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| Danish organisation | Civil Connections Community Foundation (CCCF) |
| Title of the intervention | Mapping Early Childhood Development programmaes and actors as well creating a digital platform to strengthen collaboration - Ethiopia |
| Partner name(s) | Education for Sustainable Development |
| Amount applied for | 100.000 DKK |
| Country(ies) | Ethiopia |
| Period (# of months) | Five months |

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

The national Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme in Ethiopia is cross-sectoral as the holistic needs of children are diverse and cannot be addressed by a single intervention from a single sector. However, from our discussion with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health (MoH) and our local partner Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), we have learned that ECD programmes across the sectors are not coordinated and lack a platform to start a more concentrated collaboration towards this coordination.

Therefore the overall objective of this intervention is to start efforts for more systematic coordination of the national Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes and actors in Ethiopia, that will in the longer run strengthen and promote these programmes to be more effectively delivered. This intervention focuses on mapping the national ECD programmes and actors in Ethiopia and strengthen collaboration amongst the various actors by creating creating knowledge of who, where and what they do around ECD, facilitation for formation of a cross-sectoral multiactor working group that will systematize more coordinated planning around ECDs – including mobilizing others to converge towards more effective delivery, as well as developing a digital platform/repository of all our results and the mapped actors and tincture a discussion on the way forward.

For the purpose of this intervention, it is crucial to define early childhood development programmes and services. Early childhood development support children’s growth and development from birth to age five. It includes programmes and services that support nurturing care, including health, nutrition, play, learning and protection. Its interventions address four developmental domains of a growing child-physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional development.

This small-scale intervention has two key specific objectives which is presented as follows:

1. Mapping the various ECD programmes and actors engaged in Ethiopia. Under the first objective, we aim to do the following activities:
2. Carry out a survey where we will develop questionnaires and interview tools to do the mapping.
3. Gather and collect relevant data/information about existing frameworks and strategies through a desk review.
4. Based on the mapping outcome, we will organise a consultative meeting with key stakeholders as a qualitative input into the mapping of ECD programmes and actors.
5. Gather all the data and actors within the ECD sector in Ethiopia generated in objective 1 into action synergies for further engagement on and planning for the future of ECDs. This will include two main activities/outputs:
6. Forming representatives (at least 15) from the mapped ECD actors into a cross-sectoral, multi-actor collaboration committee/working groups, that will continue engagement on the project components, including planning for follow-up steps/interventions and mobilizing other stakeholders.
7. Creating a digital platform with our local partner and key stakeholders to enhance collaboration and create access to knowledge based on the mapping.

**1.1 What do you want to achieve through the intervention?**

The previous section outlines the coordination gaps in ECD programmes in Ethiopia and the methodology for this specific intervention. This intervention will achieve the following outputs:

1. There is a shared understanding of ECD and which actors work with ECD programmes in Ethiopia.
2. There is enhanced collaboration amongst the ECD actors.
3. There is a digital platform with ECD information accessible for coordination and collaboration.

The Ministery of Health (MoH) in Ethiopia is responsible for the emerging ECD programme in the country. Thus, we are intentionally engaging with the MoH to ensure ownership and enhance coordination amongst ECD programmes and actors.

**1.2 Why is the intervention important?**

This intervention is based on the background knowledge that early childhood care and support profoundly impact children and society. According to the World Bank, globally, about 250 million children under the age of five live in poverty and lack health care, nutrition, learning, early stimulation, and responsive care. Ultimately due to poverty and lack of vital services early in life, 250 million children do not reach their full developmental potential globally. And the majority of these children are from sub-Saharan African countries, including Ethiopia.

Specific to Ethiopia, a report released in 2019 by the Ethiopian Government Statistics Agency and UNICEF has indicated that an estimated 36 million of a total population of 41 million children are deprived of basic goods and services. The report indicated that 97% of children in Ethiopia experienced deprivation in at least one of the six dimensions (stunting, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and housing), whereas 89% per cent of children under five experience at least two deprivations simultaneously.

In addition, the situational analysis report made about children in Ethiopia by the Ministry of Health (MoH) has revealed that from the total under-five child population, about 37% are stunted, 21% are underweight, and 7% are wasted. Moreover, in 2016 a report from the Ethiopian Government Statistics Agency indicated that 68% of children under five were deprived of basic health care; 73% lacked proper nutrition; 59% lacked adequate water, while 90% lacked adequate sanitation and housing. Deprivation in Education was 50% for children aged between 5 and 17 years in 2016.

