Governance and the Millennium Development Goals: Exploring Education and Gender-Related Goals in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) consists of various aspects of human developments that have been pledged by 189 countries in the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. The MDGs has eight goals, eighteen targets and forty eight indicators to be achieved by 2015. Indeed, deadline is approaching. According to different reports, some countries have shown progress, but many countries in Sub Saharan Africa are lagging behind. Scholars are now critically looking into the possible 'missing pieces' in those countries that are behind timetable in achieving the goals. In the same vein, the objective of this paper is to explore whether governance is one of missing pieces in countries lagging behind the schedule. To do so, we have selected Ethiopia as a case out of Sub Saharan countries due to information access to Ethiopia and Ethiopia is highly committed country to achieve MDGs, although lagging behind. We have specifically focused on MDG Goal 2 and 3 by interviewing different actors and reviewing literatures. The results indicate that Ethiopia has shown promising results in achieving MDG goal 2 and 3. However, in terms of governance, Ethiopian policy actors should rethink on multi-sectoral approaches in achieving these two goals, and tension between government and NGOs relation due to enactment of Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009. Further, quality of education is should be incorporated in MDG indicator post 2015 worldwide.

Keywords: Millennium Development, MDG Goal 2 and 3, Education, Gender goal, Governance, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

The millennium year marked the pledge of 189 countries in the United Nations General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They put their commitment to achieve the 8 goals, 18 targets, and 48 indicators by 2015 on the various aspects of human development (for complete list of the MDGs, see mdgs.un.org). We are approaching the edge, the deadline of that promises and some of the countries are behind in terms of achieving the goals. Various reports indicate varying degrees of achievement of the MDGs with more concerns in Sub-Saharan African nations (Hulme, 2009; Hulme and Scott, 2010).

Scholars like (Hulme, 2009) have been investigating the possible 'missing pieces' in those countries that are behind schedule in achieving the goals. There have been several discussions on the issue of governance as one of those 'missing pieces'. Governance, currently a 'buzzword' in the field of development, has been used and discussed in many different ways.

According to different sources, Sub Saharan Africa is one of the regions lagging behind schedule. However, all Sub Saharan countries may not show the same results in terms of achieving MDGs. For this study, we purposely selected Ethiopia, which is one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, landlocked, and like many countries in the region, building its economy mainly from the agricultural sector. However, it is noted that Ethiopia is making steady progress towards the MDGs and has achieved remarkable results in key areas, such as education (World Bank, 2006). Ethiopia's public spending on education has increased by 170% between 1996/97 and 2006/07 (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), (2008). Also, it was one of the first countries to connect its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)[5] to the MDGs (UNDP, 2005) showing the commitment of the country towards achieving the MDGs. Nevertheless, it realizes that much more needs to be improved as it ranks 171th out of 182 countries and 41st out of 52 African countries in the 2009 Human Development Index (HDI)[6] of the UNDP (UNDPa, 2010). Exploring governance structures and practices contextually in Ethiopia could help us get insight into the dynamic of education and gender in MDGs.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2010b) states that meeting the education-related goals in the MDGs contribute to accelerated progress toward other goals. Educating children helps reduce poverty and

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[5] The PRSP has become the operational framework to translate the global MDG targets into national action.

[6] The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and gross enrolment in education) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). (UNDPa, 2010).

promote gender equality. It helps lower child mortality rates and promotes concern for the environment. Goal 2 "Achieve universal primary education" is seen as inextricably linked to Goal 3 "Promote gender equality and empower women" as universal primary education by definition requires gender parity. They elaborated the 'multiplier effect[7]' of getting girls into school and ensuring that they stay and learn (UNICEF, 2010a). The Ethiopian government is committed in promoting gender equality; this is shown by the achievement of 0.89 gender parity[8]ratio in the primary education level by 2008 and the role of its Women Affair Ministry down to district levels to make sure the availability of gender-disaggregated data reporting to better inform policy (MoFED, 2008).

