THE CONTRIBUTION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN DELIVERY OF BASIC HEALTH SERVICES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

A Case of Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Healthcare Centre in Yei River County South Sudan, 2014

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Abstract

The study was carried out in two health institutions: Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care Centre in Yei River County. The study placed focus on the contribution Of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Delivery of Basic Health Services in Yei River County Through collaboration with the Local Government. The study covered the period 1997 to 2013.However, some consideration was put by the researcher to look at the period between 1997 – 2004 which was a war period and from 2005 – 2013 a period of relative peace. The study used a case design study which employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

The study main objective was to assess the contribution of NGOs in the delivery of basic health services in Yei River County through collaboration with the Local Government. Specific objective which guided the study were; to identify the various activities carried out by the NGOs in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care Centre; establish the beneficiaries' appreciation of the health services provided by the NGOs in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care; assess the challenges faced by the NGOs in the delivery of health care support in Yei River County and suggest ways for effective and efficient delivery of health services. The study results were meant to provide the health sector in Yei River County with some information that can be shared with donors and government for better collaboration in the health sector and contribute to advancing effective service to the beneficiaries in Yei, Central Equatoria State.

Introduction

A collective action in search for a good society is a universal part of human existence. Millions of people across the globe find it inspiring to pull together available resources in their struggle for a better world. Most successful civilizations have effectively found it rewarding if these efforts are aligned in a collective manner (Michael Edwards, 1999; World Health Organization, 2008). has noted that groups have often successfully come together, to pull resources to save others or each other. In today's world, the lives of people are in the hands of heath care system. People in different countries seek protection on their health systems (World Bank 1993) Promotion of good health by overcoming disease requires strong interventions and proper attention on the activities in the health sector. There has been evidence now over a period of many years that the public sector in South Sudan is lacking in capacity in the context of delivery and management of health services (for South Sudan Health Services Report 2006).

For many countries such as New Zealand, United Kingdom, Sweden, Iceland Norway, Japan, Southern European and Netherlands, it is the responsibility of the government to assure health care provision for the whole population. NGOs provide quality services Mercer et al. (2004) in accordance with the national policy guidelines, but lack deliberate plans to build the capacity of government services.

In South Sudan, for instance, the government and NGOs collaborate to a certain degree to provide health care, especially to vulnerable populations such as women, children and the poor. Within such collaborations, the government retains ownership in the areas of policy formulation and implementation, human resource development and budgetary control. NGOs concentrate on facilitating the activities within national policies and strategies (MOHFW 1998). This study, therefore, attempts to assess the contribution of NGOs in delivery of basic health services in partnership with local government in Yei River County, South Sudan., in the light of movement towards wider collaboration to achieve national health goals.

Statement of the Problem

The declining role of the state and the changes in donor funding from the public to the private sector have led to a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs in the past 20 years (Edwards, 2004: 21; Vakil, 1997 & Fruttero & Gauri, 2005). It has been estimated that there are over 40,000 internationally operating NGOs majority of these organizations have been providing health services around the world (Anheier, Glasius, & Kaldor, 2001). Many Services that are provided by governments, such as health, education, are now commonly supported by NGOs (Fruttero & Gauri, 2005).

Today, NGOs play a central role in the provision of health services to people in the developing world (Pfeiffer, 2003; WHO; 1995; & UNICEF, 1996). This is due to the fact that many countries in the developing world possess weakened health care systems (Akukwe, 1998). Overall access to sustained quality health care is poor, with very few communities living within the reach of the most basic health services in Yei and South Sudan at large. The material resources and managerial expertise for administering the sector are insufficient and largely dependent on external financial and technical assistance. Existing health infrastructure and equipment are extremely poor, with many hospitals and health centers either dilapidated or only have the capacity and characteristics of lower-level facilities. Given the fact that there has been a lot of support from the international donors to the health sector in Yei, the contribution of NGOs in delivery of basic health services in partnership with Local Government is something which has not been examined.