Furthermore, 13% of children under five experiences deprivation in all six dimensions at the same time. Due to malnutrition and other adverse life experiences, nearly 60% of children under five in Ethiopia lag from their full developmental potential. Thus, the multidimensional deprivation overall analysis and recommendation indicate that children's holistic needs are diverse. As a result, there is a need to map out actors, mobilise a common understanding of ECD, develop a common workable framework, and improve collaboration. In addition, this can contribute further to increased resource mobilisation and social sector prioritisation for child-sensitive programming.

Indeed ECD programme initiatives in Ethiopia are cross-sectoral, and it requires collaboration amongst the various ministries. However, collaboration amongst the various ministries has not been possible due to a lack of coordination mechanisms and resources. Moreover, civil society organisations implementing ECD programmes in Ethiopia generally lack platforms to share best practices and knowledge in ECD programme implementation. Thus, this intervention is crucial as it produces knowledge about the various governmental and non-governmental organisations engaged in ECD programmes and aims to enhance collaboration by creating a digital platform.

A recent review made by the MoH has indicated that most of the ECD programme interventions implemented so far are targeted to address the health and nutrition of young children and their parents. However, other programme activities like protection, responsive caregiving and opportunity for early learning/stimulation (e.g. communication and play) are missing. Thus, this intervention will further highlight existing programmes implemented by the various actors, indicate the possibilities for new programmes and partnerships to provide a holistic national ECD programme.

For the future, this small-scale intervention will enable us to understand policies and frameworks that inform ECD programme implementation in Ethiopia. ECD is a worldwide agenda at the moment, especially in low and middle-income countries where the majority of children face adversity. Thus, countries like Ethiopia have adopted the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF), which the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the World Bank developed together. To this end, this intervention will contribute to familiarise the NCF framework further by creating a digital platform amongst the ECD actors.

In partiular, this intervention will provide us with the necessary information to continue our work on closing the gap in ECD programme implementation in Ethiopia. We plan to apply for new funding to follow up on this intervention and initiate activities to capacitate the local partners and enhance collaborative mechanisms.

**1.3. Describe the context of the intervention: Describe the conditions that apply in the area where the intervention will take place, and which are expected to influence the intervention.**

In addition to what has been defined in 1.2 above, we will present some specific socio-cultural and political contexts in Ethiopia relevant to ECD intervention.

The current socio-political context in Ethiopia is characterized by the ongoing conflict in the country and the related humanitarian crisis leaves children particularly vulbenrable. The conflict between the central government and the Tigray administrative region has been ongoing for over a year now. Since the conflict started, almost 6300.000 people have been displaced, according to the UNHCR.

Especially vulnerable groups, including children, need ECD services and programme support due to the fragile conflict context. Moreover, COVID-19, youth unemployment, drought, and inflation combined have affected the local economy and the population's everyday life for the last few years. Thus, the context has made children and women highly vulnerable. However, specific to this intervention, the ongoing conflict and COVID-19 regulations are expected to impact the implementation process. Thus, we plan to employ remote data collection methods for the mapping work and allocate extra resources for the consultative meetings to conduct the workshop safely. It is also expected that the ongoing conflict may impact the willingness of civil society organisations located in the conflict area to participate in the mapping. In the mapping work and in the process of creating the digital platform, we will work closely with our local partners to ensure that key stakeholders participate and have ownership of the platform to ensure future collaboration amongst all stakeholders.

Regarding societal perception in relation with ECD services, the common perceived understanding is that the services are limited primarily to healthcare and education which in several parts of the country are not available. However on the other hand, the national ECD programmes are holistic and have other components such as early stimulation, play, parental education.

Specific to the national ECD programme context in Ethiopia, it is important to highlight that it is cross-sectoral.The Ministery of Health (MoH), Ministery of Education (MoE) and the Ministery of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCY) are key governmental stakeholders working with ECD at a national level. In addition several civil societiy organisanistions - national as well as international implement ECD programmes in Ethiopia. Intersectoral coordination is crucial for the successful implementation of the ECD programme in Ethiopia. Thus, by engaging the MoH in this intervention, we will identify key actors within the government sector that are responsible for ECD and the various opportunities for collaboration. On the other hand, with our local partner Education for Sustainable Development, we will identify the civil society actors engaged in ECD programme implementation. The information we gather about the implementing actors will serve as a foundation to coordinate ECD efforts.

