

Non-Government Organizations And Its Impact Towards Poverty Alleviation In Uganda: A case Study Of Kabale District.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on investigating the relationship between the role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Uganda but with a bias in Bugili municipality local government. The study was guided by several research objectives and research questions. The researcher used by qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze both primary and secondary data to draw conclusions on the subject matter. The study is expected to be of great significance to the government authorities as it will guide the policy formulation and strategies to eliminate poverty and its impact in Bugili municipality local government. The study found out that there is a close correlation between the role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Uganda. This calls for instant government and non-state intervention by both government and non-government organizations so as to eliminate the scourge. From the findings, it was observed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed (100%) that there a number of other challenges facing the non-governmental organizations while executing their mandate in Kabale District. 20% of the respondents agreed that there was a problem of limited finance which affect their deliberations for poverty alleviation in the subcounty. 10% agreed that there was political interference in their roles which has put a number of projects on a standstill as different stakeholders hold varying interest, while 30% agreed strongly that limited funding stands to be the big challenge making it the biggest hinderance to efficient funding of all the necessary activities in the subcounty. The government should facilitate fully all agencies involved in the municipality for efficient monitoring and supervision including civil society so as to harmonize their efforts and initiatives towards the division's success.

Key words: non-government, poverty alleviation and socio-economic welfare

Background to study

NGOs are very essential in improving the socio-economic well-being of citizens all over the world, especially in third world countries where government social service systems have always proven to be inefficient and ineffective (Godfrey et al., 2023). This therefore means that the role played by the civil society sector should not be trampled and underestimated, as this sector is always considered to fill the service gap left by states that do not have social services around the world (Faridah et al., 2023). The mandates of the Bureau include;

registration of all non-governmental organizations at the national level, advise the concerned minister on policy regarding the functioning of non-governmental organizations and coordinate, create policy guidelines and supervise the activities of the district and sub-regional monitoring committees of non-governmental organizations, chaired by the CAO and the senior assistant Secretary or Besides. At the district level, CBOs are registered by local authorities at both the district and sub-regional levels. All NGO operating licenses are subject to termination and renewal as the

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relevant authorities in the country may deem appropriate (Tasha et al., 2023). Nationwide this year, the government carried out a re-registration in which some civil society organizations were left out because they lacked the minimum requirements for registration and license renewal.

In a country like Uganda, where the government may not have enough resources to reach every citizen, civil society organizations are very important in the socio-economic development of the economy and act as gap fillers (Moses et al., 2023). The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees citizens full rights and freedom of association, and Article 38 allows citizens to peacefully influence government policy through civil organizations. However, the development process of the NGO sector, the methods of work and the impact of their program activities, among others, continue to generate different and sometimes conflicting opinions and experiences (NGO Policy, 2010). In the same vein, the Faith-Based Organizations Bill was also rejected and caused divisions among different religious groups and leaders pointing fingers at each other for being behind it and witch-hunting (Winny et al., 2023).

In comparison, similar laws and restrictions are enacted in various countries, for example in Kenya last year the Kenyan government closed down 500 NGOs in the country for suspected non-compliance

with the law and some using their charitable status to raise funds for terrorism. In May of the previous year, South Sudan's parliament passed a law forcing all aid agencies to have no more than a fifth of their staff as foreigners. In Ethiopia, the 2009 Charitable Funding Act classifies any NGO as international if it receives more than 10% of its funding from abroad and is exempt from involvement in democratic and human rights, conflict resolution or criminal justice activities (Vincent & Peter, 2023a).

Accordingly, the article focuses on the role of civil society organizations and faith-based organizations in addressing major and local conflicts (Omona, 2008, ACORD, 2008). These groups have the potential to play a more active role in reconciling communities after the country's guns have fallen silent and restoring trust and normal relations. Civil society organizations are close to ordinary people and therefore more trustworthy than other groups, especially government and opposition bodies. Based on this understanding, UNDP aims to partner with civil society organizations, NGOs, CBOs and educational institutions identified through this call for proposals to support joint civil actions that ultimately contribute to sustainable and lasting peace in Uganda. Successful partners should have experience in carrying out similar activities. Partners will be involved through small grant mechanisms (UNDP, 2016).

