertake collaborative research. The study also confirmed that collaboration between the two entities in the area of training and education is relatively good. However, it is still more individual-based rather than institution-based. In addition, it was realized that there is relatively good collaboration in the area of policy dialogue, which occurs through conferences, workshops and seminars. Furthermore, it was found that most staffs of think tanks and university departments have not been actively involved in consultancy activities in the fast five years. For few of those university departments that undertook consultancy, above 75 percent worked on their own without seeking collaboration with think tanks. Therefore, developing a strategic framework for universities and think tanks' collaboration and encouraging greater sharing of information between them are very important solutions to promote the collaboration between the two entities in stated four areas in the future.

Keywords: Think tanks, university, research, training, consultancy, policy dialogue

1.   Introduction

Think tanks are public-policy research analysis and organizations engaged to generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues which enable policy makers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues. Think tanks may be affiliated or independent institutions and are structured as permanent bodies, not ad hoc commissions. These institutions often act as a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities and between states and civil society, serving in the public interest as independent voices that translate applied and basic research into a language in understandable, reliable, and accessible forms for policymakers and the public (McGann,2012; Rich, 2004). Think- tanks first emerged in the early twentieth century in the US. In 1916, Robert S. Brookings formed the Institute for Government Research, an institute devoted to the scientific analysis of public policy issues. In 1927, this became the Brookings Institution, the father of think- tanks (Gyngell 2008). The global think tank database within the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program by McGann (2009), managed at the University of Pennsylvania shows that over 100 think-tanks were established between the 1980s and the late 1990s and has identified approximately 5,465 think tanks worldwide in general. The bulk of these are based in the North American region (34%), with Western Europe (22%) and Asia (12%) closely following.

The 2012 Think - tank and Civil Society Program by McGann (2012) shows the growth and new distribution of think tanks worldwide compared to the approximate number of think tanks identified by McGann in 2009. Accordingly, 6, 545 think-tanks were identified with distribution variation from continent to continent. For instance,   Africa with 550 think- tanks, Asia (1,198), Eastern Europe (537), Western Europe (1, 258), Latin America & Caribbean (722), Middle East and North Asia (329), North America (1,912) and Oceania (39). There were several reasons for such growth. These include: the increasing complexity of policy problems; the end of the government's monopoly on information; the expansion of government, together with decreasing confidence in public service officials; and the growth of state and non-state actors. Think –tanks play a vital role in the political and policy arenas at the local and national level in a given country. Their function is unique, as they provide public policy research, analysis and advice, are non-profit, and operate independently from governments and political parties. According to McGann (2005), while the primary function of these civil society organizations is to help government understand and make informed choices about issues of domestic and international concern, they also have a number of other critical roles such as:

- Framing policy issues;

- Researching and writing books, articles, policy briefs and monographs;
- Conducting evaluations of government programs;
- Disseminating their research findings and conducting various outreach activities (public testimony before congress, media appearances and speeches);
- Creating networks and exchanges via workshops, seminars, and briefings; and
- Supporting mid-career and senior government officials when they are out of office.

In today's more dynamic and faster paced world than ever before and the increasingly complex and overwhelming amount of information is available, the rise of organizations whose primary goals are the generation of research and the provision of information are indispensable. Indeed, think tanks have enjoyed massive growth – both in number and in their role in global policymaking – over the last decade. As policymakers have come to rely on think tanks for the thoughtful research and analysis needed for the generation and implementation of successful policy responses to global issues, think tanks have expanded and diversified, to meet the information need of policy makers in this globalized world. In this way, think tanks have sought to fill the "operational gap" of policymakers' lack of access to the information and tools needed to respond to contemporary issues. It is here, in part, that think tanks are so important in filtering, sorting, synthesizing and providing information to policymakers (Benner et al, 2000; McGann, 2010).

In the policy world context, think- tanks have received considerable attention which   has focused on their role in, and influence upon, the policy process (Gyngell, 2008 cited in Christopher, 2012; Abelson, 2007; Stone, 2000; Marsh, 1994; McGann, 2007 & 2009). Think- tanks, as non-profit institutions, carry out applied research in a diverse range of policy sectors. In an attempt to facilitate better-informed policy-making, they engage policy makers on policy issues and contribute to public debate and policy advocacy through introducing new ideas (McGann, 2007& 2009; 't Hart and Vromen, 2008).

Universities, in contrast to think- tanks, primarily strive to develop human capital through education and research activity. However, governments have been encouraging the development of the entrepreneurial university through policies designed to promote and sustain university-industry interaction (Etzkowitz, 1997). The traditional role of the university covers teaching and basic research. Eventually, academics have increased levels of research control, and academic freedom and interaction between the university and external stakeholders through knowledge spillover and unidirectional transfer from the university to the stakeholders.

Collaborations and interactions with external stakeholders such as think-tanks are key aspects and can be classified into: research support; technology transfer; knowledge transfer; and cooperative research. Under this mode, there is a shift from sponsorship to research partnership, and attributes such as trust, openness and understanding are critical for partnership success and the realization of mutual benefits (Christopher, 2012). In order to understand a better position of social science research within the policy making process, it is critical to understand the interaction between think-tanks and universities. In this regard, this study will attempt to meet the following objectives:

- To examine the nature and extent of collaborations between think- tanks and universities in Ethiopia in the last 5 years.
- To explore the nature and extent of collaboration among people in the think tanks or universities with people in other universities or think thanks in the last 5 years in the country
- To understand the areas of collaboration, benefits/contributions, trends of collaborations and challenges encountered in the last 5 years.

2. Literature Review
2.1. The Concept of Think-tanks

The term "think tanks" generally refers to organizations engaged on a regular basis in research and advocacy on any matter related to public policy. They conduct and translate evidence-based research which serves the needs of the public for the comprehension and implementation by policymakers. This would in turn can strengthen public policy debates and promote more objective, evidence-based decision-making. These institutions often act as a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities and between states and civil society, serving in the public interest as independent voices that translate applied and basic research into a language in understandable, reliable, and accessible forms for policymakers and the public (McGann 2012; Rich, 2004). The precise definition of think tank is given by Talbot (2007) cited in (Teitz, 2009) as 'an organization that conducts research on policy issues and then makes its recommendations available to policy makers, opinion leaders, and the citizenry'.

Boucher conceptualization of think-tank encompasses comprehensive and self-explanatory lists as cited in (Koellner, 2013). He identified nine criteria to define a think tank. To qualify as such, accordingly, one has to: (1) be somewhat permanent; (2)specialize in the production of public policy solutions; (3)have in-house staff dedicated to research; (4)produce ideas, analysis and advice; (5)communicate its findings to policy-makers and public opinion; (6)not be responsible for government operations; (7)maintain research freedom and

independence from specific interests; (8) not grant degrees or have training as its primary activity; and (9) Seek, explicitly or implicitly, to act in the public interest.

2.2. The Evolution of Think tanks and Universities in Ethiopia

The subsequent sections highlight the concepts, typologies and evolution of think-tanks and Universities in Ethiopian context.

2.2.1. The concept and origin of Think-tanks in Ethiopia

As in previous sections, we describe think-tanks broadly as 'organizations' that produce research products with the aim of creating policy debates, informing decision-makers and making appropriate interventions in the policy process. They may encompass non-governmental organization (NGO) think-tanks, government-affiliated research institutes, university research centers, consultancies, informal groups of academics and individuals who advise governments, such as intellectuals, consultants and foreign experts (Teshome, 2007; McGann, 2009).

