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| **Danish organisation** | Ghana Biblioteksvenner |
| **Title of the intervention** | Recepting Reading and Learning Project |
| **Partner name(s)** | Read to Change Initiative (R2CI) |
| **Amount applied for** | 303.364,- dkr |
| **Country(ies)** | Ghana |
| **Period (# of months)** | May 2022 - April 2024 (24 months) |

1. **Objective and relevance (the world around us)**

* What is the main purpose with the intervention, including challenges that need to be addressed?

The Receptive Reading and Learning (RRL) project builds on the experiences of the Community of Reading (CoR) project funded by CISU. The CoR was used to establish community groups, initiate capacity building of the partner organisation and began engagements with educational authorities regarding community libraries. The RRL project which is planned to last for 2 years from May 2022 - April 2024 will use the lessons learned as basis for growth and greater results.

Major problems that will be addressed are the high illiteracy rates amongst children. Many children leave primary and junior high school with the ability to read and write. Reading and writing materials remain a huge challenge in the area. The Dallung Community Library, which is a small library, remains the most functional library in the whole of Kumbungu district. It is in the light of this that the partners seek to further strengthen the Dallung Library, strengthen the existing reading clubs and facilitate processes for communities to initiate community-led libraries in the area. It is also important for teachers to receive further training regarding ways to integrate the use of libraries and information searching to optimise reading and learning in schools. The overall objective is to promote the culture of reading by strengthening reading clubs and partnerships with selected schools in the Dalun Education Circuit of the Northern Region of Ghana.

**Specific Objectives**

1. The Dalun Community Library has become a point of learning that promotes receptive reading culture in selected schools within the Dalun Circuit by the end of the project in 2024.

2. Engagement of educational actors and partnership models are established to promote active teaching and learning practices in the Dalun circuit of the Kumbungu district of Northern Ghana.

3. The capacities of the Read to Change Initiative (R2CI) and Ghana Biblioteksvenner (GBV) have been strengthened and have become strong organisations serving as catalysts for promoting receptive reading in the project communities.

* Describe the context of the intervention:

Ghana is a growing democratic society and relatively stable country with a high degree of freedom of expression and appreciable level of people’s participation in governance issues. Kumbungu is the district capital and houses the District Education Service departments and oversees the management of educational institutions in the area. In the latest Population and housing census a total of 110,586 was registered in the kumbungu district. Dalun is the second largest community in the district with a population of about 8.500.

The Ghana Education Service (GES) leads the implementation of education. For easy supervision and monitoring purposes, district educational structures are further divided into circuits. This project is implemented in the Dalun Circuit. Dalun Circuit has 19 schools, with one Circuit Supervisor who reports to the District Direct of Education. School governance structures such as the Parent Teachers Association (PTAs), Schools Management Committees (SMCs) are part of the educational governance actors and key stakeholders. However many of these structures remain dysfunctional due to high literacy amongst parents who lack the understanding that there is great need for school-community partnership.

There is a growing gap between rural-urban educational opportunities and COVID-19 has widened the gap. Ghanaian schools remained closed between March 2020 to February 2021. Schools in the project area have remained under-resourced and could not actively take part in the so-called online learning process instituted by selected schools in the country. Many children of the targeted schools lack furniture, reading and writing materials and schools under trees are still seen. In the entire Kumbungu district there is no public library where citizens can borrow books. The Dallung Community Library which was supported through the Community of Reading project remains the only functional library in the area.

Economically, unemployment is high in the project area and leaves community members unable to fend for the educational needs of their children and thus leave education as a privilege rather than a right. Parents are largely peasant farmers and still cherish using their children as farm-hands rather than educating them even though education is seen as a key to poverty reduction. Even in 2022 there is still a high number of children, especially girls who are out of school and are used as farm labour by their parents. Ghana was one of the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, yet cultural practices still affect the welfare and educational rights of children especially girls.

* + **Describe whether the intervention takes place in a stable or fragile context.**

Ghana is categorised as a stable and democratic environment with striving democratic practices exemplified in people’s freedom of association, freedom of speech, existence of universal adult suffrage. Civil society organisations and media freedom defines Ghana as a good example in Sub Saharan Africa. Denmark sees Ghana as a transition economy that is ready for growth and has thus shifted focus away from traditional aid towards promotion of trade and investment opportunities.