Problem Statement

Since its inception in the mid-1980s, the NRM government has offered a conducive environment and wider political space in Uganda, which has witnessed a stunning expansion of NGOs in the country, including local, national and international organizations up to the present day. This expansion was due to a number of reasons and primarily to bridge the service gap left by the government's inefficient and ineffective service delivery system (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). NGOs are very instrumental in improving the well-being of people in various societies of Uganda by

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alleviating poverty, especially among the youth (Vincent & Peter, 2023b). Unfortunately, many of these organizations have been targeted by the government on suspicion of money laundering and funding of opposition political scientists and organizations seen as a threat to the NRM regime, and many have had their bank accounts frozen by the government at times on similar related suspicions such as eg Action Aid, CCEDU among others (Action Aid report, 2019) and others whose licenses have been revoked by the government such as DGF. The proposed 2018 legal framework for NGOs is also not favorable as it violates the rights of these organizations and makes them mere puppets of the state, yet they are described as partners in development with the state (Uganda Constitution 1995). It is against this backdrop that the research seeks to further explore these matters and explore more the contribution of NGOs to alleviating youth poverty amidst the above-mentioned issues to remedy them.

The purpose of the study

The major purpose of the study was to explore and analyze the contribution of the non-government organizations in alleviating poverty among the youths in Uganda but with a bias in Kabale District

Research objectives

- To find out the contribution of the NGOs in poverty alleviation among the youth.
- To identify the different activities that the NGOs engage in with the youths in a bid to alleviate poverty.
- To investigate the challenges that are faced by the NGOs in the execution of their mandate and devise practical remedies for them.

Methodology

The design of the study was comparative, descriptive and explanatory so that data was collected objectively, accurately and economically. These included both primary and secondary methods. Interviews refer to a face-to-face interaction between the respondent and the researcher or interviewer. Interviews were conducted face to face or using phone calls or via zoom in case it is hard to reach the respondents to collect firsthand information. Both structured and unstructured interviews shall be used to allow probing so as to generate more information from the respondents. Both open and closed ended questionnaires were used to generate as much information as possible from the various respondents. These shall be given to the respondents physically or via their emails in case physical contact is hard. Comprehensive reviews were done especially of the

current NGO Laws and Policies and the proposed Bills to have an in-depth understanding and analysis of the subject matter. Reports from the NGOs and donors as well as government shall also be reviewed. These were accessed via online platforms. These included interview guides, questionnaire guides, recorders, observation guides, books and pens, focus group guides as well as documentary review guides to guide the collection of data. The choice of the instruments was guided by the nature of research and affordability of the researcher. Data was mainly analyzed qualitatively because the study was basically qualitative that is meant to investigate though statistics and figures shall also be used to reinforce the findings. The study population was involved officials from the a few NGOs including their umbrella organizations, government officials

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(both civil and political), and the local beneficiaries investigation and capable of providing relevant (YOUTHS). This is because such respondents had a information. stake and a wider understanding of the topic under

Table 1: Techniques and sample size

The researcher interview about 40 respondents who were sampled using different sampling techniques as illustrated below:

Category of respondents	Sample size	Sampling techniques
NGO officials and government officials	20	Purposive sampling
Local beneficiaries/youths.	20	Cluster and stratified sampling

Data was analyzed progressively using thematic qualitative analysis which is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data and therefore data was analysed in form of tables, percentages, frequencies and correlations using SPSS and STATA (Nelson et al., 2022). This method was used in order to be able to describe in details the views and opinions of the respondents. Themes were defined and data was presented according to the identified themes which shall be based on the study objectives. Quotations were used to bring out the voices of the respondents for the cases of interviews whereas tabulations were used to reduce findings or collected data into a tabular form for the cases of questionnaires.

RESULTS

Table 2 showing the different types and forms of decentralization in Kabale district