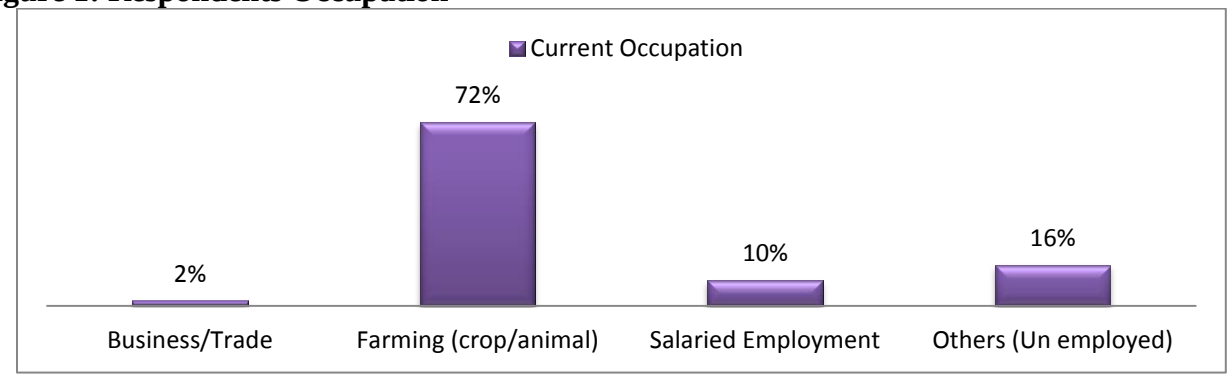
The United Nations Charter on Right to Development, Article 8 states that, every person has a right to health care. Without good health systems development cannot be realized at a high level since it begins with people but not with goods.

Research Design and Respondents Occupation

The research design adopted in this study was a cross-sectional case study research design. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. For this study however, Simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling were employed in the study to select the sample for 40 clients or beneficiaries and purposive sampling was used for the 60 key informants. All these beneficiaries where chosen from the two case study.

The figure 1 below provides an analysis of the occupation of the respondents interviewed during the research period.

Figure 1: Respondents Occupation



Source: Primary Data

From figure 1 above, shows that 2% of the respondents were business/trade workers, 72% were farmers, 32% were salaried employees and 16% unemployed. This implies that majority of respondents in the study were peasants (farmers) whose income was low and hence appropriate for the study objectives.

Discussion of the Findings

The various activities carried out by the NGOs in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care Centre

The research findings revealed that there are various activities and services offered by NGOs in Yei civil hospital and Martha Primary Health care Centre Primary Health care Centre. The quality and range of services offered depend on the type of NGOs. Both Yei Civil hospital and Martha Primary Health care Centre offers curative inpatient and outpatient services.

According to the findings from the Yei County Health Department are that (NGOs (NGOs) offering health services and support in Yei Civil Hospital which includes Winchester UK, Population Services International (PSI), Handicap international, Malteser International, Across Health Program, United Nation Children Education Fund (UNICEF), United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) to mention but a few. The services offered in Yei Civil hospital and Martha, are maternal, minor operations, Tuberculosis treatment, surgical services, tooth ache and fracture management. At Martha Primary health care and Yei civil hospital services offered are treatment of malaria and warms which are higher, other services includes provision of anti-retroviral drugs for HIV/AIDs, voluntary counseling and testing of HIV and other STDs and treatment of treatable STDs by the

NGOs. Data obtained from the Yei Civil hospital Matron office. NGOs also supported the renovation of people with disability Centre and training of community health workers on prevention and care of disability and support. The government of Central Equatoria State was also financing the renovation of the Main wards at the Yei civil hospital. Consultation services/ curative, in patient services (admission) ANC, PMTCT, Delivery services, Emergency obstetric care/ surgery TB, HIV Aids Care, Sleeping sickness care, treatment of under-five/ grown monitoring service and EPI services are both offered at Yei civil hospital and Martha Primary health care Centre.

Performance of Martha Primary Health Care Centre

An interview with those who receive the medical service at Martha primary health care centre established that the Centre is properly managed by the NGOs and the church. The beneficiaries who receive the health services were asked why they prefer to receive their health services at Martha Primary health Care Centre than any other health Centre or even Yei civil hospital their response is that they prefer Martha primary health care Centre because they can access medicine and they are not referred to buy medicine from the private clinic which reduces child and mortality. NGOs primary health care programs were found to expand coverage for reproductive and child health services, and decrease child and maternal mortality. Most of the interviewed beneficiaries, reported that the Martha primary health care Centre has established a mechanism of cost sharing this is to help in the sustainability of the health Centre as the NGOs think is the best strategy. According to the beneficiaries the payment of the cost sharing is appreciated and the cost is not high compared to services in the private clinics and Yei civil hospital. The beneficiaries said they get good health services and encouraged the cost sharing to be continued.

Two pregnant mothers who came to receive antenatal care at the time when the research was under way reported that Martha primary health care has a good handling of patients more especially the children and pregnant mothers. The way in which the Martha primary health care is managed by the church, health Centre staff and the NGOs reported to suggest that more emphasis have been put on core values. Most of the beneficiaries interviewed stated that they prefer Martha primary health care Centre because of the presence of NGOs support and the management of the health Centre by the NGOs which they said has resulted in to quick and prompt services; no insult of patients like the one witnessed in the public hospital such as Yei civil hospital. Some beneficiaries reported that the health services are cheaper than the Government and private clinic.