* **Describe how this intervention will strengthen civil society organising.**

Objective three of the project focuses on building the capacity of GBV and R2CI to become strong NGOs promoting literacy and advocating for the educational rights of children. Furthermore, by strengthening the capacity of Library committees, reading clubs, building networks of reading club coordinators, parents of children in reading clubs, teachers, school management committees (SMCs), Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) and other community actors, the project promotes civic action and parental inclusion in educational governance. These micro level activism has the propensity to contribute to stronger community based associations to engage policy makers to promote quality education at community levels. This is an important contribution to sustainable development goal 4. The actors do understand the power of working together and have identified selected like-minded CSOs such as Right to Play, YEfL-Ghana, Youth Opportunity Partnership Programme and the Northern Region Library Authority as strategic partners and engage them during project events. All these processes seek to strengthen and increase civic action and thereby civil society organisations in the area.

* **What climate- and environmental conditions do the partnership and/or the intervention need to respond to?**

We have reflected over ways to promote environment and climate change action. GBV has established a learning and inspiration group made up of retired Danish librarians, pedagogs and so on who will develop and share learning materials with partner schools and reading clubs. Some of the themes will be related to climate change and how children and communities can respond and contribute to environmental and climate change action. The partners will explore ways to use environmentally friendly means of transport such as shared motorbikes in Ghana. Reduce printing and instead use digital information designs to reach out to the target audience via social media is reflected in action to reduce use of paper. RC2I in partnership with Simli Radio have a weekly reading programme - the radio library - and texts regarding climate and environment will be added to the reading lists to build the climate and environmental consciousness of community members.

1. **The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)**

The Danish partner is **Ghana Biblioteksvenner (GBV)**. A group of people, who think libraries nurture and enhance reading culture for community development founded GBV in 2017. The goal is to develop libraries in partnership with local communities, to build reading culture and support children, youth and adults’ access to information, reading materials as ways to promote cultural awareness. GBV has 53 members and contributors. The organisation has within its relatively short lifespan, achieved impressive results. Membership has increased and the first community library in Dalun – Ghana established through a self-funded model. GBV has a board with varying degrees of experiences in library management, project management and pedagogical development. The board is chaired by Jim Højberg; a retired Librarian and author of many children's books. Britta Bitsch, also a retired librarian and member of the Vejle Municipal Assembly takes care of all administrative and project coordination activities. The GBV treasurer, Susanne Heisig, has many years of experience in financial management from the Danish education sector. GBV ensures that all CISU funding requirements are met and thus undertake Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting of project performance. As part of the application two members of GBV were in Ghana to engage the board and staff regarding design and components of the application. The meetings has increased shared understanding and ownership of the project and it is believed that the implementation will be more smooth as compared to the pilot project.

**Read to Change Initiative (R2CI)** is the local partner and main implementing partner of the project. R2CI grew from being a small group of community education activists to a registered NGO initiated by four members of the Dalun community in 2014. They identified the need to address educational challenges that affect learning outcomes and high school dropouts. A community library was identified as a necessity to increase access and culture of reading to complement the mainstream educational system. The group engaged different community actors and an experimental library was put in place with some few donated books from individuals and their own private bookshelves. The community embraced the idea of a community library and the local chief donated a piece of land for free.

R2CI is organised with a project manager, 2 Library Assistants and Library Manager who connects the Library and the project and takes care of the finances. R2CI has a five member board with monitoring roles. They meet regularly to look at reports and give feedback. In this application resources are made available to build the capacity of the board and actively monitor project and organisational performance.

The group linked up with GBV and established a partnership that led to the full establishment of the Dalun Community Library. The Library is fully functional and hugely patronised by community members daily. It is run by two library assistants whose capacity has been boosted through privating funding to give them library and information management education. The vision of R2CI is “An educated, informed and connected community of readers and learners leading change in their communities”. The mission is to empower communities, especially children with access to information through reading materials and educational events to ensure active reading and prospects for lifelong learning. R2CI has a board, A Director (serves as project coordinator), Library Manager and a team of volunteers serving as library assistants and reading club coordinators. R2CI will coordinate all project activities in Ghana, manage volunteers, monitor, evaluate and report on performance.