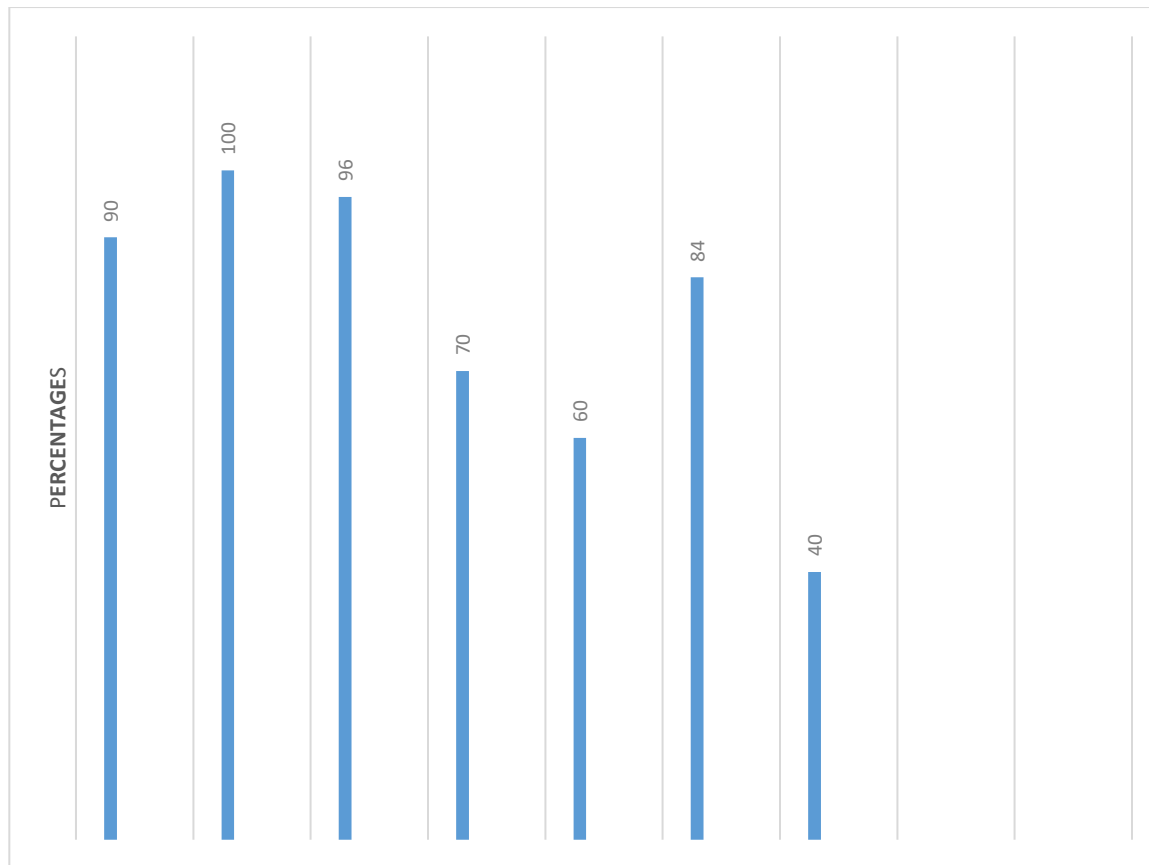
S/no	Type and forms of decentralization	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Political decentralization which takes the form devolution	60	70
2	Administrative decentralization which takes the form of delegation, deconcentration and privatization	30	25

3	Fiscal decentration which takes form of grants from central government, loan guarantees, donations and local revenue expenditures	10	05
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Source: Survey

From the findings above, it indicates that political decentration is the most dominant type of decentralization in Bugili municipality local government and this takes the form of devolution standing at 60% followed by administrative decentralization at which takes the forms of delegation, deconcentration and privatization (Faith et al., 2023). From the table above, it shows that Bugili municipality local government mainly receives grants from the central government which includes both conditional and unconditional grants. This is represented by 70% of the total revenue for the division. Conditional grants are those monies given to the district to fund predetermined activities whereas unconditional grants are those monies given to fund any activity as may be deemed by the district authorities (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). Locally, the district collects the least revenues as compared to other districts and this is attributed to low level of tax compliance, limited tax base and among other factors (Tasha et al., 2023). Donations and loans. The district also receives some contributions from donors including private individuals and non-government organizations that have the financial leverage to donate any materials including money. This is however, the least source of division revenue standing at only 10% as represented in the table above.