Studying in the Netherlands and getting access for information, one of authors of article has took the interest to explore the bilateral aid partnership between the Netherlands and Ethiopia in achieving the MDGs. The Netherlands support in the education sector in Ethiopia started in 2002. It focuses its input on improving the quality aspects of basic education and on increasing the poverty alleviation effects of education, emphasizing the harmonization with other donors. Teacher development, girls' education, and higher education are some of the activities supported by the Embassy (Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands in Addis Ababa, 2010). The United Nations Millennium Declaration also pledged "*to support developing countries by providing substantial increase in aid of sufficient quality and arriving in a timely manner to assist them in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.*" The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development reiterated the international community pledged to commit 0.7% of the Gross National Income (GNI) of donor countries as Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries. In Ethiopia, The Development Assistance Group (DAG) was established in 2001 to advance information sharing, policy dialogue, and donor harmonization in order to meet the MDGs. DAG currently comprises 26 donor agencies providing development assistance to Ethiopia within the Paris Declaration principles of aid effectiveness and harmonization (DAG/UNDP Ethiopia, 2010). The Netherlands Embassy is one of the donor agencies in DAG.

Thus, the aim of this research is to analyze the governance structure and practices that have contributed to the achievement of the MDGs, goal 2 and 3, in Ethiopia. To do so, we adapted Pasha-Ghaus (2007) on her view of governance structure that encompasses multiple actors (such as the state, civil society, the private sector, and external development partners) and multiple duty holders, and their relationship in various levels. Further, we looked at governance practices as the actual arrangements or application on the ground, as experienced/observed by the relevant actors in the field.

2.   Methodology

Selection of Ethiopia as a case was due to information access and Ethiopia is one of sub Saharan countries and it shows mixed results in achieving MDGs. Further, as one of the authors was in The Netherlands, We have got useful inputs from the about the relevance of education and gender issues (e.g. current issues on budget cut for education and development cooperation in The Netherlands) and practicalities (conducting the research in the Netherlands and the possibilities to have a face-to-face interview with the MDGs Ambassador of the Netherlands) of choosing The Netherlands. After further literature reviews and consultations with the commissioners, we ended up with focusing on the inextricable link of goal 2 and 3 in Ethiopia.

We conducted a qualitative research, applying the method of interviews (face-to-face and telephone interviews) and literature review as means of data collection, which then is triangulated to answer our research questions. We reviewed MDGs-related articles, Ethiopia's MDGs Progress Reports, and grey literatures such as websites of various development organizations. We carried out semi-structured interviews with two MDGs experts s from Ethiopia. The key-informant interviews were conducted with the Head of Women's Affairs of Southern Nation, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), Ethiopia and with the Head of Development Cooperation and Education Specialist of the Netherlands Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Moreover, we got some real practices of community participation in schools and insights on the relationship between the government and NGOs. While, the interview with the Netherlands Embassy offered an alternative view from an international donor actor working in the field of education in Ethiopia forming an integral part of governance structures and practices.

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[8]Gender parity index is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes.

3. Ethiopia's Progress in Achieving The MDGs, Goal 2 and 3

3.1 Achievements

In the year 2000, the experts group of the United Nations has formulated the indicator to measure the progressed of the MDGs. Annex 1 presents Ethiopia's progress based on the indicators related to Goal 2 and 3. These numerical data shows that there is a progressive increase toward achieving the MDGs goal 2 and 3. However, we recognized that reality on the ground may be different: children may have difficulties to access primary education, more students may be dropping out from schools, people may be able to read but may not understand the simplest sentence that they read, and parents may still prefer not to put their daughters in schools. Yet, we see that changes are happening. Thus, in this research, we were interested to assess the strategies adopted to bring these changes.

The government's strong commitment towards women and gender issues is one of the most interesting points from the Ethiopian experience. This is exemplified by the fact that girls' education is being promoted as an integral part of the nation's development agenda, hence the full integration of gender-in-development issues at all sectoral departments and at all levels of government. There is a growing level of awareness about the magnitude of the problems involved in enhancing the status of women in general, and in improving the participation of girls and women in education in particular (Obanya, 2004). In the last six years, the government has allocated highest budget to the education sector more than any of the other sectors (see Table 1.). This shows the issue of gender and education has a high priority area of national development that contributed to: (a) Raising awareness among different classes in society, (b) Building capacity at different levels, and (c) Progressively narrowing the gender gap, especially at the basic education level (see Annex 1.)