* **Describe any previous acquaintance or cooperation between the partners, and how these experiences have fed into the development of the proposed intervention.**

GBV and R2CI established a partnership in 2018 that led to the establishment of the Dallung Community Library. The partners jointly applied for the Community of Reading Project that lasted for a year. The partners have established working relationships, build administration and reporting systems and have produced learning outcomes that are relevant to build on and expand. In order to increase shared ownership of the project two members of the GBV visited Ghana to deliberate on project design, activities budgets and methods to be used. These meetings were also used to review the pilot project and deliberate on lessons learned from the CoR project.

The CoR was implemented in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet the project produced incredible results.

* Build a strong relationship with the Regional Library Authority who have built the capacity of RC2I team
* Established relationships with Right to Play and introduced reading through play
* Introduced the **Radio Library Concept** that has been adopted by the local radio station. This has inspired state actors and the programme replicated at different places in Ghana. The Simli Radio in partnership with the R2CI expanded the duration of the weekly Radio Library Idea at no cost to R2CI. This is a great achievement.
* Build a strong community library as the only library in the Kumbungu district
* Recruited and trained community reading club coordinators
* Established functional reading clubs for children.
* The capacity of the staff including the library assistants have increased through tailored made project management and library management courses.
* **Describe the contributions, roles, and responsibilities of the partners and other actors.**

The board of GBV has the overall policy responsibility and ensures all CISU standards agreed are followed. GBV is the direct link to CISU, administers and transfers funds for project implementation in Ghana and monitors project implementation through reports, online meetings and monitoring visits. Two monitoring visits are planned. One of the monitoring visits will be together with the GBV board to be used as a partnership development and learning event. GBV has established a learning material group who are professional pedagogs and librarians. They will develop inspirational learning materials for reading clubs and partner schools in Ghana.

R2CI is the main project implementer, project coordinator and will take charge of community sensitization, project management and reporting to CISU through GBV. R2CI will lead in the engagement of local actors, monitoring and supervision of local volunteers and providing logistical needs to local project beneficiaries. The partners will jointly manage the project and ensure that they meet CISU agreed standards and achieve project objectives. The Northern Regional Library authority has pledged to conduct capacity training for the staff regarding management of the Dallung community library and support advocacy for expansion of libraries in Northern Ghana.

* **Describe how the intervention will contribute to developing the relationship and collaboration between the partners.**

The RRL Project has the power to build on the gains made during the CoR Project and contribute to capacity building of both partners. Under this project a partnership meeting based on a self funding model is planned where the board of GBV will visit Ghana for the partners to engage in shared learning. This will give the partners the opportunity to hold meetings, meet other partners and discuss their shared vision and ways to strengthen the partnership. An expected output of the engagement is a partnership strategy. GBV will develop inspirational learning materials to be shared with reading clubs and schools. This has the propensity to increase intercultural learning that is key to partnership and collaborative learning. R2CI is becoming visible due to increased engagements with other like-minded CSOs. The radio library component has made RC2I known in communities and has made the organisation known in the area and to other education-led NGOs. GBV has through private monetary contribution sponsored library education for two young girls to read BA in Library and Information Studies at the University of Ghana Adult Education Centre. This will add an incredible amount of human resource capacity to R2CI and their management of libraries in Dallung and the area. Increased staff capacity is key to the sustainability of the organisation.

1. **Target groups, objectives, and expected results (our intervention)**

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| **Target Groups Description** | **Total Number and Gender/Age Divisions** | **Roles and Expected Benefits** |
| Direct Beneficiaries | Boys: 1094  Girls: 1003  Young People:317 | active users of the project activities: members of reading clubs and take part in festivals and dialogues. |
| **Teachers:**  Males: 99  Females: 18 | School library coordinators , actors in library model design and organizers of school reading activities. |
| **Parents:**  Males 797  Females 790 | Stakeholders who play the roles of guiding their children to use the library and reading clubs actively. |
| **Volunteers:**  Reading Club Coordinators  Males: 14  Females: 8 | Reading club leaders motivating and inspiring users of reading clubs. They also organise community reading activities. |
| Indirect Beneficiaries | **C**ommunity Leaders:  Chiefs and elders: 17 | Encourage parents to support project activities |
| Other CBOs:  Youth Groups : 1207 | Support project activities by participating in events. |

* **Describe the objectives and expected results.**

The activity matrix below shows the relationship between the objectives, activities, expected outputs and output indicators.