Although the think-tank sector in other parts of the world has been well established ever since the 1960s, in Ethiopia context, it took time for the sector to be well established and to flourish. This was mainly due to the growing suspicion and marginalization of the sector and the fear that its growth will agitate for regime change and thus pose threat to the power of the ruling elite. The establishment of think tanks and their growth appears to be at least partially tied to a series of major political, social and economic events (Dessalegn, 2008).

The mushrooming of think tanks in Ethiopia in 1990s occurred due to the change of government system from unitary-dictatorship to the current federal arrangement. The typologies of think-tanks can be based on their affiliations. This basis yields five possible groupings of Think tanks: (i) academic research centers in universities; (ii) government research centers; (iii) NGOs (non-profit think tanks) and (iv) associated research centers of various interest groups (e.g. lobbies) and (v) Free standing or independent think tanks (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011). According to the Global Go to Think Tanks Report 2011, there are 25 think-tanks in Ethiopia (McGann, 2012). Think-tanks can be categorized under two-main types: government initiated/party-affiliated and civil society affiliated (Dessalegn, 2008). In order to distinguish their similarities and differences, let us briefly see each separately.

1. Civil society affiliated think-tanks

Until the mid-1990s, the growth of the voluntary sector was quite slow by international standards, and by the end of the 1980s the strength of the sector was relatively small compared to many African countries as well as to the size of the country's population. By the latter part of the 1980s, there were perhaps sixty to sixty-five NGOs operating in the country of which the great majorities were international organizations. After the fall of the Derg, there was a steady increase all through the 1990s, and accelerated growth from the end of the decade onwards. Think tanks under this category are independent, non-partisan, and nonprofit membership organization, which have been engaged in undertaking policy-oriented research, delivering training and promoting public debate for the transformation of Ethiopian economic, political and social situations. Like government initiated think tanks, civil society affiliated think-tanks have been created in 1990s following the current government (Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic Government) in Ethiopia in taking over the power. Forum for Social Studies (FSS), Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA), and Ethiopian Initiative for Development, Association of Ethiopian Microfinance Institutions (AEMFI), Ethiopian Development Research Institute, and Inter Africa Group (IAG) are some of the notable think thanks in this category.

2. Government affiliated/party affiliated think-tanks

They have been created by the initiative of the current Ethiopian Government since 1996 and they are semi-autonomous research centers. Their primary mission is to conduct research on the development of the Ethiopian economy, social, and political aspects and to disseminate the results. Under this category, the think-tanks in Ethiopia are: Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development, Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI), Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), and Environmental Economics Policy Forum for Ethiopia (EEPFE).

2.3. Legal Environment and Think Tanks in Ethiopia

Following the enactment of the new government proclamation on charities and societies (Proc. No. 621/2008), the constitutions of civil society affiliated think-tanks have been revised by incorporating the requirements and provisions of the law. On the basis of this new proclamation, civil society organizations including think tanks have been registered in the following categories depending on the source of the budget and the citizenship of members:

1. Ethiopian Charities or Ethiopian Societies: are charities formed under the laws of Ethiopia and all of whose members are Ethiopians. They are also required to generate not less than 90 percent of their fund from Ethiopia and wholly controlled by Ethiopian. On the other word, they should receive and use not more than 10 percent of their funds from foreign sources.

2. Ethiopian Residents Charities or Ethiopian Residents Societies: are charities formed under the laws of

Ethiopia and which consist of members who reside in Ethiopia and who can receive 90 percent of their funds from foreign sources. On the other word, they can receive more than 10 percent of their funds from foreign sources. Most think tanks in the country belong to this category. This is due to the difficulty to mobilize funds from local sources to undertake research activities that require more fund.

3. Foreign Charities: are charities that are formed under the laws of foreign countries or which consist of members who are foreign nationals or are controlled by foreign nationals and receive their total funds from foreign sources.

4. Mass-based societies: are societies that include professional associations, women's associations, youth associations, and other similar Ethiopian societies.

The proclamation also states that the charities or societies cannot expend more than 30% of their expenditure as administrative expenses while 70% of their expense should be on development/program purposes. This also applies to civil society organizations involve in capacity building and research activities (think tanks). Regarding the areas of functions, think tanks in Ethiopia mainly engaged in activities such as researching and writing books, articles, policy briefs and monographs; conducting evaluations of government programs; disseminating their research findings and conducting various outreach activities (policy dialogue, media appearances and speeches); creating networks and exchanges via workshops, seminars, and conferences, and providing short-term trainings.

2.4. Evolution of Universities in Ethiopia

Higher education has only been available in Ethiopia to most qualified school leavers since the early 1990s when the current Government, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to the power. The first higher education institution, Haile Selassie University, was established in 1961 and in 1974 the name was changed to Addis Ababa University (AAU). Until 1985, when Haramaya University was established, this was the only university in Ethiopia. Since 2000, Ethiopia's higher education sector has grown from two public universities to thirty four (34) today. From 2004, the number of students in each public university has doubled to 77,182 in 2009/10 (although the target was 110,000 enrolments), and is expected to double again in subsequent years. It is estimated that Ethiopia's gross enrolment ratio (GER) has increased by 800 percent between 2000 and 2010 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2010).

Private higher education has also increased as part of a general liberalization of parts of the economy; there are now approximately 13 private universities offering undergraduate degree programs in Ethiopia and the private sector accounts for approximately 25 percent of the country's undergraduate enrolments. There has been a very rapid expansion of private higher education institutions since government recognizes that it needs the private sector if it is to meet its targets for the expansion of higher education (World Bank, 2003; Teshome, 2007). These recent developments also increase the potential for strengthening links among Ethiopian higher education institutions, the communities, the labor market and industry. In 2008, Ethiopia decreed that all universities should modify their curricula so that 70 percent of student intake is to science and technology based subjects and 30 percent to the arts and humanities. This has been applied to the private sector as well as public institutions (Teshome, 2007).

Almost at all Universities level, several undergraduate and graduate programs require thesis writing as a partial requirement for graduation. More importantly, universities have research centers/departments that are responsible to organize and manage the research works at universities level. However, their findings are produced largely for technocrats in public service and presented in the form of technical reports that are of limited value for engaging the public in debates or for promoting public awareness. The output of University research is largely geared to academic purposes and is frequently less amenable to public consumption and research undertaken by academic institutions is often not available outside academia due to poor dissemination strategy.

2.4.1. Granting the Status of a University and university college

As per Higher Education Proclamation (Proclamation No. 650/2009) of Ethiopia, an institution shall be granted the name and status of a "university" by the Ministry where:

    a. It has a minimum enrollment capacity of 2,000 students in regular undergraduate and graduate programs in at least three academic units larger than departments, or it has a minimum enrollment capacity of 2,000 students in regular undergraduate programs in at least four academic units larger than departments;

    b. It has a record of at least four consecutive classes of graduates in a degree program if it has been rendering services of higher education after being accredited as a university college, college or institute;

    c. It undertakes research in different appropriate fields, has published its research products and has facilitated means of dissemination of the research findings to end-users;

    d. It has a curriculum that match the national standards set by the Ministry, the necessary academic staff, institutional governing structures as provided for by this Proclamation, teaching materials, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other appropriate discipline-related facilities; and

    e. It fulfills other minimum national standards set by the Ministry.