Table 1. Trends in pro-poor sectors allocated budget (%)

Sector	*2001/2*	*2002/3*	*2003/4*	*2004/5*	*2005/6*	*2006/7*
Education	14.2	16.1	20.4	19.7	21.8	16.5
Health	5.9	4.9	4.3	4.8	4.6	6.1
Agriculture & food security	9.2	8.1	13.4	16.3	16.8	16.4
Road	10.7	9.9	9.6	11.3	14.8	12.7
Water & sanitation	2.8	2.9	2.0	4.5	4.4	6.9
Total	**43**	**42**	**50**	**57**	**62.4**	**59.7**

Source: UNESCO (2007)

In order to address the capacity constraints, the Government of Ethiopia launched in 1997/98 the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). At the moment, the program is in its third phase, (2010/11 to 2014/15). The policy pursued under this program focuses on improving the quality of education, increasing access to educational opportunities with enhanced equity, equality and relevance. According to UNESCO 2007, some of the achievements recorded so far in this sector include:

i. The Government increased investment on education, in construction of schools, and of textbooks. Specially, the Government investment on education has more than doubled from 35 Birr per person in 2001/02 to 72 Birr per person in 2004/05.

ii. A greater shift to community control over schools and resources, so villages and parents have more says in education and school management. By involving villages' leaders in school management the Head of Women Affairs, clarified how local leaders and teachers request the parents and why their children are absent from school, even they bring to committee for decision.

iii. Programs to improve the quality of education, including upgrading teacher training, revising the curriculum and textbooks, and improving English language teaching.

iv. Special programs to use information technology, computers, and television in teaching across the country.

v. Six regions have met the basic target of 1 textbook for each student.

Among the factors that contributed to the accelerated progress achieved in this period is the significant increase in the number of primary schools from 11,780 in 2000/01 to 16,513 in 2004/05. The progress is supplemented by the fact that 80% of the constructed schools are located in rural areas and by the increased awareness of the community towards girls' education.

With more children completing primary school, there is also increased pressure for more secondary schools. Thus, the government has simultaneously launched a program to expand the number of secondary education places. Accordingly, secondary school 1st cycle and 2nd cycle acceptance/enrolment capacity has increased from

860,645 and 45,671 to 1.01 million and 73,133 respectively. The GER[9] for secondary school reached 27% in 2004/05 as well (UNESCO, 2007). This also resulted in an increased number of student enrolled in the university. In order to cope with this balloon effect, the Government has given accreditation to 10 new private institutions and established 13 new higher education institutions and also upgraded existing ones (MoFED, 2008). In the case of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**,** the number of TVET institutions has increased from 17 in 1996/97 to 158 in 2003/04, and acceptance/enrolment capacity has reached 94,592 in 2004/05.

With the considerable success in raising enrolment rates, however, it is becoming apparent that enrolling to school is not the end of the story. The dropout rate has increased over the years (see Annex 1) and has become a major challenge to policy makers as they try to secure success of the sector. Quality, retention and learning achievement have often been compromised in the quest to get as many children into school as possible. Free basic education swelled classrooms. The poor quality of teaching-learning processes in the classrooms has an influence on attendance and the high drop-out and repetition rates of girls. Other elements of poor qualities are inadequate facilities, insufficient training of teachers, low salary of teachers, shortage of books and other teaching materials indicate the low quality of education provided (Oumer, 2009). Other factors specific to girls, these factors include early marriage and childbirth; a lesser willingness on the part of parents and the family to send girls to school; the absence of sanitary facilities in schools; the security implications of geographical inaccessibility; and the provision of care to family members who have been affected by HIV/AIDS or other illnesses (UNICEF, 2010a).

3.2 Challenges

With those successes also come new challenges. While one may appreciate the attempts made to expand access, and improve equity, the progress so far made to improve quality is limited. Quality in education is relative and not easy to measure. It has been difficult to keep up with the very rapid increases in the number of students, so quality might have been compromised in some instance because:

i.   The increase in average number of students per classroom exceeds the caring capacity of available classrooms.

ii.   The number of teachers has not increased as fast as the number of students, so the number of students to each primary school teacher has increased from 61 in 1993 to 67 in 2004/05, and the number of students in an average secondary school section has gone up to 77 (UNESCO, 2007).

iii.   High construction costs limit the construction of new schools as well as the speed of construction of additional classes which is much slower than the rate of increase in number of enrolled students; Dropout rates are very high; absenteeism is also high and many children leave school before the end of year 5 (or even of year 1), so get very little education.

iv.   Whereas enrolment ratios show an overall increasing trend, it is necessary to note that there is disparity among regions. In particular, the enrolment ratio of Afar and Somali regions are found to be low.

v.   Resource shortage to access qualified teachers as well as problems related with management and implementation capacity.

