

The Role of the Non-Government Organizations in Poverty Alleviation in Uganda: A Case Study of Bugiri Municipality Local Government.

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Abstract: *The study's primary goal was to determine the relationship between the role performed by non-governmental organizations and the reduction of poverty in Uganda, with a special emphasis on the local government of Bugili municipality. Many research goals and research questions served as the study's compass. In order to identify collusions on the topic, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather and analyze both primary and secondary data. The study is anticipated to be of great significance to the government authorities as it would direct the design of policies and strategies to end poverty and its effects in the local government of Bugili municipality. 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.*

Background to study

Non-governmental organizations play a critical role in improving the socioeconomic welfare of the population around the world, especially in third-world nations where government social care systems have consistently shown to be inefficient and ineffective (CIVICUS, 2016). Therefore, the role played by the civil society sector should not be overlooked or undervalued as the sector is continuously used to cover the service gaps left by non-welfare states around the world.

Before colonialism, when we had farmers' cooperatives and burial societies, the historical emergency, development, and multiplication of the civil society sector in Uganda had a lengthy history. We had the Salvation Army, missionary-founded hospitals and schools, the Red Cross, and other foreign organizations throughout the colonial era. The dictatorial governments of the time, particularly in the 1970s and the early 1980s, abolished these groups quickly after independence, which resulted in a severe dissolution of these organizations. All of Uganda's CSOs, including feminist organizations, were disbanded by General Idi Amin. In the 1970s, an attack on the church, which had previously enjoyed some degree of autonomy resulted in the brutal death of the country's archbishop, Janan Luwumu. The 1973 Education Act for Uganda eventually led to the renationalisation of several of the missionary-founded schools (CIVICUS, nd).

In the mid-1980s basically 1986, the NRA government took over power and shortly after, Credit is given to the NRM government that has provided a very wide conducive environment and political space that has led to the proliferation of numerous CSOs in Uganda since the 1986 to date including the local, national, regional and international organizations (Dicklitch, 1998, Makara, 1998, Nsibambi, 1998). Currently the CSOs population in Uganda is estimated between 12000 to 14000 including both registered and unregistered ones.

Problem Statement

Since the NRM government's foundation in the middle of the 1980s, Uganda has benefitted from a favourable environment and expanded political space thanks to which the number of NGOs—local, national, and international—has exploded. This increase has accelerated for a variety of reasons, but mostly to fill the service gap left by the inefficient and unproductive government service delivery system. The quasi organizations play a significant role in enhancing the welfare of the populace in Uganda's many societies by reducing poverty, particularly among young people.

Unfortunately, many of these groups are now hunting targets of the government due to suspicions of money laundering and funding political pundits and organizations deemed a threat to the NRM regime. Many of these groups, including Action Aid and CCEDU (Action Aid report, 2019), have had their bank accounts frozen due to similar related suspicions. Other groups, like DGF, have had their licenses revoked. The planned NGOs' legislative framework for 2018 is particularly unfavourable because it violates their rights and turns them into simple puppets of the state, despite the fact that they are referred to as the state's partners in development (the 1995 constitution of Uganda).

It is against these backgrounds that the research seeks to investigate further into these matters and explore more into the contribution of the NGOs in poverty alleviation among the youths amidst the above challenges so as to remedy them.

Research objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

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

Research questions

The study explored the following questions:

1. What contribution do the NGOs have towards poverty alleviation among the youths?
2. What are the different activities that the NGOs engage in with the youths?
3. What challenges are faced by the NGOs in the execution of their mandate and what practical remedies can be used?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The design of the study was comparative, descriptive and explanatory so that data was collected objectively, accurately and economically.

Data collection methods

These included both primary and secondary methods

Primary methods included:

Interviews

Face-to-face encounters between the respondent and the researcher or interviewer are referred to as interviews. In order to gather firsthand information, interviews were done face-to-face, during phone calls, or using Zoom if it was difficult to reach the respondents. The use of probing questions during interviews, both organized and unstructured, is required to elicit more information from the respondents.

Questionnaires

To elicit as much data as possible from the various respondents, both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were used. If direct contact is difficult, the respondents will receive these physically or by email.

Secondary methods

Documentary review

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.