An institution that may be granted the name and status of a "university college" in Ethiopia should fulfill the following requirements as stipulated by Higher Education Proclamation (Proclamation No. 650/2009):

    a. It undertakes research in different appropriate fields, has published its research products and has facilitated means of dissemination of the research findings to end-users;

    b. Has a curriculum that matches the national standards set by the Ministry, the necessary academic staff, institutional governing structures as provided for by this Proclamation, teaching materials, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other appropriate discipline-related facilities;

    c. Has a minimum enrollment capacity of 2,000 undergraduate students in its regular degree programs in three academic units larger than departments; and

    d. Has a record of at least three consecutive classes of graduates in a degree program if it has been rendering services of higher education after being accredited as a college or an institute.

2.5. University-Think tank Relationships

Formal and grey literature suggests that, globally, universities and think tanks collaborate in different spheres and via different processes, though not much is known about the actual nature of these relationships. McGann (2009) observes that think tanks traditionally have a more academic bend, with a larger portion of their staff consisting of university professors. This suggests that think tanks employ university academics to undertake research on their behalf.

There may only be a few instances where the links between think tanks and universities are embedded in established structures and are guided by defined processes or sets of rules (as might be the case with affiliated think tanks), yet Medvetz (2007) comments on the "hybrid" nature of intellectuals, arguing that "think tanks are structurally hybrid offspring of the more established institutions of academics, politics, business, and journalism". In his specific reference to American think tanks, the arguments could reasonably be applied to the African think tank-university landscape.

In general, the literature reveals a wide variety of relationships between think tanks and universities: short- and long-term, formal and informal, and institutional and individual. They may or may not involve resource sharing, collaborative activities (undertaking projects jointly), or the generation of shared outputs. Depending on the nature of the relationship, a number of factors may influence the forms of collaborations between them, including the national context, the specific types of institutions, the institutions' areas of focus, their ideological orientation, and the kinds of support one or both receives from funding organizations. Each type of organization has emerged (and in the case of some universities from pre-independence roots) with differences in culture and functions and in the perceptions of governments and external funders about their roles and capabilities. In short, a mixed picture exists of the relationships between think tanks and universities, since these institutions have multi-faceted relationships that may be synergistic in some respects and competitive or uncooperative in others.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

Figure1 provides a conceptual framework for understanding university-think tank relationships. The framework shows the nature and extent of relationship that may exist, and the enabling factors. The assumption is that a relationship exists when think tanks and universities make use of each other's resources. As the figure depicts, relationships may exist at institutional and individual levels, and these may be formal or informal arrangements. Relationships may be in different areas including research, training/education, policy dialogue and consultancy. There are enabling and constraining factors that determine the kind of relationships between universities and think tanks. These factors include availability of funds, type of organization and motivation. Other factors that is key in the university think tank relationships include: expected benefits, lessons learned from previous relationships, challenges faced and trends. This study was not intended to evaluate think tanks and universities in the different countries but rather understand the nature and extent of relationships, what drives the different forms of relationships and how the different actors view the relationships.
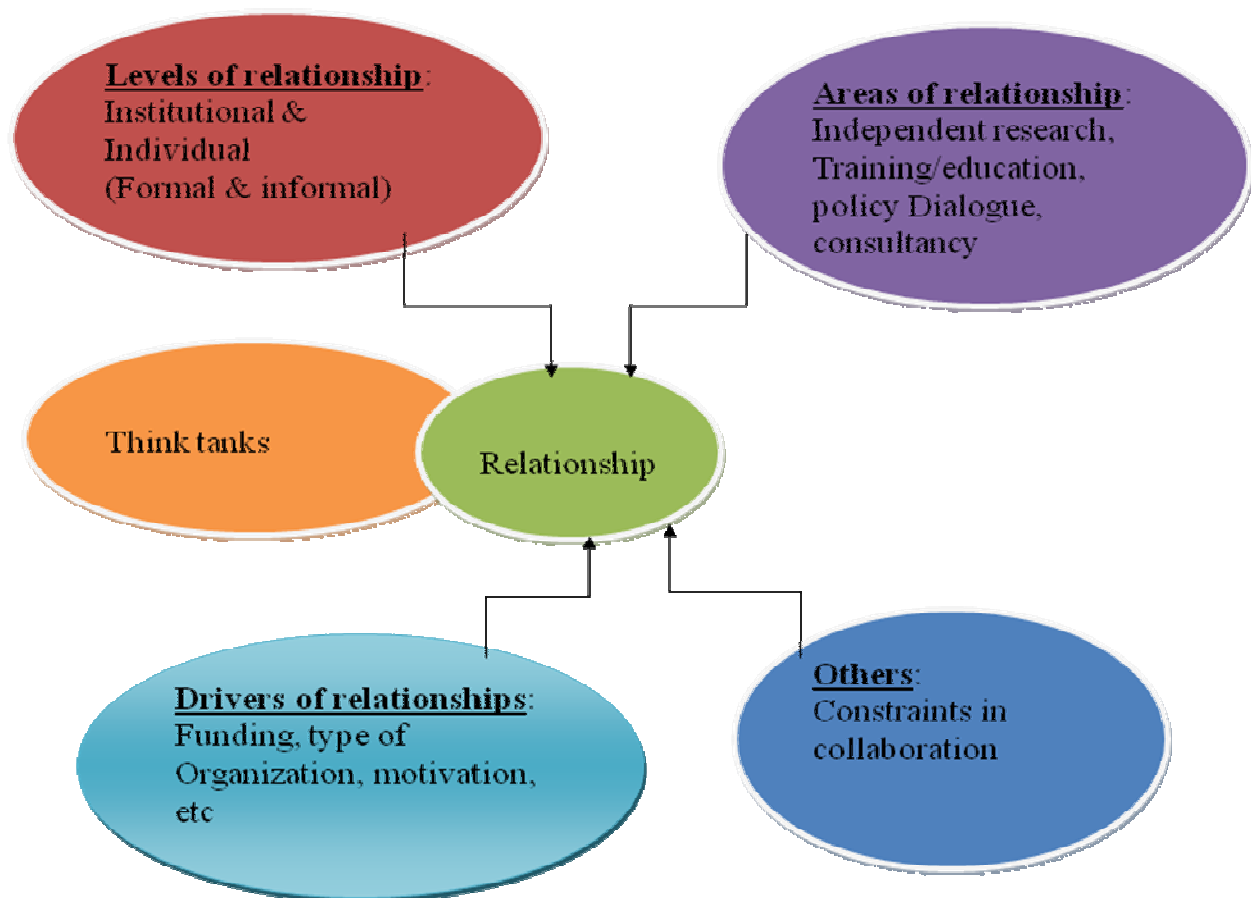
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study; Source (PASGR, 2014).

3. Methodology of the study

In more specific terms, the methodology section explains how the research is conducted and how the data are obtained. It is a way to systematically solve the research problem. Research methodology constitutes of research methods, selection criterion of research methods used in the context of research study and explanation of using of a particular method so that the research results are capable of being evaluated either by researcher himself or by others (McNabb, 2008).

3.1. Population and Sampling

Characteristics of the population (size, type and location) affect the determination of sample size. The population in this study covers all lists of think-tanks, universities and third party organizations in Ethiopia. There are about 23 think-tanks and 47 universities (34 public universities and 13 private universities and/or university-colleges in Ethiopia. But, the exhaustive number of third party organizations, that include investors and clients/users of the think-tanks and universities' products and services, is not well known. For this particular study, purposive sampling method was used since it invites the researcher to identify and target individuals who best meet the purpose on the study. Thus, in order to address the issues related to institutional level, 10 think-tanks which are engaged in undertaking policy oriented researches and 15 departments of different disciplines, but belong to social science fields of study from 8 universities were selected on purposive basis. At individual level, 20 people from the 10 think-tanks and 30 staffs from 15 departments were selected to meet the objectives of the study.