Government is working on these drawbacks, including trying to find ways to hire more teachers and to reduce construction costs. The main effort will still be on mobilizing more teachers and provision of capacity building programs to upgrade their skill through on job training and summer courses. Special programs were initiated to respond to the needs of rural and pastoral areas where it is more difficult for children to go to school. Accordingly, Alternative Basic Education Centers (ABECs) are being built to reach out-of-school children and children from pastoral areas. There are now 1.3 million children in ABECs and female enrollment in ABEC is growing from time to time. This program has helped to narrow the enrolment gap between boys and girls (MoFED, 2008).

The 2009 assessment of progress being made in achieving the MDGs by African countries recognizes the advances that Ethiopia has made in increasing net primary enrolment (AfDB, 2009). Moreover, efforts will be made to strengthen community and NGOs participation in the provision of primary education as well as to increase the participation of women. Emphasis will also be placed on to support children with special needs.

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[9] The number of **pupils (of any age)** who are enrolled in primary education as a percentage of the total children of official school age population. When the NER is compared with the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) the difference between the two ratios highlights the incidence of under-aged and over-aged enrolment.

4   Governance Structures and Practices In Relation To Goal 2 And 3 In Ethiopia

Gibson (n.d.), in his paper "Governance, Political Science, and the Environment" reviewed how various development organizations discuss governance. In his paper he mentions that the British Council believes governance is a broader notion that involves interaction between the formal institutions and those in civil society; it refers to a process whereby "elements in society wield power, authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life". The World Bank in its 1992 report of "Governance and Development" defined it as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development"; it sees three distinct aspects of governance: (i) the form of political regime, (ii) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of country's economic and social resources; and (iii) the capacity of the government to design, formulate, and implement policies and programs and discharge its functions. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) asserts that governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). The actors in governance range from government, to local/national/international donors/organizations/multinational corporations, to academic institutions, and to community themselves for example the peasant farmers.

Furthermore, Mark Malloch Brown, the then UNDP Administrator, in the opening of the Human Development Report 2002 "Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World" mentioned that building strong and deep forms of democratic governance at all levels of society is the best way to achieve sustained poverty reduction including the attainment of the MDGs. In line with that, when discussing governance and the MDGs, Pasha-Ghaus (2007) outlined eight dimensions and/or challenges of governance, they are: (1) framework for pro-poor policies, (2) public administration and civil services, (3) decentralization and delivery of services, (4) accountability and transparency, (5) rule of law, (6) human rights, (7) role of civil society, (8) enhanced aid and absorptive capacity. She suggested that the achievement of the MDGs requires properly trained and skilled civil services and properly managed public administration system to develop and formulate strategies and policies. It is important to make well-informed decision on which institutional arrangements are most appropriate for delivery (national or sub-national governments, public-private partnership, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), bilateral/multilateral donor agencies) to ensure efficiency and sustainability. From the research findings, I was able to analyze and discuss on the basis of 6 of Pasha-Ghaus' points which include (1) framework for pro-poor policies, (2) public administration and civil services, (3) decentralization and delivery of services, (4) accountability (5) role of civil society, (6) enhanced aid and absorptive capacity.

4.1 Framework for pro-poor policies

Ethiopia has made strides in moving from being one of the countries in the world with the worst human development indicators. Annex 1 also shows that in Ethiopia, education has the highest budget allocation as compared to other sectors. However, this does not take away the view that many authors have that Ethiopia still has a long way to go in terms of poverty alleviation. Whilst there have been strides made by Government to improve socio-economic conditions of the populous, according to Ringheim et al (2009) Ethiopia is still one of the countries in the world that has the majority, 84% of the population, living in densely populated highland areas. "In 2009, 4.9 million beneficiaries were identified as requiring emergency food and nonfood assistance; another 7.5 million with chronic food insecurity receive assistance through the Productive Safety Net Program." It Is this very poverty levels that have led to high drop-out rates. This is on two fronts;