Figure 1: Graph showing the responses of the respondents on whether the NGOS have contributed to poverty alleviation in Kabale district



People's responses

Source: survey

The graph shows that 100% of the respondents are aware of the existence of the non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations work closely with the local governments to alleviate poverty. This means that NGOs are partners in development. This relationship might be good or unfriendly which affects service delivery either positively or negatively. 90% have strongly agreed that there is a close relationship between the role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Kabale District. 96% agreed that if the non-governmental organizations do not play a positive role in society, the service delivery is affected (Gracious, 2023). This is because they are the gap fillers. They exist to feel the gap left by the defunct service delivery system. 70% of the respondents accepted that the non-governmental organizations in Kabale District are playing a very fundamental role by affecting service delivery and the standards of living of the local dwellers have greatly contributed to poverty alleviation in the subcounty (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). This implies that on the average, there is a strong and close correlation between the role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation which strongly calls for efficient and effective government institutionalized policies and laws to empower and harmonize this relationship if we are to improve service delivery in the subcounty. 30% of the respondents revealed that

government has not supported much these organizations which is strongly affecting their performance in the subcounty especially the community-based organizations.

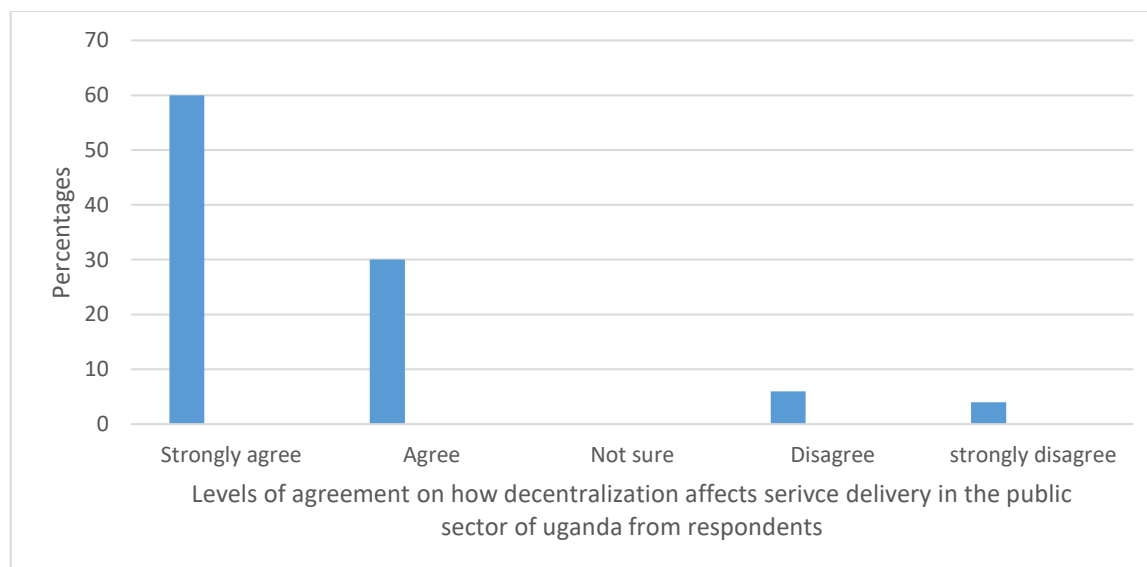
Table 2: Showing the factors that affect NGOs in the execution of their mandate in Kabale District

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Financial constraints	15	20
Political interference	15	10
Limited funds	05	30%
Bureaucracy	3	10
Corruption	2	10
Unfavorable government policies and laws	02	10
State hostility	03	05
Inefficient capacity of the staffs	05	05
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

From the above findings, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed (100%) that there a number of other challenges facing the non-governmental organizations while executing their mandate Bugili municipality local government. 20% of the respondents agreed that there is a problem of limited finance which affect their deliberations for poverty alleviation in the subcounty. 10% agreed that there is political interference in their roles which has put a number of projects on a standstill as different stakeholders hold varying interest, while 30% agreed strongly that limited funding stands to be the big challenge making it the biggest hinderance to efficient funding of all the necessary activities in the subcounty. This is most likely to adversely affect the service delivery more in the public sector so to fail the meeting of the objectives of the NGOs. The findings also indicate that bureaucracy is another challenge affecting the implementation of the different projects of the non-governmental organizations (Innocent et al., 2023). Corruption is another challenge eating up the success of the division. Officials are indulging in a lot of corrupt tendencies which affects service delivery in the division. 10% of the respondents cited inadequate citizen participation as another big blow to efficient and effective service delivery in the subcounty. Some residents don't understand the role of NGOs and this affects the activities of NGOs in the subcounty. The unfavorable legal environment is another challenge to the NGOs. The 2018 NGO bill restricts the non-governmental organizations to service delivery which is a very big challenge (Mark & Jacob, 2023). The 2016 NGO law places them under the supervision of the NGO Bureau which interferes in their responsibilities.