Table 2: Overall satisfaction of beneficiaries with the health service

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Yes fully	26	65.0
	Not at all	8	20.0
	Fair	6	15.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary Data

From the descriptive statistics in table 2 above indicates that 26 (65%) of the all the respondents acknowledged that beneficiaries are satisfied with the health service, 8(20%) said that they were not satisfied while the minority 6 (15%) said fairly they were satisfied with facility. The findings there imply that fairly the beneficiaries appreciate the health services provided by the Non- Governmental Organizations in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care. This was because of adequate drugs and qualified medical staff at the health Centre and those who were not satisfied was due to their income levels compared to the cost that are incurred in receiving the health services.

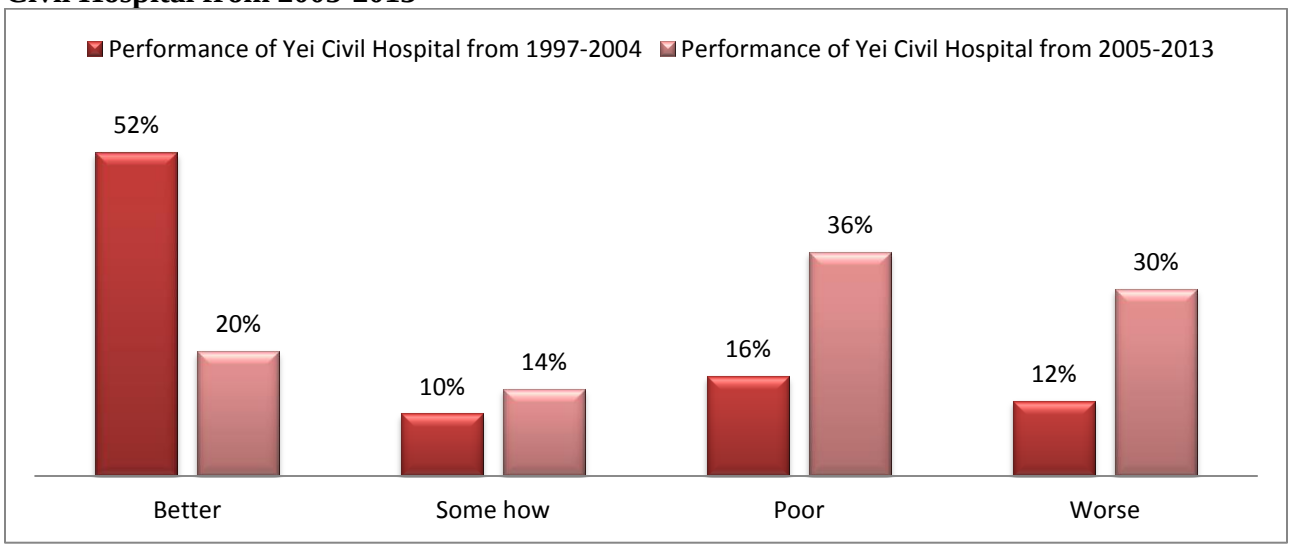
The Performance of Yei Civil Hospital from 1997-2004

Most interviewed persons who used to be beneficiaries (65%) receiving health services from Yei hospital highlighted that the hospital used to be very good when the NGOs were fully and comprehensively running and managing it. Most respondents referred to the period between 2000 and 2005 as the period when the health services in Yei civil hospital were well performed. Beneficiaries who were interviewed having received health services in 1998 and the period beyond 2000s reported that the health services offered by the NGOs in Yei civil hospital were well maintained they reported that the wards were well maintained there was an NGO hospital Ambulance that was well maintained and could help to pick critical and patients emergency from Rural areas to the main hospital.

Figure below showing Performance of Yei Civil Hospital from 1997-2004 and Performance of Yei Civil Hospital from 2005-2013

The figure below shows the performance of the Yei civil hospital from the years indicated. The researcher was interested in these years because these years have witnessed activities of NGOs in delivery of basic health services in Yei River County and in addition these periods falls during the years of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 9, 2005, enactment of South Sudan Local Government Act 2009 and the declaration of South Sudan independence on 9th July 2011. The results are presented in figure 4 below.

Figure 3: Showing Performance of Yei Civil Hospital from 1997-2004 and Performance of Yei Civil Hospital from 2005-2013



Source: Researcher

From figure 3 above it was revealed that before (1997-2004 before the partnership between NGOs and government), the performance of Yei civil hospital was so much better but after the partnership (2005-2013) there has been a decline in service provision of the health sector.