**1.4. Describe how this intervention can contribute to supporting collaboration, public engagement and civil organising and how this in time will contribute to social justice.**

This intervention will contribute directly to supporting collaboration between civil society actors, ministries and other stakeholders related to ECD programmes like health care, education and psychosocial services. Mapping of the actors engaged in ECD programmes will provide an overview of who is doing what to understand coverage and collaboration. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in programme implementation, coverage and programme-type, this intervention provides the foundation for improving collaboration among the various actors.

Moreover, this intervention aims at contributing to equitable access to ECD services regardless of gender and age by contributing to the national ECD programme. The mapping will also fill the missing programme gap leading to a holistic and effective national ECD programme, which is accessible for more children and parents/guardians nationwide. This way this intervention contributes to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 and 17.

**1.5 What climate- and environmental conditions do the partnership and/or the intervention need to respond to? And how have the partners responded to it?**

We know that children and youth in Ethiopia are particularly vulnerable to climate change as they constitute a growing proportion of the population. A significant number of children and youth in Ethiopia grow up in areas that are vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change that affect their ability to survive, grow and thrive. UNICEF estimates that 8.2 million children currently are directly or indirectly affected by climate change in the horn of Africa as migrants, internally displaced persons or refugees. Thus, this intervention seeks to assess two central aspects regarding climate and environmental conditions.

The first aspect is determining whether the ECD programmes in Ethiopia have included climate change -related vulnerability and adaptation mechanisms, s it is crucial that national ECD programmes should respond to the needs of climate change involving children as agents to impact their environment.

The other aspect is how the team working on this intervention can limit its carbon footprints while conducting this project. The team will need to visit the various actors working with early childhood development programmes. Most of the actors are based in the capital, Addis Ababa, but some actors are based in different regions. The team needs to have physical meetings with all the actors in order to successfully communicate the aim of this project and establish rapport. However, the physical meetings with the actors based outside of Addis Ababa has been limited to one time across this project intervention, where other informative data will be collected along the way through online communication and meetings.

The staff from Denmark will travel to Ethiopia one time because the trip is assessed to be absolutely necessary. Following up and monitoring the progress of the intervention will mostly take place through online communication and meeting channels. As the Danish staffs have family in Ethiopia, the staffs have the opportunity to stay in Ethiopia for a longer period at relatively low costs. In light of the above-mentioned considerations, the project is generally environmentally friendly.

2. The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)

**Civil Connections Community Foundation (CCCF)** is an international non-governmental organization based in Copenhagen – Denmark. The aim of CCCF is to increase value and achievement in international development initiatives with local grassroots communities. CCCF’s mission is to support local grassroots development actors to achieve their aims in facilitating development for a fair and sustainable world.

**Early Care International (ECI) is an associate** Danish based non-governmental organization created in 2021 to respond to the early developmental needs of children in low and middle-income countries. ECI engages at a systemic level to impact the lives of a significant number of children early in life to help them attain their full human potential. The mission of ECI is to strengthen early childhood development programmes in low and middle-income countries. ECI consists of dedicated people who have extensive knowledge about Ethiopia, particularly ECD programme initiatives. The team has long years of work and life experience in Ethiopia and thus the team has in-depth cross-cultural understanding of the context where this intervention will be implemented. ECI is an organization that has a lot of experiences from Ethiopia with vast network of non-governmental, governmental and private initiatives supporting ECD programmes.

**Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** is the project’s local partner in Ethiopia and was established in 2007. ESD envisions seeing a country where children, youth and women are economically, socially and culturally empowered to overcome poverty, marginalization and exclusion. ESD’s mission reads as “create a brighter future for children, youth & women through education, skills training & women livelihood promotion in partnership with communities & other stakeholders”.

**Other supportive partners**

The Ethiopian Ministry of Health (MoH) is a supportive non-contractual partner. The MoH is responsible for the emerging national ECD programmes and is willing to collaborate with both ESD, ECI. And CCCF.

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

Civil Connections Community Foundation (CCCF) and Early Care International (ECI) have been in dialogue about possibilities of working together in Ethiopia for over 8 months. CCCF has strong experience in civil society capacity building and has projects in several countries. Engaging in Ethiopia provides a new opportunity for CCCF, whilst at the same time supporting ECI to implement the project and strengthen their capacity in this area. This is in direct coherence with the mission and vision of CCCF – to support high impact community development actors to grow.