Figure 2: Graph showing whether the role played by NGOs contribute to poverty alleviation or not in Kabale District.



Source: primary data

From the above table, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed (60%) that there is a close correlation between the role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Uganda. 60% of the respondents agreed, 30% agreed, 0% not sure, 05% disagreed while 03% strongly disagreed saying that it's just the lack of effective laws and policies to clarify on the responsibilities of the different stakeholders and determine their relationship which is the root cause of the problem of poverty and though the NGOs are present in the area, they may not change much in the community. However, this implies that on the average, there is a strong and close correlation between non-governmental organizations improved poverty alleviation which strongly calls for efficient and effective government institutionalized and decentralized policies to support and supplement on the role played by the NGOs in the community in Bugili municipality local government so as to improve service delivery in the public sector. This is most likely to improve service delivery more in the public sector so to meet the objectives of the decentralized policy of Uganda and drive Uganda to a middle status income by 2040 vision.

Table 3: Showing remedies to the factors that affect NGOs in fight against poverty alleviation in Kabale District.

Responses	Male	Female	Frequency	Percentage
Increased funding	20	20	48	40
Elimination of Political interference	2	5	02	15

Having Strong and efficient partnerships	4	4		05
Flattering and leaning of administration to eliminate bureaucracy	4	3		10
Improved state and non-state relations	10	6	50	10
Enhanced fight against graft and engaging the all stakeholders	5	4		20

Source: Primary data

The findings on the table above indicate that 20 male and 20 female respondents agreed that other factors such as increased funding is the most practical remedy towards enhancing the role of NGOs in poverty alleviation making it stand at 40% response rate. Only 2 males and 5 females agreed that political interference from the political leadership affects the role played by the NGO in poverty alleviation standing at 15%. Therefore, eliminating it can be the most practical remedy. Only 4 males and 4 females proposed that having efficient and strong partnerships with both the state and non-state agencies will be another remedy to curb corruption and bureaucracy. This stands at only 4% of the total responses. The findings on the table above also indicate further that 10 males and 6 females agreed that by improving the state and non-state relations, the service delivery in the subcounty will become more efficient and effective so to be able to meet its intended goals. This stands at 10% of the total responses. The table above also shows that five males and four females agreed that lack of relative autonomy to division inhibits their ability to implement the youth livelihood program because their roles are predetermined by the center or central agencies (Rashid et al., 2023). Five males and four females called for intensified fight against graft if the subcounty is to meet its intended goals of poverty alleviation. These respondents were picked out of the sample of 40 which indicates 96% of response and only 04% were not accessible. The study reveals that 60% of the respondents were males whereas only 40% of the respondents were females. This has given a fair distribution of responses according to gender indicating limited bias in the selection process

Table 4: Showing the challenges faced by NGOs in the execution of their mandate in Kabale District.

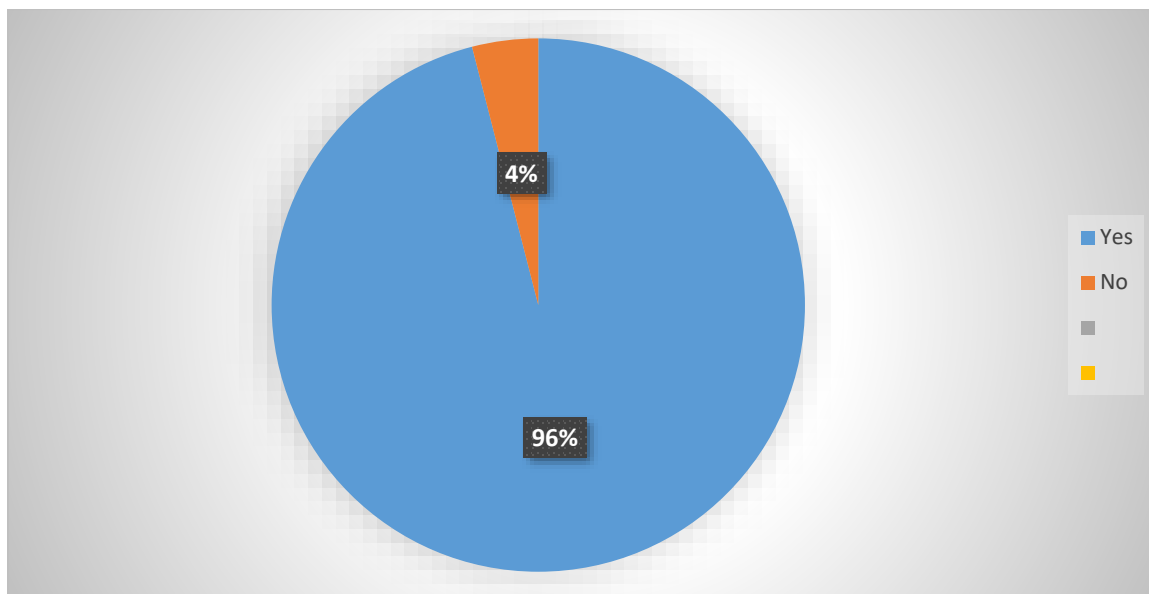
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Source: Primary data