    i.   As more labor is needed for food production, children, especially girls, are kept at home as a labor source

    ii.   As heads of households attempt to make do with the little money available, education becomes less of a priority

    iii.   However, in some of the cases, the Ethiopian Government together with NGOs and donors such as World Food Program and Canadian International Development Agency, have managed to take advantage of the relative food insecurity as a means of encouraging school enrollment through school feeding programs Whilst such programs have been questioned in terms of sustainability by authors such as, they do serve to increase enrolments rates and form an integral part of pro-poor policies in education. Scholarships especially for women and girls within Ethiopia are available through NGOs such as Forum for African Women Education. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (Southern Region) also looking for scholarships for female students from both the private sector and international sources and such scholarships are available even at primary school levels. This is all in an effort to reduce the number of barriers that women in Ethiopia face as they seek to get good education.

4.2 Public administration, accountability, civil services, decentralization & Service delivery

The research found that there were several coordination mechanisms that were in place within Ethiopia when it came to Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3. This is partly due to the fact that there are several institutions with different mandates that are attempting to work towards the same goal. However, what we see is a case of institutional inertia[10] with institutions struggling to retain their existing structures and coordination mechanisms.

We have found a hierarchical structure within the Ministry of Education, although with some degree of autonomy at regional level. At the moment, the focus of the MDG 2 is at primary school level and within the education arena; this is primarily coordinated at regional levels. At this level the curricular, language of instruction and types of schools are decided and implemented with relative autonomy. Pupils are taught in their native language up to grade 8 in line with UNESCO recommendations, thereafter the language of instruction changes to English. This creates disparities between regions on the delivery/quality of curriculum. In terms of accountability, each school director reports to District education office, which in turn reports to Zonal education office which in turn reports to regional education office then ultimately to National Ministry of Education. The time span increases from bottom to top and detail reduces. However, there is also accountability of higher departments in the structure, to lower ones in terms of resource allocation and curriculum regulation.

However, discussions with key informants revealed that this segmentation of education (emphasis on primary education as one of the indicators in Goal 2) created by MDG 2 was creating challenges in a reality that is non-linear and interconnected. As we go up to University level, coordination is now done at national level and in the same language of instruction (English). As the education arena widens, we see the entry of variety of actors that are not limited to government departments. Within the Ethiopian Education sector, NGOs play an important role in terms of service delivery in non-formal education and in formal primary and secondary school levels. There has also been the introduction of private schools run by entrepreneurs mostly within the urban areas. However, ultimately the curricular and the examinations are centralized and these actors have little autonomy. This means that ultimately government has the final say and remains in control of the education sector. In terms of gender, the Ministry of Women's affairs plays a key role.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is more like a *watchdog* for engendering of activities including education. There exists a horizontal and vertical collaboration: at national, regional, district and zonal levels amongst education officers, NGOs, women affairs, private schools and communities to help the poor female students attend school, create awareness of education at local level. However, this does not fall under the jurisdiction of education officers; it is main duty of women affairs bureau to coordinate the activities. The Head of the Southern Region Women's Affairs Office Ms. Aster said: *"... One of my duties is to find sponsors for poor female students who have no access to school, which must be endorsed by village leaders."*

Further, she explained that the sponsors are NGOs, private schools for few numbers of students, but it is challenging to get sponsors for poor female students. Selection is highly competitive and is based on severity of poverty and performance of students. In terms of coordination, at district level, a school director must submit enrollment size they planned and achieved, rate of dropout, actions taken, lesson plan of each teach. The main duty of gender office is to check whether each data are gender disaggregated. There is also the use of affirmative action to ensure that women have an equal chance of getting into schools and pursuing their dreams. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, as shown in Figure 1 below, has offices from national to district level. At lower levels, they do not have an office but do have a presence as this forms part of their jurisdiction.
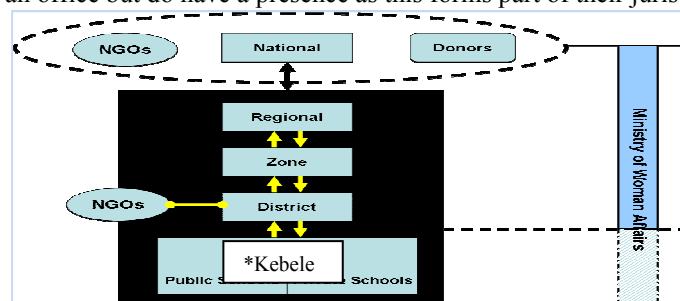
*Kebele is the smallest administrative unit at local level
Figure 1: Structure of the education arena within Ethiopia

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[10] The term inertia is adopted from Newton's laws of motion. It is taken to mean that without the application of external factors institutions will continue in their normal state of priorities and activities. However, even with the application of that force, there will be resistance to change of status quo.