Data collection instruments

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 analysis

While the study was largely qualitative and intended to investigate, the information was assessed primarily qualitatively, though statistics and figures will also be utilized to support the findings. Thematic qualitative analysis, a descriptive method of presenting qualitative data, was used to gradually evaluate the data. This approach has been taken so that the responses' thoughts and opinions could be described in full. The study objectives were the basis for the definition of the topics and the presentation of the information in accordance with those themes. In situations of interviews, quotations were used to highlight the opinions of the respondents, while in cases of surveys, tabulations were used to condense conclusions or gathered data into a tabular format.

The study population

The study population was involved officials from the a few NGOs including their umbrella organizations, government officials (both civil and political), and the local beneficiaries (YOUTHS). This is because such respondents had a stake and a wider understanding of the topic under investigation and capable of providing relevant information.

Sampling 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

RESULTS

Bio data of the respondents

This section described data collected on the respondents basing on their Age, Sex, and period taken

Age of respondents

Respondents were grouped in different age groups. This is illustrated in the table below

Table 1 shows the age of the respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
13 – 20	1	2%
21 – 30	15	30%
31 – 40	28	56%
41 – 50	5	10%
51 and above	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Primary data

From the table above the age group of 13-20 had 1 respondent (2%), age group 21-30 had 15 respondents (30%), age group 31-40 had 28 respondents (56%), age group 41-51 had 5 respondents (10%) and age group of 51 and above had 1 respondent (2%) of the sample

This implies that most of the respondents and staff of Bugili municipality local government lie in the age brackets of 21-30 (30%) and 31-40 (56%). While the least age groups are 13-20 and 51 and above which both have 1%. This implies that most are young and mid age generations especially the politicians.

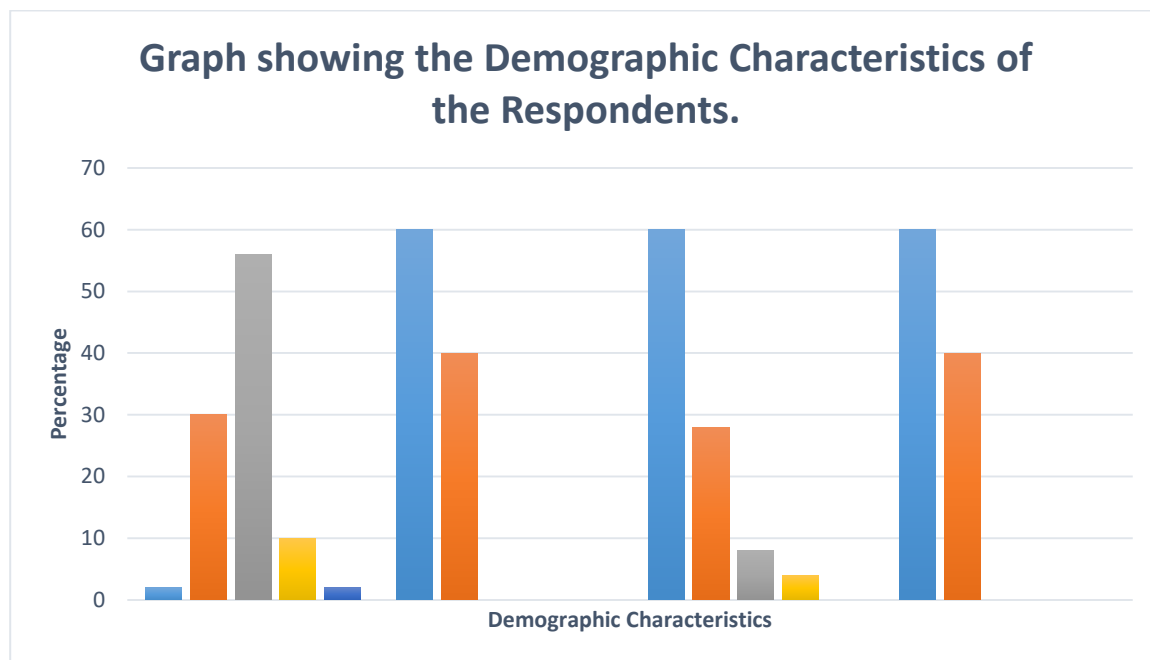
Table 2 shows the categories of the respondents and their Gender/sex

Category	Males	Females	Percentage
Political leaders	5	5	20%
Local government civil servants	5	5	20%
Officials from the ministry of gender and members of the civil society	5	5	20%
The local masses or the beneficiaries	10	10	40%
Total	50	25	100%

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from the table above that the sample consisted of 40% of the workers of the local government of the Bugili municipality, 20% of the employees of the ministry of gender, 20% of the officials of the civil society, and 40% of the local populations or beneficiaries. By using the case study of Bugili municipality local government, it can be inferred that the sample was fully representative and could be used to offer informed data on the relationship between the role played by NGOs in Uganda.