3.2. Data collection methods

In order to produce empirical evidences to fulfill the set of objectives, data collection is necessary. This requires primary as well as secondary data which have to be collected using appropriate methods. For this, study, interviews with well structured questionnaire and observations were used to collect the necessary data from purposively selected interviewees/respondents.

3.3. Data analysis methods

Quantitative data collected from the field survey through interview were analyzed by using the analytical

software SPSS (version 17). Excel was also used in some cases for computation of data. Descriptive statistics, particularly percentage and frequency were computed and presented by using tables and graphs/figures. Depending on the nature of this study, some of data sets were qualitative. This necessitated transformation of attributes through aggregation and quantification by weighting, scoring and computing index values. Summarized rank ordering was used for questions/variables requiring ranking (Zikmund 1990). For all variables that were designed and collected by likert-scale in level of agreement, Weighted Average index (WAI) was also applied. In order to make the comparison easier and clearer, a Weighted Average Index (WAI) was applied to analyze the respondents' level of agreement (Miah, 1993). The index value was obtained by multiplying the statement to its corresponding weight and divides it by the total number of responses, which may be stated as follows:

$$ I = \sum F_i W_i / N $$

Where,
I=WAI
Fi= frequency of response to a particular statement
Wi= weightage of statement
N= total number of responses
The index of level of agreement employed in the data analysis is:

$$ I = Index = (F_1 W_1 + F_2 W_2 + F_3 W_3 + F_4 W_4 + F_5 W_5)/5 $$

Where,

F1 to F5 represent the frequency of response answered 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither nor', 'disagree' and ''strongly disagree' respectively. W1 to W5 represent corresponding weights applied to different response classes (W1=2, W2=1, W3=0, W4=-1 and W5=-2). N= total number of responses. Responses under category of no-opinion was also assumed as 'neither nor'. The following indexes' ranges and interpretations were applied for analysis and discussion purposes in this study.

Weighted index and interpretation				
1.5-2.0	0.5-1.4	-0.4-0.4	-0.5-(-1.4)	-1.5-(-2)
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

In addition to the above quantitative data analysis techniques, narration and content analysis were done for qualitative data (which obtained from open-ended questions and observations).

4. Results and Discussions
This section is devoted to data presentation, analysis and discussion on the basis of the information collected through structured interview from ten think-tanks and thirty departments of eight universities in Ethiopia. The chapter mainly focuses on the nature of interactions between think-tank and university both at institution and individual levels. It presents the institutional and individual interactions turn by turn and the challenges encountered under each situation.

4.1. Areas of collaboration
This section deals with the nature of collaboration between think-tanks and universities in relation to research, training/education, policy dialogue and consultancy activities.
4.1.1. Research
This section seeks to understand the interactions and collaboration between the think-tanks and university's departments and /or individuals working in both cases in relation to independent research. Table 4.1 reveals research projects undertaken by think-tanks and the universities' departments in the last five years.

Table 4.1: Research undertaken by think-tanks and Universities' departments

Items	Think-tanks (N=10)			Universities' departments (N= 15)		
	Response options	Frequency	Percent	Response options	Frequency	Percent
a. Number of research projects your think tank/university undertaken in the last 5 years	Btw 1-5	2	20.0	Btw 1-5	5	33.3
	Btw 6-10	1	10.0	Btw 6-10	5	33.3
	Over 10	7	70.0	Over 10	5	33.3
	Total	10	100.0	Total	15	100
b. Description of the way your think-tank/university undertakes research	Internally	2	20.0	Internally	12	80
	Externally	1	10.0	Externally	-	
	Mixed	7	70.0	Mixed	3	20
	Total	10	100.0	Total	15	100

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

As revealed in table 4.1, the overwhelming majority (70 percent) of the think-tanks undertook over 10 research projects over the last 5 years. The remaining 20 percent and 10 percent of the think-tanks conducted 1-5 and 6-10 research projects respectively. From universalities side, the proportion of universities' departments those undertook 1-5, 6-10 and over 10 research projects is equal to represent 33.3 percent. This indicates that majority of both think-tanks and universities emphasized on research works. With regard to the way the research is undertaken, the overwhelming proportion of think-tanks (70 percent) employed the combination of internal and external staffs which indicates the existence of interaction with other organizations. However, 2 (20 percent) think-tanks used internal staffs exclusively to undertake research projects. In contrast to the think-tanks situations, significant proportion of universities' departments (80 percent) undertook research over the last five years by using its own full or part-time staff. The remaining 20 percent of the universities' departments employed the mix of internal and external approaches. The reasons for which both parties applied exclusively internal staff are depicted in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: The reasons for undertaking research internally

Reasons	Think-tanks (N=2)	Universities' departments (N=15)
	WAI	WAI
a. Using our own staff is less expensive	1	0.5
b. The necessary skills and experience are within	0.5	1.4
c. It is hard to find other organization or outside people with the right research skills	-1.5	-0.2
d. Other organization or outside people are not willing to get involved in our research	-1	-0.5
e. External researchers or other organization lack policy orientation	0	NA
f. it is required or encouraged by funders of the research	-1	0.5
g. Quality control is easier	1	0.7
h. It helps us build internal capacity of staff	1.5	1.7
i. External researchers or organization do not deliver research outputs on time	0.5	-0.5
j. We need to own research reports as a single organization	0	0.3

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

Almost all think-tanks strongly agreed and/or agreed that undertaking research internally attributed to internal capacity of staff, own staff is relatively less expensive and quality control is easier. On other hand, they strongly disagreed and /or disagreed for the reasons connected with it is hard to find other organization or outside people with the right research skills, unwillingness of other organization or outside researchers, and the demand/pressure by funders of the research. Other reasons such as the necessary skills and experience are within, lack of policy orientation from external researchers, lateness of external researchers or organization in delivering research outputs, and owning research reports as a single organization were ranked nearly as neutral. The universities' departments strongly agreed and/or agreed that they undertook research internally for the reasons related to internal capacity of the staff, the necessary skills and experiences are within, and somehow quality control is easier. Table 4.3 presents the reasons for which both think-tanks and universities' departments undertook research externally as summarized by weighted score method.

Table 4.3: Reasons for undertaking research using external sources

Reasons	Think-tanks (N=8)	Universities' Departments (N=3)
	WAI	WAI
a. Using outside organization or people is less expensive	-1.3	-0.3
b. External people provide skills and experience not present internally	1.1	0.7
c. We have a standing collaboration with an outside organization/individual	0.6	0.3
d. They add credibility to our research	0.3	0.7
e. External organizations/people have access to financial or other resources required for research	-0.9	0.7
f. Its required or encouraged by funders of research	-1.3	0.3
g. External researchers or organization bring in the policy orientation aspect to the research	N/A	0.7
h. We want to complement skills	0.6	1.3
i. We do not have enough staff who can do good research	0.4	0.0
j. Our staff are busy and do not have enough time to do research	-0.8	0.0

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

With regard to the reasons for undertaking research projects externally, a considerable number of think-tanks agreed that external people provide skills and experiences not present internally. From universities side, they used external people or organizations mainly in order to complement skills. They also agreed that external people provide skills and experiences not present internally, add credibility to research, have access to financial resources and bring in policy orientation aspect to the research.