From the above findings, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed (100%) that there a number of other challenges facing the non-governmental organizations while executing their mandate in Bugili municipality local government. 20% of the respondents agreed that there is a problem of limited finance which affect their deliberations for poverty alleviation in the subcounty. 10% agreed that there is political interference in their roles which has put a number of projects on a standstill as different stakeholders hold varying interest, while 30% agreed strongly that limited funding stands to be the big challenge making it the biggest hinderance to efficient funding of all the necessary activities in the subcounty. This is most likely to adversely affect the service delivery more in the public sector so to fail the meeting of the objectives of the NGOs. The findings also indicate that bureaucracy is another challenge affecting the implementation of the different projects of the non-governmental organizations. Corruption is another challenge eating up the success of the division. Officials are indulging in a lot of corrupt tendencies which affects service delivery in the division. 10% of the respondents cited inadequate citizen participation as another big blow to efficient and effective service delivery in the subcounty. Some residents don't understand the role of NGOs and this affects the activities of NGOs in the subcounty. Lack of competent capacity of the staffs especially those of the community-based organizations curtails the implementation, monitoring and supervisory responsibilities of the NGOs. The unfavorable legal environment is another challenge to the NGOs. The 2018 NGO bill restricts the non-governmental organizations to service delivery which is a very big challenge. The 2016 NGO law places them under the supervision of the NGO Bureau which interferes in their responsibilities.

Figure 3: A pie chart showing the relationship between the role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Uganda but with a bias in Kabale District.



From the pie chart above, the findings show that 96% of the respondents agreed that there is a correlation between the role played by non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in local government as respondents have revealed in Kabale District. Only 4% of the respondents were not sure and these respondents objected citing other reasons such as government interventions are more efficient in their areas than the NGOs initiatives and therefore, they are attributing poverty alleviation to government efforts and not NGOs in their areas. This does not however, distort the fact that the non-governmental organizations are undertaking a very big role in poverty alleviation in Kabale District.

Conclusions

The study concluded that 100% of the respondents are aware of the existence of the non- governmental organizations and their role in the subcounty and 96% of the respondents have agreed that their role is very fundamental in poverty alleviation in the subcounty.

This study further concluded that there are several challenges encountered by the non-governmental organizations among which include political interference, poor funding curtailing the capacity of the organization to dispense its mandate, negative attitude of leaders and community members leading which pose a heavy financial threat to the NGOs activities and the unfavorable legal environment which is incapacitating rather than enabling and the problem of poor state and non-governmental organizations relations which hinder effective.

The study found out that 96% of the respondents agreed that there is a close correlation between role played by the non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation in Bugili municipality local government of Uganda. And only 04% of the respondents disagreed citing other reasons such as government poverty alleviation programs like the YLP.

Recommendations

The government should lobby for enough resources to enable the success of the NGOs since they are taken as partners in development so as to enable successful implementation of their development agenda.

The government should facilitate fully all agencies involved in the municipality for efficient monitoring and supervision including civil society so as to harmonize their efforts and initiatives towards the division's success.

Massive sensitization should be reinforced so as to enable clients change their mindset and desist from bad attitudes so as to embrace the all the projects in the subcounty initiated by the NGOs.

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