Figure 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.



The respondents' age and gender breakdown is shown in the table. Although there were some female participants in the survey, men made up the majority of the respondents. 60% of the study's participants were men, whereas 40% of the respondents were

women. The age group between 21 and 30 was followed by that between 31 and 40 for the majority of respondents. Every sex was represented in the study, so this balance provided a fair discussion of the subject

Types/forms of decentralization in Bugili municipality local government, in Uganda.

Table 3 shows the different types and forms of decentralization in Bugili municipality local government

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, deconcentrating and privatization	30	25
3	Fiscal decentration which takes form of grants from central government, loan guarantees, donations and local revenue expenditures	10	05

Source: Survey

According to the articles that were published, political decentralization, which takes the form of devolution and accounts for 60% of all decentralization in the Bugili municipality local government, is followed by administrative decentralization, which takes the form of delegation, deconcentration, and privatization.

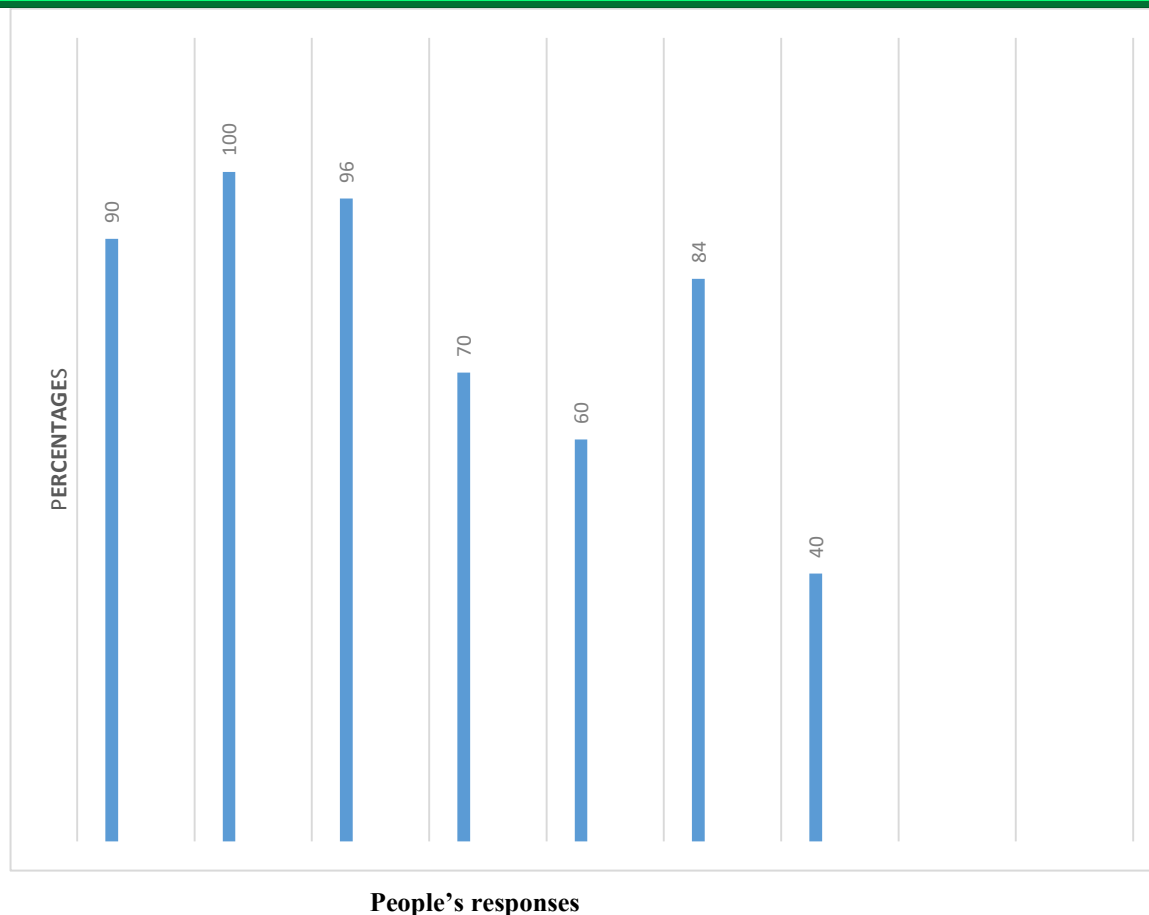
According to the abovementioned data, the central government provides grants to the local government of Bugili municipality, both unconditional and conditional grants. 70% of the division's whole revenue is made up of this.