Table 4.4 discloses the collaborators of think tanks and universities' departments in research projects. From ten sampled think-tanks, the number of think-tanks that had collaboration with different collaborating bodies ranges from 1 (10%) to 7 (70%). In contrary to this, only a few proportion (1%-3%) of 15 universities' departments had collaboration with other different organizations or individuals on research projects over the last five years. More specific to this study, 50 percent and 40 percent of the think tanks confirmed that they collaborated with national-based university departments and individual researchers who work in national-based universities respectively. On the other hand, only 13.3 percent and 6.7 percent of the sampled universities' departments reported that they undertook research in collaboration with think-tanks and individual working in national think-tanks.

Table 4.4: Collaborators of think-tanks/universities in research for the last five years

Collaborating body	Think-tanks (N=10)		Universities' departments (N=15)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
a. National/country-based university department/think-thank	4	40	2	13.3
b. Individual researchers who work in national/country-based universities/think-tanks	5	50	1	6.7
c. African universities/think-tanks outside the country	1	10	1	6.7
d. Non- African universities/think-tanks	3	30	1	6.7
e. Other African think tank/universities	3	30	1	6.7
f. Non-African think tanks/universities	1	10	1	6.7
g. Governmental bodies	6	60	3	20
h. Inter-governmental organizations	2	20	1	6.7
i. International organizations	6	60	1	6.7
j. Private sector organizations	3	30	-	-
k. NGOs & Advocacy organization	3	30	1	6.7
l. Individual researchers who are based in other organizations	7	70	1	6.7
m. Other universities within the country	-	-	2	13.3

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

As indicated in table 4.5, think-tanks disagreed that collaboration with individuals working in universities improves understanding of policy-oriented research, financial accessibility, the requirements by research funding bodies, and the requirements by users of research outputs. But, they are indifferent about other reasons. From university side responsiveness, improving the understanding of policy-oriented research, credibility, best way to find suitable researchers, quality research, financial accessibility were considered as the major reasons for creating collaboration in research with think-tanks and individuals working in think-tanks with

1.3, 1.3, 1.0, 0.7, 0.7, 0.7 weighted scores respectively.

Table 4.5: Reasons for collaboration in research between institutions and individuals

Reasons	Think-tanks (N=6)	Universities' Departments (N=3)
	WAI	WAI
They are preferred research collaborators over other individual researchers	0.2	0.3
They respond quickly to our needs	0.3	1.3
The best way to find suitable researchers	0.2	0.7
Add credibility to the research	-0.2	1.0
Contribute to quality of the research output	0.3	0.7
Understand policy-oriented research	-1.0	1.3
Have access to financial or other resources required for research	-1.2	0.7
Research funding bodies require us to collaborate with	-1.2	-0.7
Users of research, including policy actors, prefer our research to include collaboration with	-1.3	-0.7

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

Figure 4.1 depicts that out of six think-tanks that had research collaboration with universities and/ or individuals based at universities, 3 of them said that the trend of collaborations did not show any improvement over the last years. On the other hand, one of the six think-tanks indicated that the research collaboration was in declining trend. According to these think-tanks, this trend attributable to the shortage of fund, restrictions by the supervising body, stable structure and invariable assignments over the last five years. Two of the six think-tanks, however, responded that the trend increased or significantly increased over the last five years. The reasons explained here include improved access to funding opportunities; the growing and expansion in terms of the volume of work which in turn necessitated for the support of universities' departments and individual researchers based at universities. Universities' departments which had collaborative research with think-tanks said that the trend is getting significantly increased or increased as pointed out by some university's departments. According to them, the increasing trend is attributable to the ever expansion of universities' departments' responsibilities on a research areas and the number and quality of staffs increased. They also mentioned other reasons such as growing prevalence of think-tanks in number and types; growing role of research units in doing research both at government and private higher institutions, and less bureaucratic and information flow to communicate with think-tanks through call for proposals.

Figure 4.1: Trend of research collaboration in the last five years
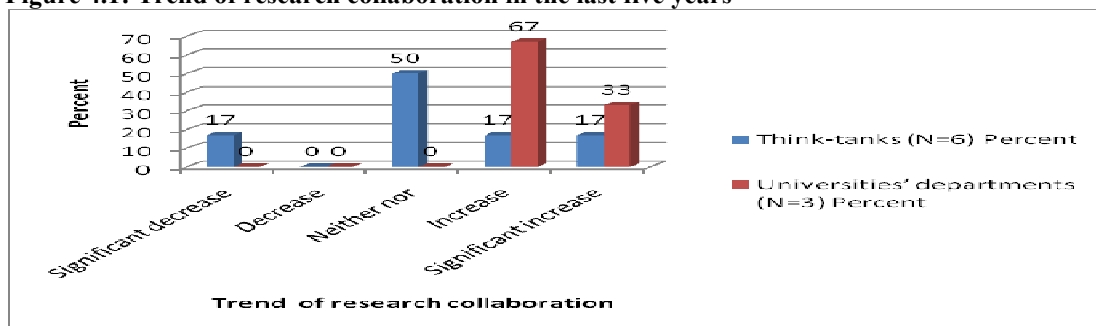
Source: survey and interview, May 2013

4.1.2. Training/Education

This section seeks to understand the collaboration and the nature of interactions between think-tanks and universities' departments in relation to training/education activities undertaken by either the universities' departments or think-tanks.

Table 4.6: Forms and target participants of training/education

Items	Response options	Think-tanks (N=10)	Universities' departments (N= 15)
		Frequency & %	Frequency & %
	None	1(20%)	-
Forms of training/education activities have been delivery in the last 5 years[1]	Training workshops	8 (80%)	14(93%)
	Diploma program	1 (10%)	-
	Undergraduate program	-	15 (100%)
	Postgraduate degree program	3 (30%)	11(73%)
	Certificate program	1 (10%)	-
	Other program	2 (20%)	-
	Our staff	5 (50%)	-
	University student	3(30%)	12(80%)
	Students who have completed secondary education	-	5(33.3%)
The target participant of these training/education activities	Staff in universities	4(40%)	-
	Staff in other universities	-	7(46.7%)
	Local government employees	3(30%)	9(60%)
	NGO employees	2(20%)	-
	Local communities/grass root organization	4(40%	1(6.7%)
	Central government employees/government employees	5(50%	5(33.3%)
	Employees in inter-governmental bodies	3(30%)	2(13.3%)
	Independent people	-	2 (13.3%)
	Private sector employees	1(10%)	3(20%)
	Staff in think-tanks	-	1(6.7%)
The involvement of think-tank/university's department in the delivery of training/education activities	Internally	-	4 (26.7%)
	Externally	1(10%)	-
	Mixed	8(80%)	11(73.3%)
Is there collaboration in delivering training/education activities?	No	1(10%)	9(60%)
	Yes	8(80%)	6(40%)

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

        Majority of think-tanks (80%) used workshops as the dominant channel to undertake training/education activities. Some of the think-tanks also participated in delivering training/education activities in the forms of postgraduate, certificate and other programs. From university-departments' side, all of them (100%) involved in undergraduate; 93% engaged in training workshops and 73% engaged in postgraduate programs in different disciplines that include development economics, environmental economics and public administration. Concerning the target participants, both think tanks and universities' departments have dealt with wide range participants. The delivery of training/education activities have been done internally, externally and the combination of the two. A considerable number of think-tanks (80%) and universities' departments (73.3) participated in the delivery of the training/education activities through the combination of internal and external approaches. Concerning the existence of collaboration between think-tanks and universities' departments in delivering training/education activities, 8(80%) of think-tanks and 6 (40%) of the universities' departments said 'yes' (Table 4.6). This indicates that think-tanks created more collaboration than the universities' departments. At this juncture, table 4.7 indicates the forms of collaboration between think-tanks and universities' departments in delivering training/education activities.