The foundation and values on which ECI is built, can be traced to 2012. Due to the fact that ECI has just formally been registered in Denmark, ECI has joined the CCCF as an associate partner. This setup presents collaborative advantages for both ECI and CCCF in relation to complying development and joined resource mobilization to support activities and partners in Ethiopia. Additional CCCF, ECI and ESD share common interest in developing the welfare of marginalised communities and specifically the rights and the development of young people. Thus, this project is a given motivation for the three collaborative partners. Also the small-scale modalities of CISU give the possibility for this partnership and develop it for the future.

The aim of this intervention is to help identify existing gaps and opportunities in ECD programme and thereby it is necessary to have a local partner, which has extensive knowledge and experience with education and other aspects of early childhood development programmes. CCCF and ECI are partnering with ESD as a local partner. ECI has had several meetings with ESD, the MoH in person to make sure that the values and missions of ESD and MoH align with the values and mission of CCFI and ECI. The people working at ECI have extensive knowledge and experience about Ethiopia. Both Rebecca and Wondim from ECI have extensive work experience from Ethiopia. Wondim has over ten years of experience working with both local and Danish based civil society organisations, speaking the language and extensive network and contextual knowledge. Developing the idea for this intervention has been in process for a long time.

**2.2 Describe the partners and other actors’ contributions, roles, and responsibilities.**

Civil Connections Community Foundation (CCCF) will be responsible for the overall framework of the project. Early Care International (ECI) as an associate partner will support the technical aspects of implementing the project in Ethiopia. Moreover, although CCCF has been part of developing this project with Eudcation for Sustinable Development (ESD), ECI has a much longer history working with early childhood development programmes in Ethiopia and thus a relevant knowledge partner to have.

CCCF in particular will be responsible in supporting ESD to understand the rules of the fund, and together with ECI support ESD to effectively implement the project locally through consultations, monitoring and capacity building where necessary. ESD will be responsible for the on-ground implementation of this intervention, and ensure that all the project activities take place, providing timely feedback to CCCF and ECI (monitoring date) as well as financially reporting to CCCF and ECI. CCCF together with ECI is responsible for drafting, finalizing and submitting application for small-scale intervention. CCCF will follow up on the application process as well as manage budget and report timely to CISU.

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

The nature of this intervention does not give us room for predetermined numbers of target groups, but rather an estimation as it is the aim of the intervention to map them and establish such numbers. Nevertheless, we have the following estimations.

* + This intervention will directly benefit ECD programme stakeholders (non-governmental and governmental) in Ethiopia, with a total estimated reach of between 500-1000 people within the ECD sector who will gain increased access to information and collaboration opportunities in Ethiopia.
  + The MoH along with several Non-governmental and governmental ECD programme actors will be part of the mapping activity (at least 300 representtaives through online questionnaires and meetings),
  + At least 15 key actors (from major government departments and umbrella CSO platforms) will be part of the consultative workshop and woking group. These will be part of the consultative workshop will benefit directly from expanding their knowledge about the ECD programme landscape. Through the digital platform the key actors will have the opportunity to share knowledge and further collaboration.
  + As well as the up to 5 people at ESD and at least another 8 experts that will support the project.
  + Indirectly millions of children will potentially be affected by this intervention, as the intervention contributes to the national early childhood development programme.

**3.1 Describe how the intervention will be implemented: what activities will be carried out? With whom?**

The tablel below shows the activities of our project in chronological order. The project will last 6 months, but we know the result will be utilized for many years to come, and will form foundation for many others.

Table

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4. Intervention-related information work in Denmark

**The purpose of the information work.**

* + Information work in Denmark will be an important aspect of this intervention. Thus, we plan to host events in schools or cultural centers to share information about our effort to promote and strengthen ECD programmes in Ethiopia.

**The target groups of the information work.**

* + The Danish population, children, members in our association, network of civil society organisations will be presented with information about ECD programmes in Ethiopia.

**The means of communication to be used (social media, printed matter, theatre, events, or the like).**

* + Create a brochure about early childhood development services and share with our target groups when we speak at schools and culture centers.
  + Distribute information material about early childhood development including our work through our website and social media such as Facebook/LinkedIn.