Conditional grants are funds granted to the district to support certain activities, whereas unconditional grants are funds given to support any activity that the district authorities think appropriate.

Locally, the district generates the least amount of money when compared to other districts, and this is linked to a number of issues, including a low rate of tax compliance and a small tax base.

Loans and donations. Furthermore, the district receives some donations from sources like private citizens and quasi groups with the financial clout to give anything, including cash. Yet, as shown in the table above, this is the division's least important source of revenue, contributing only 10%.

Figure 2 shows the responses of the respondents on whether the NGOS have contributed to poverty alleviation in Bugili municipality local government.



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 Bugili municipality local government.

96% agreed that if the non-governmental organizations do not play a positive role in society, the service delivery is affected. This is because they are the gap fillers. They exist to feel the gap left by the defunct service delivery system.

In Bugili municipality local government, non-governmental organizations are playing a particularly vital role by affecting service delivery and local residents' standards of life, which has significantly helped to reduce poverty in the sub county, according to 70% of the respondents. This suggests that, generally speaking, there is a strong and direct correlation between the role played by non-governmental organizations and the reduction of poverty. If we are to enhance service delivery in the sub county, then we pressingly need efficient and effective institutionalized government policies and laws to empower and harmonize this relationship.

According to 30% of the respondents, the government has not given these organizations much support, which has a detrimental effect on how well they perform in the subcounty, particularly the community-based organizations.

Table 4 shows the factors that affect NGOs in the execution of their mandate in Bugili municipality local government.

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 concurred that a problem with low funding affects their planning for reducing poverty in the sub county.

30% strongly agreed that low financing is the biggest obstacle to effectively funding all necessary activities in the sub county. 10% agreed that political interference in their roles has caused a lot of initiatives to stall because different stakeholders have conflicting interests. This will most certainly have a detrimental impact on public service delivery and make it more difficult for NGOs to achieve their goals.

The results also show that bureaucracy is a problem that hinders non-governmental groups from executing their various projects.

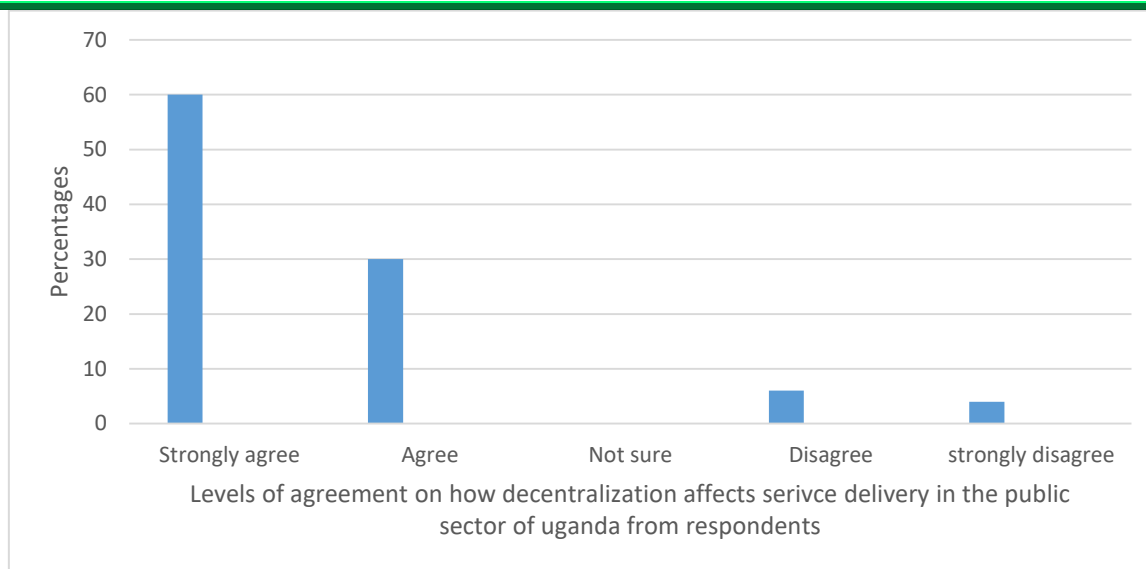
Another issue draining the division's success is corruption. The division's service delivery is hampered by the various corrupt tendencies that officials indulge in.