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[1] Ticked more than one option

Table 4.7: Training/education collaboration

Items	Response options		
		Frequency	percent
Think-tanks (N=8)			
a.Number of universities your think tank collaborated with on the delivery of training/education activities in the last 5 years	1	4	50
	Btw 2-5	3	37.5
	Btw 6-10	1	12.5
	Over 10	-	-
b. How your think-tank collaborates with universities' departments/individuals working in universities	Co- delivery of training workshops	5	62.5
	University staff to participate in the delivery of training workshops	5	62.5
	Provide think tank staff to teach at university	3	37.5
	Co-delivery of joint think-tank-university degree and diploma course	-	-
c. The main funders of the collaborative training/education activities with university departments/research units and or individuals working in universities	Government	1	12.5
	Donors	7	87.5
Universities' departments (N=6)	Response options	Frequency	percent
Number of think tank your department/research unit collaborated with on the delivery of training/education activities in the last 5 years	1	-	-
	Btw 2-5	-	-
	Btw 6-10	6	100
	Over 10	-	-
How your department/research unit collaborate with think tanks and/individuals working in think tanks	Co-delivery of joint training workshops	5	83.3
	Provide our staff to participate in the training workshops organized by thin-tanks	3	50
	Co-delivery of joint university-think-tank degree and diploma course	2	40
	Think-tank staff participate as part-time lecturers in the delivery of our degree and diploma course	3	50
The main funders of the collaborative training/education activities with think tanks and or individuals working in think tank	University department/research units internally generated funds	2	40
	Think tanks internally generated funds	1	20
	Government	3	50

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

On the basis of the response from the think-tanks which had collaborative training/education with universities' departments/individuals working at think-tanks, 50 percent (4) collaborated with only one university, 37.5 percent (3) collaborated with 2-5 universities, and 12.5 percent (1) collaborated with 6-10 universities. The collaborative training/education activities involved co-delivery of training workshops, university staff to participate in the delivery of training workshops, and provide think tank staff to teach at university as confirmed by 62.5%, 62.5%, and 37.5% of respondents respectively. The main funders of the collaborative training/education were donors (for 87.5% of think-tanks) and government (for 12.5 % of think-tanks). All six Universities' departments (100%) answered that they had collaboration with 6-10 think-tanks in delivery of training/education activities. This collaborative training/education activities mainly delivery in the forms of co-delivery of joint training workshops as replied by 83.3 percent of think-tanks. University's departments also used staff exchange, and co-delivery of joint university-think-tank degree and diploma courses.

Table 4.8: The Benefits of collaboration in training/education

Reasons	Think-tanks (N=8)	Universities' departments (N=6)
	WAI	WAI
Improves the quality of training/education	1.5	1.3
Enable provision of content that has practical experience and is up-to-date	1.4	1.5
Increase the use of our research output in training/education activities	1.5	N/A
Pool resources and increase training/education scope	0.8	0.0
Opens opportunities for collaboration in other areas	1.3	0.3
Adds credibility to the training/education program	0.6	0.2
Increase interaction between people in think tanks, universities and students	1.4	0.7

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

The weighted score computed in table 4.8 shows that both think-tanks and university's departments indicated that collaboration in training/education improves the quality of training/education and provision of content that has practical experience with up-to-date information. Think-tanks and universities also said that the collaboration increases interactions between people in thank-tanks, universities and students with 1.4 and 0.7 weighted scores. Think-tanks also strongly agreed/and or agreed that their research outputs are used in training/education activities. In contrary to the views from universities' departments, think-tanks reported that collaboration in training/education opens opportunities for collaboration in other areas, pools resources and increase training/education scope, and adds credibility to the training/education with 1.3, 0.8 and 0.6 weighted scores respectively.

Figure 4:2: Trend of training/education collaboration in the last five years
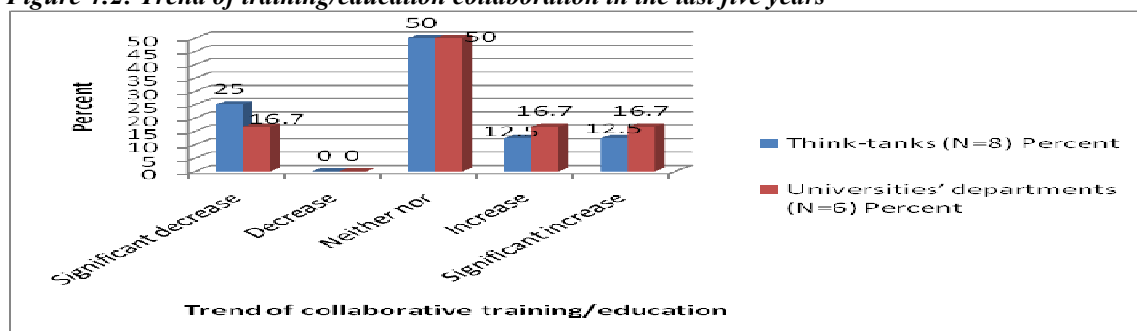
Source: survey and interview, May 2013

Majority of think-tanks (50%) said that the trends of collaboration on delivery of training/education neither increased nor decreased. The other 25 percent of them indicated the trend as significant decrease whereas as equal proportion (13%) experienced significant increasing and increasing trend as depicted in figure 4.2. They attributed unchanged structure and responsibilities over the last five years to the decreasing and neither increasing nor decreasing trend of the collaboration. Some of the reasons emphasized include all become busy towards their business, lack of funding; the restriction nature of the current civil society working environment and its supervising agency; international donors are losing interest to support the think tank because of poor relations with government, shortage of skilled manpower and less priority is given for training. On the other hand, those said increasing trend justified the increased demand for support, increased interests, increment in training/education scope over the last five years. Like the experiences of think tanks, 3 of university-departments (50%) indicated that the collaboration on delivery of training/education was neither in increasing nor decreasing trend. The other one university (17 %) replied the trend as significantly decreasing. Their reasons for this unchanged and decreasing trend include lack of the staff capacity in utilizing and creating the network, resource constraints and unfavorable environment, and absence of compensative payment. On the hand, equal proportion (17%) pointed out collaborative training/education increased and significantly increased for the reasons associated with the needs and interests that are increasing to upgrade the capacity of staffs.

4.1.3. Policy dialogue

This section aims to understand the interaction between think-tank and university departments or individuals based at universities in relation to policy dialogue.

Table 4.9: Forms of policy dialogue

Forms of policy dialogue	Think-tanks (N=10)		Universities' departments (N=15)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
None	-	-	6	40
Conferences	7	70	8	53.3
Workshops	9	90	8	53.3
Seminars	7	70	6	40
Consultation with policy actors	5	50	1	6.7
Media event	3	30	2	13.3
Briefing paper	4	40	1	6.7
Public forum	3	30	-	-
Other publications (research reports, bulletins, etc)	4	40	4	26.7

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

The dominant forms of Policy dialogue undertaken by think-tanks are workshops, conferences, seminars and consultation with policy actors as responded by 90%, 70%, 70%, and 50% of the think-tanks respectively (Table 4.9). In addition, think-tanks employed briefing paper, publications of research reports/ bulletins, media event and public forum as indicated by the range of 30% - 40% of the sampled think-tanks. Regarding the engagement of university's departments in policy dialogue, 6 universities' departments (40 % of the sampled departments) did not participate at all over the last five years. But, majority of them (60%) had experiences in policy dialogue. On the other hand, the dominant policy dialogue forms used by university's departments were conferences, workshops, seminars and publications of research reports as confirmed by 53.3%, 53.3%, 40%, and 26.7 % of the universities' departments.