The Performance of Yei Civil Hospital from 2005-2013

The performance of Yei civil hospital was reported by interviewed beneficiaries who received health services in the facilities between 2005-2013 most interviewed beneficiaries suggested that the falling of the hospital health services standard was between years 2005 to 2007. This is the period where NGOs were in transition to rapidly hand over the management and running of the hospital responsibilities to the government. The research findings has established that both patients who come to the hospital because they do not have money to go to the private clinics and those who can afford the private clinic services do not receive the health services easily. Health beneficiaries has reported that receiving services in the hospital affects 3-7 hours at most this was not the case when the NGOs were managing the hospital. 60% of respondents interviewed also reported that no patient has the authority to tell the hospital staff to provide service to the patient.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation for the Overall beneficiaries' appreciation of the health services provided by the Non- Governmental Organizations in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care

	Not satisfied	***satisfied***	***Significance***
Age			
18-24 years	12(30%)	28(70%)	p>0.05
25-30 years	16(40%)	24(60%)	
Over 30 years	12(30%)	28(70%)	
Highest Level of Education			
Primary and Below	14(35%)	26(65%)	
Secondary and above	24(60%)	16(40%)	p>0.05
Never been/Went to school	2(5%)	38(95%)	
Current Occupation			
Salaried employment	36(90%)	4(10%)	p>0.05
Self employed	1(2.5%)	39(97.5%)	
Unemployed	5(12.5%)	35(87.5%)	
Monthly earnings			
Below £20	11(27.5%)	29(72.5%)	
£21 – 85	19(47.5%)	21(52.5%)	p>0.05
£170 and above	4(10%)	36(90%)	

Source: Primary Data

From the table 4 above , health services described the care giver's attitude towards them as good while 57.1% of them who had a contrary opinion of the attitude of care givers were still satisfied with the health services provided by the Non- Governmental Organizations in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Care; this was also significant(p>0.05). The overall rating was classified into poor and good. Most respondents were satisfied with the services given at the clinic; 81% rated the services as good while 19% were not satisfied and stated that service was poor. Most respondents (83%) revealed that they would register in the same health facility in subsequent sickness and would recommend the health Centre to someone else. The findings also revealed that there is no significant association between age and occupation of respondents under study and their appreciation services

with P>0.05. This means that when the results from cross tabulation for the overall beneficiaries' appreciation is >0.05 then the Contribution of NGOs in Delivery of Basic Health in Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary Health Centre has a positive significance.

The challenges faced by the NGOs in the delivery of health care services

NGOs are faced with challenges such as complex requirements and expectations, NGOs are highly dependent on the flow of resources from external providers. This dependency can create a situation in which donors have power over the NGOs, the interests of the funding agency conflict with the interests of the organization, NGOs are left with two options: seek funding from other sources, or make the necessary changes in order to obtain funding reference was made to why Family Health International (FHI) was not able to secure funding from donors due to conflict of the interests. NGOs with higher levels of dependency may be forced to make these changes in order to ensure their survival. Lack of proper coordination, undermining of the county health department, poor communication and lack of transparency were some if the issues reported during the research. Bureaucracy in the government departments also affects the delivery of the health services and further frustrates the work of NGOs in the health sector.

Recommendations

The following recommendations put forward for better improvement of health sector in Yei River County.

- There should be a better way of utilization the resources to the health facilities so that clinical staff (doctors, nurses, midwives) could improve on their full potential.
- There is need to improve on the availability of equipment for health care and also focus on recruitment of adequate skilled medical personnel at all categories should be a priority i.e. from nursing, midwives, lab technicians and doctors.
- There should be provision of modern medical equipment to Yei Civil Hospital and Martha Primary health Care Centre to help in the investigation and management of health care cases.
- The Ministry of Health Central Equatoria State needs to decentralize some administrative function to the County Health Department so as to allow them to do the day today administrative supervision to improve the health condition in Yei Civil hospital.
- Yei Civil Hospital needs to establish a board that can govern the functioning of the hospital. The board can be good body that can play the check and balance and an overall watch dog role for the purpose of improving the health service in Yei.
- NGOs should work in building the capacity of the local government health department.
- The local government health departments in Yei county needs to work with the NGOs to put in place a strategic plan that should cover aspects of the Yei civil hospital and the primary health care centers and also look at issues of health concerns that are arising in Yei.

Conclusion

The study revealed that that, NGOs make successful contributions to health in large circumstances. NGOs have made significant contributions to reproductive and sexual health in many areas in the Yei River County. The research also found that effectively run NGO reproductive and child health services have decreased child and maternal mortality in Martha Primary health care and to some extent Yei Civil hospital. The importance of (NGOs) in the delivery of services have gained recognition in Yei River County in terms of filling gaps in government programmes, the research also established that the contribution of NGOs has also provided Yei River community with a choice of service outlets and to create an effective voice in respect of service needs and expectations.

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