10% of respondents cited a further major barrier to the efficient and effective delivery of services in the subcounty as being insufficient citizen participation. Several locals don't understand the function of NGOs, which has an impact on their operations in the subcounty.

The implementation, monitoring, and super visionary roles of the NGOs are limited by the staffs' inadequate competence, particularly those of the community-based organizations.

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 shows whether the role played by NGOs contribute to poverty alleviation or not in municipality local government.



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.

This suggests, however, that there is usually a strong and close correlation between non-governmental organizations' improved poverty alleviation, which strongly calls for efficient and effective institutionalized and decentralized government policies to support and supplement on the role played by the NGOs in the community in Bugili Municipality local government in order to improve service delivery in the public sector. This is most likely to enhance public service delivery in order to achieve the objectives of Uganda's decentralized policy and promote the country's ambition of reaching middle income status by 2040.

Table 5 shows remedies to the factors that affect NGOs in fight against poverty alleviation in Bugili municipality district local government.

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 results on the table above show that a 40% response rate was obtained by 20 male and 20 female respondents who agreed that other elements, such as increased funding, are the most feasible cure towards strengthening the role of NGOs in poverty alleviation.

Only 2 men and 5 women agreed that the governmental leadership's intervention has an impact on the NGO's 15% role in poverty reduction. Eliminating it may therefore be the most realistic solution.

Only four men and four women suggested that another way to reduce corruption and bureaucracy is to form effective partnerships with both state and non-state organizations. This represents just 4% of all 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 chart above also indicates that five males and four females felt that because their duties are set by the center or central agencies, a lack of relative autonomy to division hinders their capacity to implement the young livelihood program.

In order for the subcounty to accomplish its stated poverty alleviation goals, five men and four women demanded an intensified fight against corruption.

Out of the 40 respondents in the sample, these people were chosen, meaning that 96% of them replied and only 4% could not be reached. Based on the survey, just 40% of respondents were women, while 60% of respondents were men. There was a balanced distribution of replies by gender, indicating that there was little prejudice in the selection procedure.

Table 6 shows the challenges faced by NGOs in the execution of their mandate in Bugili municipality local government.

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

According to the research exists, the vast majority of respondents (100%) strongly agreed that the non-governmental organizations in Bugili municipality local government have a number of additional challenges as they carry out their purpose.

20% of the respondents concurred that the subcounty's efforts to combat poverty are hampered by budgetary restrictions.

30% strongly agreed that limited funding poses the biggest challenge, making it the biggest barrier to successfully funding all necessary activities in the subcounty. 10% agreed that political interference in their roles has caused a number of projects to stall because different stakeholders have divergent interests. This will likely have a negative impact on how services are delivered.

The results also show that bureaucracy is a problem that hinders non-governmental groups from executing their various projects.