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| **Activities** | **Expected Outputs** |
| **1. The Dalun Community Library has become a point of learning that promotes receptive reading culture in selected schools within the Dalun Circuit by the end of the project in 2024.** | |
| 1.1: Local Reading Festival | At least 90% of reading club members, their parents, and community leaders plus GES representatives take part in the local reading festival. |
| 1.2: The General Reading Festival | 75 % of Children, parents, reading club coordinators, representatives from GES, CSOs, and community leaders take part in the event. |
| 1.3 Radio Library | 24 radio programmes are produced with themes that are informative (including Climate action themes) and educational for children and their parents. |
| 1.4 Strengthen existing reading clubs | Strengthen the performance of the 5 reading clubs to become self-driven |
| 1.5 Establish new reading clubs | Four new reading clubs are established in year two of the project. |
| 1.6 Starting up digital learning | 8 workshops in how to use the internet information searching eg. Wikipedia  20 junior high - and senior high pupils at each workshop |
| **Objective Indicators 1:**   * The reading clubs have become strong and self-driven with 75% of the members of the reading clubs actively taking dialogue reading * At least 30 % of teachers and 45 pupils actively use of internet for searching information workshops | |
| **2. 2. Engagement of educational actors and partnership models are established to promote active teaching and learning practices in the Dalun circuit of the Kumbungu district of Northern Ghana.** | |
| 2.1: Establish School Library Partnership | Library School Partnership developed and each school sign up to agreed terms |
| 2.2: Review and develop School Library Model | The existing schools Library model revised and improved with clear guidelines and made user friendly |
| 2.3 Engagement with Ghana Education Service | R2CI continuously engage district education authorities regarding integration of library into lesson plans |
| 2.4 Training on integration of libraries into teaching and digital learning | 38 teachers are trained on integrating libraries and information search in teaching and learning in a workshop in year one.  In year two the training will be school based |
| 2.5 Pedagogical capacity building of Reading Club Coordinators | Beginner and refresher training for new and existing Reading Club Coordinators |
| 2.6 Capacity of School - Library Coordinators | Training for 19 school - library coordinators on and use of the School - Library model |
| 2.7 Parental engagement meetings | Meeting between parents of reading club members, reading club coordinators and project coordinator. |
| 2.8 Learning and sharing seminar for partner schools | Two learning and sharing events arrange for partner schools in each of the three circuits |
| **Objective Indicators 2**:   * Strong school partnership model with clearly defined agreements developed. * The percentage of schools that use the library in their teaching and learning | |
| **3. The capacities of the Read to Change Initiative (R2CI) and Ghana Biblioteksvenner (GBV) have been strengthened and they have become strong organisations serving as catalysts for promoting receptive reading culture in the project communities.** | |
| 3.1 Capacity training of project and library staff | Tailored made training for project and library staff on library and project management |
| 3.2 Board training and monitoring | The Board members are trained on the role of the board in project monitoring |
| 3..3 GBV learning material production | GBV’s learning materials group produce learning materials that are shared with schools in Ghana |
| 3.4 Partnership summit | At least 3 members of GBV board, R2CI board and other key actors meet face to face in Ghana to engage each other on the partnership prospects and ways to strengthen the partnership |
| 3.5 Project coordination | A project coordinator is hired to coordinate the activities. The supervision and the coordination of project activities by the coordinator will ensure that the target goals of the project are met in a total sanity. |
| 3.6. Board meetings | The board members meet periodically to be updated on the progress of work and to examine and approve budgets. |
| **Objective Indicator 3:**   * The capacities of GBV and R2CI have become strong and the have developed strategies for growth | |

* **What is the strategy of the intervention?**

We have applied five major strategic priorities to achieve the objective of the project.