4.3   Enhanced aid and absorptive capacity

We cannot deny the contribution of the international community within the education sector in Ethiopia and particularly in the achievement of MDGs 2 and 3. This may stem partly from the fact that these goals are formulated at a global level and then transcend country boundaries and sovereignty. Their monitoring is also done at a global level and some of the implementation done with international money. One of the key-informants interviewed was the Dutch Development Cooperation arm in Ethiopia. Education is one of the priority themes of Dutch development policy because good education promotes social and economic development. By 2007, 15% of the total Dutch development cooperation budget (approximately 600 million Euros) was spent on education (UNDPb, 2010). Furthermore, Dutch cooperation policy intends to enable women to enjoy the same development opportunities as men in all of its priority areas and to play a more active role in politics, society and the economy. Approximately 20% of the Netherlands' contribution to education now has an explicit gender-based goal. At policy level, from 2010 we noted from literature review and interviews that most donor countries had agreed to adopt what is known as a silent partnership that will see a withdrawal from active policy engagement but continuing channeling funding in the area of service delivery of education for example: construction of schools, textbook procurement and teacher training as Ethiopian government is viewed as having the "right" policies in place. The silent partnership strategy helps in harmonization between actors' activities in the DAG.

On closer analysis of the relationships and linkages that exist within the education arena we find that there are different pockets of power that exist. Figure 2 shows the different actors that the research was focusing on and the arrows represent the direction and volume of engagement that exists between the actors. The Ethiopian Government is described by other actors as being efficient and strong willed. The Head of Development Cooperation at the Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia praised the Ethiopian Government saying: *".....when you are talking to senior officials of this country, they are serious, they know what they are talking about. If they promise something today, they will do it tomorrow. So that makes working is very interesting and motivating and I must say having to work in another country that has not always been the case."*

This is in line with Pasha-Ghaus (2007) suggested that skilled civil services and proper management of public administrations are paramount to achieve the MDGs. The commitment is exemplified by the Ethiopian Government commits 20% of its total budget allocation towards education. As a result they have a 2 way relationship with donors at a national level. However, there is very little space created for the participation of NGOs that are dealing with human rights and advocacy issues. This is such that there is a law that prohibits the operation of NGOs within this sector that has more than 10% of their funding from abroad. As such, a good rapport does not exist between the 2 actors. However, there is a much better rapport, albeit one sided, between the government departments and NGOs in the service delivery sector.
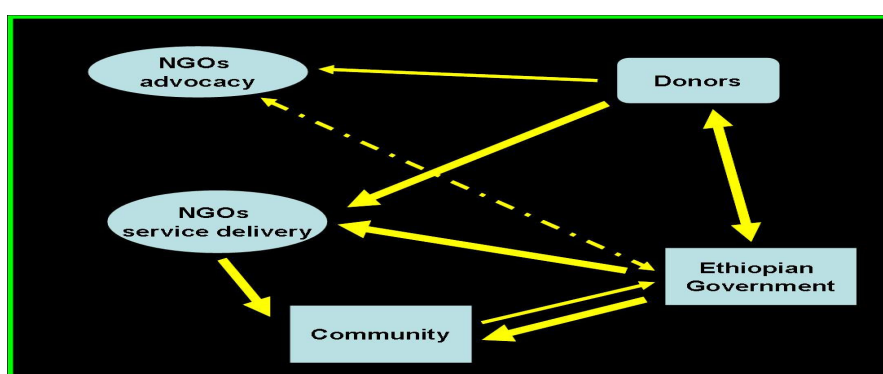
*Figure 2: Engagement between different actors in the education arena

Thickness and direction of the lines represent the level and dominant direction of engagement. Whilst there is a relatively good relationship between the donors and the Ethiopian Government that is two way, there is barely any relationship between the Ethiopian Government and NGOs working on advocacy. The community had very little say as compared to the level of engagement exercised by the Ethiopian Government towards them.