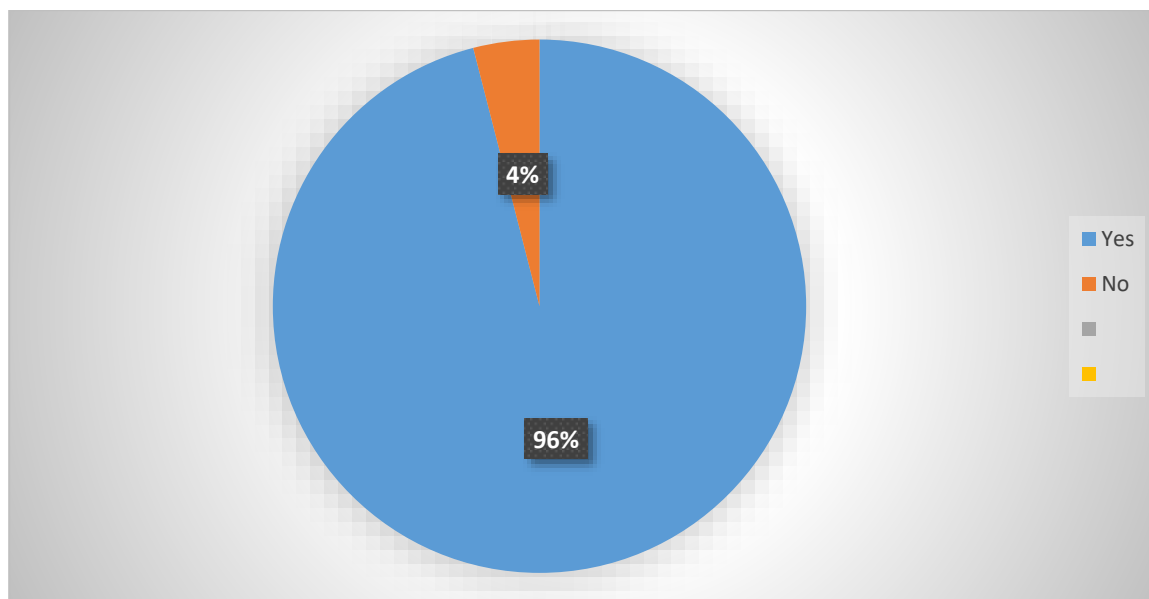
Another issue sapping the division's success is corruption. The division's service delivery is hindered by the numerous corrupt inclinations that officials indulge in.

10% of respondents cited a further major barrier to the efficient and effective delivery of services in the subcounty as being inadequate citizen participation. Several locals don't understand the function of NGOs, which has an impact on their operations in the subcounty.

Lack of competent capacity of the staffs especially those of the community-based organizations curtails the implementation, monitoring and super visionary 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 4 shows 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.



According to the findings from the pie chart above, 96% of respondents concur that the role played by non-governmental organizations and the reduction of poverty in local government are connected, as respondents in the Bugili municipality local government have shown. Only 4% of the respondents were unsure. These 4% objected, citing other reasons such as the fact that government interventions are more efficient in their areas than NGOs' initiatives, and that they are therefore attributing the reduction of poverty to government efforts rather than NGOs in their areas. Nonetheless, this does not change the fact that the local government of Bugili municipality relies heavily on non-governmental groups to reduce poverty.

Conclusions

Basing on the study findings, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions as follows;

That the common types of decentralization in Bugili municipality local government in Uganda include the political decentralization which takes the form devolution in which semi-autonomous administrative units are created and political powers devolved to them.

Secondly, there is administrative decentralization in which powers over service delivery are conferred to local governments through delegation. Thirdly, the fiscal decentralization in which financial powers to collect local revenue are conferred on lower agencies like the sub counties, municipalities and lower localities given to them so as to fund the different activities of the program. This is because all the study respondents covered by the study were able to reveal the same information.

According to the report's results, 100% of respondents are aware that non-governmental organizations exist and play a role in the subcounty, and 96% of respondents concur that their involvement is crucial to reducing poverty there.

The study also found that non-governmental organizations face a variety of difficulties, such as political interference, insufficient provision that limits their capacity to carry out their mission, leaders' and community members' negative attitudes, which seriously potentially ruin the viability of their operations, an unfavorable legal environment that hinders rather than facilitates their work, the issue of poor state.

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.

In conclusion, statistics still show that local governments have failed to combat poverty, despite some real-world examples of success. This is true even though Uganda's government has made progress since 2000, when General Y K Museveni established the National Development Plan 1 with the goal of reducing poverty in the nation. This leaves a very large funding gap, revealing flaws in the local entities' systems for delivering services. This calls for more government support in the form of increased funding, staffing, and education programs, as well as having a strong, efficient, and effective partnership with non-state actors to meld efforts in order to collectively overcome the problem.

Recommendations

Basing on the study findings as well as study conclusions, the researcher recommends the following;

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.

Political interference should be counteracted to enable the independence of the subcounty to work expeditiously the NGOs in the area without any unnecessary interference from the center or any powerful Centre of authority from above.

Effective and deterrent laws as well as strong enforcement should be ensured so as to deter failure of the sub-county's projects and also empower the NGOs to undertake their roles impeccably.

Training and skilling of beneficiaries and officials to build their capacity to work efficiently and effectively should be undertaken. Building the capacity of the NGO staffs so as to enable them undertake their roles expeditiously as well is very vital.

Privatization of the provision of some services should be reinforced so to give room for greater improvement among others. The Bugili municipality authorities can contract out the provision of certain services to the NGOs.

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