4.10: The Most frequent actors for policy dialogue

The most frequent actors	Think-tanks (N=10)	Universities' departments (N=9)
	WAI	WAI
a. Government bodies (ministries, parastatals, etc)	1.1	0.0
b. Private sector players	-0.4	-0.6
c. Universities	0.7	-0.4
d. Think-tanks and research organizations	0.0	0.1
e. Intergovernmental organizations	-0.4	-0.6
f. International organizations	-0.2	-0.6
g. Advocacy organizations	-0.4	-0.3
h. Independent professional experts	0.2	0.1
i. Media	0.4	-0.8
j. Opinion leaders	-0.1	-0.8
k. Members of the public affected by the policies	-0.2	-1.3

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

The overall weighted score indicated that the most frequent actors that think-tanks engage in policy dialogue are government bodies and universities with 1.1 and 0.7 weighted scores respectively. On the other hand, universities' departments did not have visible actors that they engaged frequently for policy dialogue. In aggregate terms, the highest positive weighted score is only 0.1 for both think-tanks and independent professional experts. The surprising thing is that both did not frequently involve members of public affected by the policies during their policy dialogue (Table 4.10).

Table 4.11: The dominant way of undertaking policy dialogue

Forms of policy dialogue	Think-tanks (N=10)		Universities' departments (N=9)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
a. Internally	1	10	6	66.7
b. Externally	-	-	1	11.1
c. Mixed (both internal & external approaches)	9	90	2	22.2

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

Table 4.11 indicates that a great number of think-tanks (90%) conducted policy dialogue over the last five years in the form of mixed approaches (by organizing activities alone and in partnership with other organizations). But, majority of universities' departments (66.7%) organized policy dialogue internally even though few of them (22.2%) undertook the policy dialogue through mixed approach.

Table 4.12: Benefits of collaborative policy dialogue

	Benefits	Think-tanks (N=7) WAI	Universities' departments (N=3) WAI
a.	Adds credibility to activities from the perspective of other participants	0.4	1.0
b.	Adds value to understanding of policy	0.4	1.0
c.	Creates opportunities for participants to establish contacts with policy actors	-0.9	0.3
d.	Pools resources and increases scope	-0.1	1.0

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

Table 4.12 shows that almost in all potential benefits of collaborative policy dialogue, think tanks felt 'neutral' and 'disagreed'. Through further probing, many of them underlined that there is legal restrictions to undertake policy dialogue from 2010 onwards as a result of new proclamation of civil society in the country. Because this proclamation does not allow think tanks that registered as "Ethiopian residents' charity" to involve in policy dialogue that has political and human right nature. However, universities' departments agreed that collaborative policy dialogue adds credibility, value to understanding of policy and pools resources as well as increases scope of policy dialogue.

Figure 4.3: Trend of collaboration on policy dialogue activities over the last five years
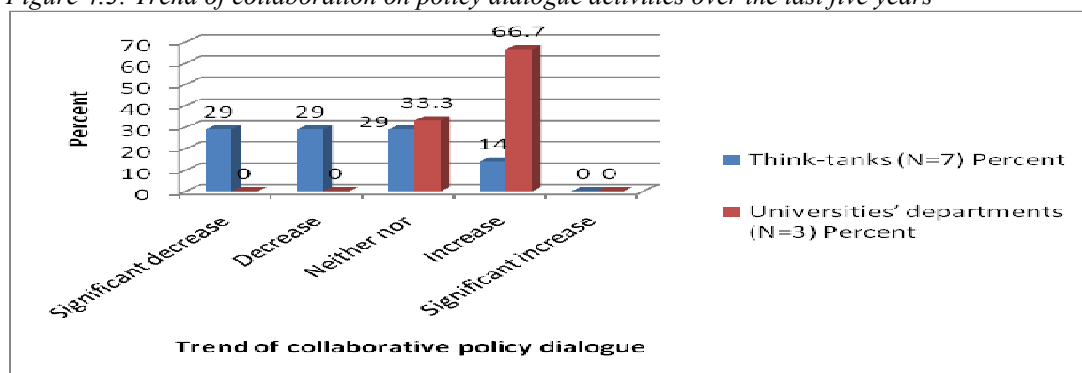
Source: survey and interview, May 2013

As shown by figure 4.3, almost all think-tanks explained that the trend of collaborative policy dialogue was significantly decreasing or decreasing or with no any change over the last five years. According to this group of think-tanks, the constraining factors for collaborative policy dialogue include the absence of government interest, the restriction nature of the new government proclamation on charities and societies, absence of change in structure, staff; and responsibilities internally. On the other hand, only one think-tank (14%) perceived that the collaborative policy dialogue was in increasing trend. This was attributable to the ever increasing in credibility of think tank in organizing forums, and the ambition to add synergy to thoughts and perspectives. From very a few universities' departments (3) which had collaborative policy dialogue with think tanks, the two said the trend of collaboration was increasing due to smooth working relations between the two institutions but one replied neither increased nor decreased.

4.1.4. Consultancy

This sub-section presents the interactions between the think-tank and university departments and/or individuals working in universities in relation to consultancy activities.

Table 4.13: Number of consultancy projects undertaken in the last 5 years

Items	Response options	Think-tanks (N=10)	Universities' departments (N= 15)
		Frequency & %	Frequency & %
a. Number of consultancy projects that your organization undertakes in the last 5 years	None	5 (50)	11 (73.3)
	Btw 1-5	1(10)	3(20)
	Btw 6-10	2(20)	1(6.7)
	Over 10	2(20)	-
	Total	10(100)	15(100)
b. How your think tank undertakes consultancy work (N= 5)	Internally	1 (20)	
	Mixed	4(80)	
	Total	5 (100)	----
c. How your department/research units undertake consultancy work (N= 4)	Internally		3 (75)
	Mixed		1(25)
	Total	----	4 (100)

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

As reveled by table 4.13, half (50 percent) of the sampled think-tanks did not engage in any consultancy projects while the remaining 50 percent undertook consultancy projects in the last five years. Over 10 consultancy projects, 6-10 and 1-5 projects were undertaken by 20%, 20% and 10% respectively. Among those think-tanks which did consultancy projects, 4 (80%) and 1 (20%) think-tanks used mixed and internal approaches respectively. From university side, only 3 (20%) and 1 (6.7%) of the sampled departments were involved in 1-5 and 6-10 consultancy projects respectively over the last five years. The departments which had experiences on consultancy projects, 3 of them undertook internally but only 1 of the departments did consultancy using mixed approach.

Table 4.14: The nature of collaborative consultancy between think-tanks and universities' departments

Items	Response options	Think-tanks (N=4)	
		Frequency	percent
a. Most frequent form of collaboration in consultancy work you have collaborated with universities and or individuals working in universities	Collaboration is between the think tank and a university department/research unit	1	25.0
	Collaboration is between the think tank and individuals who work in universities	1	25.0
	Collaboration is with both	2	50.0
	Total	4	100
b. Who more often initiate collaboration consultancy work you have collaborated with universities and or individuals working in universities?	Our organization initiates most if not all consultancy activities	3	75.0
	Individuals working in university initiates most if not all consultancy activities	1	25.0
	Total	4	100.0

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

The most frequent forms of collaborative consultancy that think-tanks had with universities and/or individuals working in universities are collaboration with institutional level and with individuals in the universities as pointed out by two think-tanks (Table 4.14). The forms of collaborative consultancy also took the forms of between the think and a university's departments, and between the think tank and individuals who work in universities as experienced by two think-tanks. Three of four think tanks said that more often they initiated collaborative consultancy with universities and /or individuals working in universities. One from four think tanks said that the initiation of collaborative consultancy was from individuals who work in universities. At institutional level of the sampled university's departments, there was no any experience of collaborative consultancy with think-tanks and/or individuals in think-tanks over the last five years.