4.4 Human rights and the role of civil society

For the purposes of the research we defined civil society as active citizenry that may lead to increased self-organization an influencing of living conditions that moves beyond territorialization and formal political circles.

In the case of Ethiopia civil society shall be taken to encompass the community, NGOs and women's rights movements.

Whilst the community is involved, there is no proactive participation of local communities on decision making and resource control of schools. There is a greater shift to community control over schools and resources, so villages and parents have more say in education and school management. This is organized by involving villages' leaders in school management. This gives local leaders and teachers the power to request the parents why their children are absent from school, even they bring to committee for decision. However, from our interview with the Head of Women's Affairs of Southern Region, there is a challenge that school director and parent committee leaders are member of government party. They do not want to hear bad news about school, which hide the interest of community.

As already mentioned before, NGOs play a crucial role in the education arena of the Ethiopia. However, the space that is provided for active participation is controlled and limited ultimately by the government. This is also implied from our interview with the Head of Development Cooperation: *"…. the result of achieving the MDGs has been quite impressive in the Ethiopian context […] … they are way faster in achieving the MDGs than most of any other African countries… on the other hand, there are serious problems that relate to your questions on the relationship between governance and the achievement of the MDGs. Is that on the governance side there are serious doubts on the side of the donors whether they…. in implementing its activities the government is respecting all the international … conditions for transparency, political space for NGOs, etc…. so there is a very limited space for NGOs to operate in that arena."* Figure 2 shows that although NGOs work at almost all levels, they are also accountable to the Ethiopian Government at varying levels and scales. At district level, the administrator of district is responsible to monitor/oversee the NGO activities.

Ethiopian government enacted Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009 (Civil Society Law hereafter CSO) on January 6, 2009. The preface states that the CSO law is to ensure "the realization of citizens' rights to association enshrined in the constitution… as well as …to aid and facilitate the role of [civil society] in the overall development of the Ethiopian people," (Ethiopian CSO law 2009, EHRCO 2008). However, many concerned bodies are claiming that key provisions of the proclamation will extremely restrict the work of independent civil society organizations, particularly human rights defenders and advocates of democratic governance (CIHRNWUSL, 2009). The CSO law restricts any international NGO to engage in activities relating to human rights, women's rights, children's rights, disability rights, citizenship rights, conflict resolution or democratic governance. Moreover, if any local NGO receives more 10% its fund from foreign resources would be considered as "foreign NGO" to restrict them not to work on any human right and advocacy activities or must change its mandates [CSO Law, at art. 2(2)].

For the purpose of our study, NGOs promote human rights through education, monitoring and advocacy, all of which require the ability to express thoughts and information through publication, audio and video recording and which may not be covered by public organizations. In Ethiopia, the donors are contributing in terms of underpinning protection of basic services such as education, health and agricultures as service delivery that the government made transparent for civil society (Oumer, 2009). On the other hand, the new law has been proliferating tension between the government and NGOs that work on human right defenders[11] and advocates. This would have effect on governance practices through complimenting the efforts of Ministry of Women's Affairs in advocating for the girl child in the education arena.

Concerning participation of civil society in MDGs 2 and 3 there are many indigenous CBOs like (Iqub, Idir, and Debo) across the nation. The NGOs use these Indigenous Institutions as instrument of local development since Ethiopian constitution allows freedom of association in 1995. However, there were no clear policy legislations that enable NGOs to participate in policy dialogue in Ethiopia to date and government considers NGOs intervention as relief than development (Azashe 2005). After 2005 election instability, the government alleged that NGOs were supporters of opposition parties and hence enacted the coercive proclamation.

5   Conclusion

In this cutting-edge research, we explored governance structures and practices in Ethiopia in their endeavor to achieve goal 2 and 3 of the MDGs. In the field of education, Ethiopia is noted as one of the best in its performance in achieving quantity measurements. The challenges of quality education have been taken on board by implementing programs and projects such as on teacher training, alternative basic education, and community participation. Furthermore, emphasis on primary education in Goal 2 is seen as a challenge in the reality of

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[11] World Alliance for Civic participation, Amnesty International, Ethiopia Human Right Council, Human right watch and others condemn the new Ethiopian CSO law.

education where it is interconnected with secondary and tertiary.