Strategy 1: **Establishment and Strengthening the Capacity of Existing Reading Clubs**. The experiences from the reading clubs in the Dallung Circuit will be used as learning points to support four new community reading clubs. Within the first year of the project, maximum attention will be given to existing reading clubs to make them fully functional and sustainable. In the second year when the existing clubs become strong, new reading clubs will be established. The new communities require training of new reading coordinators, building the capacity of community reading club parent committees, engaging parents and building relationships with the school leaders as important prerequisites for the sustainability of the reading clubs

Strategy 2: **Review of Library Models and Active Engagement with Schools**. During the pilot phase structures, models and approaches were developed. These structures, models and approaches require review and adjustments to become relevant and sustainable. The functionality of the approaches, models and structures is extremely significant for the project. It requires increment of capacity, review of the library school partnership model and to ensure that the approaches, models and structures developed are working as desired.The School library model was developed in the first project and will be reviewed so that it becomes more relevant to learning needs of partner schools. The functionality of the model requires active engagements with the partner schools and educational authorities. Each school has a School Library Coordinator (SLC). Series of training are planned for the SLCs and school heads to increase their understanding and integration of libraries as essential instruments of learning. Engagement with Ghana Education Service district directorates to support integration of libraries as part of the school timetable is key to this strategy.

Strategic 3:  **Integrating cultural events and promotion of reading skills through Play.** Children develop through and play has shown to motivate children to learn and cooperate with each other. The actors intend to use play atlocal and general reading festivals to showcase to communities the learning outcomes of the reading clubs. Experiences from the just ended Community of Reading (CoR) project revealed incredible connection and power of creativity and play into reading processes for children. The idea is to involve activity based learning into reading and learning practices. This motivates and increases children's willingness to become part of the library community and enhance their reading skills. We shall organise local and general reading events where the children will through music, dance and other creative performances showcase their reading ability. There will be local and general festivals where parents, community members and educational actors can experience what the children learn in schools and reading clubs.

**Strategy 4. Engagements of parents and other education focused CSOs. Engagements of these actors** are part of our sustainability mechanisms. We intend to engage parents, community based associations, educational organisations such as Right to Play, School for Life, Rural Education for Empowerment (REEP-Ghana) and educational authorities regarding ways to promote access to reading materials and receptive reading culture in especially rural schools. During the pilot phase, we realised a lack of active parental engagement at reading clubs which resulted in children coming late and absenteeism. Active parental engagement and entering into agreement with them will prepare them to support in sending their children to the reading clubs timely. In order to ensure synergies between RC21, traditional authorities and educational actors, there is the need to actively engage these actors.

**Finally, resourcing the Dallung Community Library with reading materials and digital learning devices** is a key strategy to increase access to reading materials and promote a culture of reading. The Dallung Community Library has quite a lot of reading materials, however, a way to introduce digital and visual reading options will add value to the capacity of the library and expose the readers to appreciate ways to seek external information through resource’s on internet. This is an innovative way to expose rural youth into the ever-growing digitalised world.

* **What are the plans for systematising experiences along the way and at the end of the intervention?**

We plan to conduct baseline studies regarding the literacy levels of the reading club members at the beginning of the project. This will enable the actors to be able to measure results made at the end of the project. Staff and a consultant will conduct the studies. This is strategically important for the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Furthermore, an elaborate implementation plan with roles and responsibilities has been developed. Reporting will be done every quarter based on quarterly work plans. There are two planned monitoring visits by GBV. The first will allow GVB to be part of launching the intervention, meet local educational actors, and hold an inception meeting with educational authorities and prospective collaborators such as Ghana Education Service, Right to Play, School for Life, Ghana Library Authority etc. The second monitoring will be done a few months before the project closure to allow partners to incorporate the lessons learned and challenges faced into the final report and possibly into a new project. Each of the visits will also be used for shared capacity building such as Mango Health Check and Accountability Dialogue tool exercises. The project accounts will be audited in Ghana and in Denmark. The audit in Ghana is important to strengthen R2CI as an organization and to meet organisational and statutory regulations in Ghana. A partnership summit is planned to take place in the middle of the project. GBV will encourage all board members to take part and this visit will be based on cost sharing where the project pays for project related local expenses in Ghana, but board members pay their own travel costs. Online means such as zoom meetings will be used to deliberate on progress and challenges. Pictures, videos, and audio-visual recordings will be shared via Facebook. CISU and other stakeholders will always be tagged to follow the progress of the project.

1. **Intervention-related information work in Denmark**

While we go to schools, NGO’s in DK, markets in DK e.g., we need to bring short information about the project and the need for it. For this reason, we get printed flyers to deliver.