Table 4.15: Benefits of Collaborating with universities on consultancy

Benefits	Think-tanks (N=4)
	WAI
a. Collaboration adds credibility from the perspective of the client	0.5
b. Collaboration improves the quality of the reports	0.3
c. Collaboration opens opportunities for collaboration in other areas	0.3
d. Increase interaction between people in think tanks and universities	0.3

Source: survey and interview, May 2013

The overall weighted score in the table 4.15 indicates that the 4 think-tanks, who had collaborative consultancy, were indifferent about the benefits of collaborating with universities on consultancy. In relative terms, the think-tanks agreed that collaboration on consultancy adds credibility from the perspective of the client.

Figure 4.4: Trend of collaboration on consultancy in the last five years
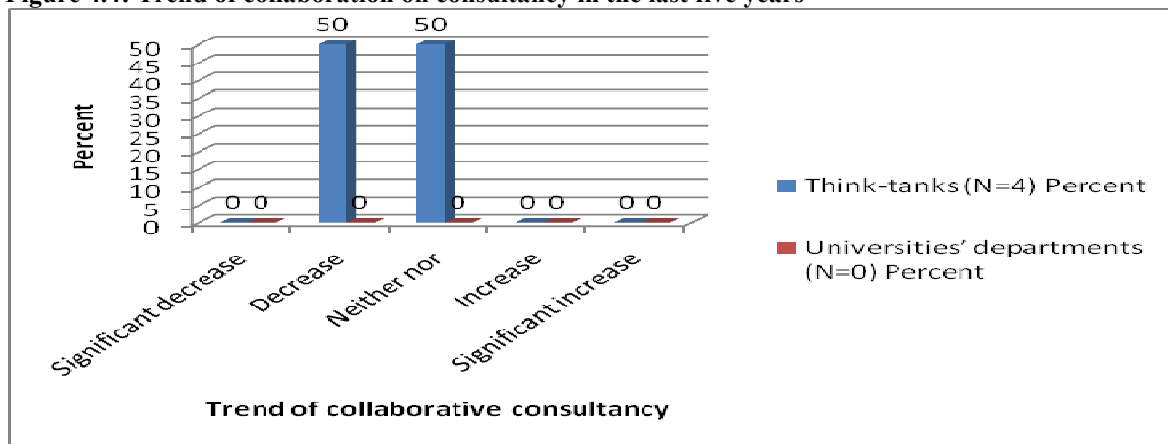
Source: survey and interview, May 2013

Figure 4.4 shows that the four think-tanks which collaborated with university departments and /or people in universities on consultancy expressed that the trend of collaborative consultancy with university departments /people was in decreasing and/or without any change. This was attached with the problems related with quality of report is often up to the standards, the restriction nature of the government rules and policies. In addition, some think-tanks reported that the political arena determines the nature and level of collaboration. In over all, the collaboration on consultancy is at infant stage.

4.2. Constraints of Collaboration

This sub-section pinpoints the critical constraining factors that hamper smooth collaboration and interactions between think-tanks and universities on areas of research, training/education, policy dialogue and consultancy works. A number of constraining factors were mentioned by think-tanks. These entail the absence or little effective communication, high staff turnover that delays the works and interactions, the absence of well established network and collaborations, and very limited initiation, restriction nature of the government proclamation on charities and societies which negatively influence the amount of und to be allocated for different program activities; universities' staff are extremely busy/occupied, shortage of financial and skilled manpower. In addition to the above problems, think tanks also indicated that researchers' from universities lack practical/real-world/ experiences.

From University side, some of the challenges explained include: conflict of interest and areas of focus in undertaking research, constraint of budget; absence of established networks, heavy workload at the universities' departments, prohibitive internal situations like rules and regulations; the conditionalities by think-tanks and donors, lack of or limited autonomy of the departments to act by its own, lack of experiences with external organizations, limited capacity of the internal staff; lack of experiences, highly centralized research activities in the university. The other constraining factors are: the concept of think-tanks and their activities is a matter of new phenomenon in our country, the prevalence, status and capacity of think-tanks are less known; the problem of communication; leadership problem, inaccessibility of think-tanks, lack of staff initiatives in the universities (particularly the expatriates), absence of forum that interact think-tanks with universities.

In connection with the above idea, constraints that might affect future collaboration were also addressed by this study. Here, think-tanks listed out challenges such as lack of funding; the big gap between reality and research outputs, the new charities and societies' proclamation, the absence of well-established network, unclear

internal institutional set-up as some think-tanks are hosted by another think-tank. By the same token, departments from universities emphasized the challenges related with unease local/national conditions for engaging in collaborative works with think-tanks particularly policy dialogue, heavy workloads at universities, prohibitive internal situations like rules and regulations; the conditionalities by think-tanks and donors.

5. Conclusions

This study aims to examine the collaboration between think tanks and universities in Ethiopia in the last five years. Accordingly, it focuses on the areas of collaboration, the nature and extent of collaboration, the benefits/contributions of collaborations and challenges faced in the process of collaboration in the last five years. In this regard, the finding of this study shows that majority of university departments/units focus on training/education followed by independent research, whereas think tanks mainly focus on research and policy dialogue followed by training/education. The engagement of university departments/units in consultancy activities and policy dialogue is insignificant compared with think tanks. The collaboration at institutional level, the study identified areas of collaboration such as research, training/education, and policy dialogue and consultancy activities. Among these four areas, majority of think tanks have collaboration with university units in research, training/education and policy dialogue. However, this collaboration with universities is mostly individual based and informal. They have collaboration in consultancy activities, but it tends to be low compared with others. University departments/research units have collaboration in research, training/ education and policy dialogue, but at all no collaboration in consultancy activities with think tanks in the last five years. The trend of collaboration for think tanks in all these four areas has not shown any increment in the last five years due to shortage of fund, restrictions by the supervising body, stable structure and invariable assignments. The trend of collaboration in research and policy dialogue has shown increment for university departments/research units who have established collaboration which is attributable to the ever expansion of universities' departments' responsibilities on a research areas and the number and quality of staffs increment. But their collaboration in training /education has not shown increment because of lack of the staff capacity in utilizing and creating the network, resource constraints and unfavorable environment, and non- compensative payment. Besides, the involvement of staffs of think tanks in teaching at university and policy dialogue organized by a university is not active which requires much to be done for bringing change in the future.

In general, collaboration among think tanks and universities or individuals in the think tanks and universities is constrained by several factors like lack of time, absence of formally established network among institutions, lack of commitment and common vision between universities and think tanks and lack of awareness about the benefits of collaboration. Besides, new government proclamation on determination of administrative and program costs, time constraints, lack of fund, non-responsive nature from universities and difficulty to get research funds from think tanks are the some other factors that influence the extent of collaboration. Furthermore, absence of clear rules for collaboration, lack of joint forum through which think tanks and universities can sign MOU for collaborations; poor access to the information of think tanks and universities, the burden of duties within the universities and think tanks (regular work load), the policy direction of institutions and finance are the pronouncing factors that determine the extent and trend of collaboration. Thus, it is indispensable to design the joint forum through which think tanks and universities can meet together to clearly discuss and formally establish areas of collaboration and signing MOU for collaboration with clear rules and guidelines.

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