In Ethiopia, education has the highest budget allocation as compared to other sectors. Moreover, the country has allocated resources to promote girls participation in school. One of those is the active engagement of The Ministry of Women's Affairs (Southern Region) in looking for scholarships for female students from both the private sector and international sources. In addition, scholarships especially for women and girls within Ethiopia are available through NGOs such as Forum for African Women Education.

Multiple actors are attempting to work towards the same goal. There is a hierarchical structure within the Ministry of Education, with some degree of autonomy at regional level. Reporting line that reflects accountability is coming from the school level at Kebele up to the regional education office and ultimately to National Ministry of Education. Donors and NGOs play an important role in terms of service delivery at both non-formal and formal primary and secondary school levels. Private schools run by entrepreneurs are running mostly within the urban areas. The Ministry of Women's Affairs acts like a *watchdog* for engendering of activities including education with offices from national through to district level and representatives in the Kebele level.

Working together with donor agencies, particularly The Netherlands Embassy, the Ethiopian Government is described as being efficient and strong willed in poverty reduction strategies and the achievement of the MDGs. In practice, the Dutch Development Cooperation arm is exercising the 'silent partnership' strategy where they withdraw from active policy engagement but continuing channeling funding in service delivery of education. This is seen as a harmonization effort amongst various donors in Ethiopia.

In practice, NGOs play a crucial role in the education arena, among others in service delivery in both non-formal and formal education. However, we found that there is limited space created by the government for NGOs to engage in human rights and advocacy activities due to the recently enacted Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009 in January 2009 whereas those activities may support the achievement of goal 2 and 3. There is a growing concern in this issue and further research is suggested.

Our findings led to the identification of three possible research focus (mentioned in Chapter 4) in the arena of Governance and the MDGs in general and particularly in the context of Ethiopia.

6   Recommendations for Future Research

In light of the research that we conducted, we have come up with some areas that may need to be explored further through researches;

- The working relationship employed by the multi-sectoral approaches in Ethiopia with regard to the achievement of the MDGs. From this research, we were exposed with the collaboration of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Women's Affairs in achieving Goal 2 and 3 in Ethiopia.
- The dynamics of NGOs in Ethiopia, following the recent enacted Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009 on 6 January 2009 and its impacts on the achievement of the MDGs.
- Quality of education and the relevance and added value (if any) of education as one of the indicators in education-related goals post 2015

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Annex-1 Ethiopia's progress in goal 2 and 3

Goals	Indicators	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
#2	NER[12] in primary education (%)										
	Total	36.7	40.6	44.6	46.8	47.8	51.2	63.2	69.0	75.7	79.0
	Boys	43.5	46.8	50.4	52.3	52.9	55.4	66.9	72.2	78.8	82.0
	Girls	30.0	34.3	38.8	41.2	42.6	46.9	59.4	65.9	72.6	76.1
	Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary (%)										
	Total	50.9	61.1	55.6	50.9	46.9	62.4	n.a.	57.8	40.3	n.a.
	Boys	49.3	60.0	57.2	53.9	46.6	61.7	n.a.	56.7	38.7	n.a.
	Girls	53.9	63.2	53.5	46.8	47.3	63.3	n.a.	59.2	42.4	n.a.
	Literacy rate, 15-24 yrs old (%)										
	Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	49.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	49.9*
	Men	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	62.2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	62.2*
	Women	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	38.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	38.5*
#3	Ratio of girls to boys enrolment in school/Gender Parity Index										
	Primary E.	0.61	0.65	0.69	0.71	0.73	0.77	0.83	0.86	0.88	0.89
	Secondary E.	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.62	0.57	0.57	0.60	0.63	0.67	0.72
	Tertiary E.	0.23	0.28	0.27	0.36	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	0.35	0.31
-	Drop-out rate (%)										
	Total	5.5	11.0	8.2	9.4	10.4	11.0	11.3	13.8	n.a.	n.a.

* estimated data by IAEG

Source: Author's compilation from Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on MDG Indicators (2010) and Oumer (2009)

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[12]   NER: The number of **children of official primary school age** who are enrolled in primary education as a percentage of the total children of the official school age population.

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