ASSESSMENT
OF
CODE’S PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
WITH
CODE-Ethiopia
2007-2012

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We would also acknowledge the work of Dr. Keith McPherson at the University of British Columbia who took the lead on the analysis of the CODE-Ethiopia annual reports which helped us frame the questions and data collection procedures for the in-country visits.

We thank the dozens of men, women, and children we met and who took part in our visits to 14 reading rooms throughout Ethiopia. We were warmly welcomed, treated as special guests, and respected for the work we were doing.

We met some amazing young men who acted as our drivers, our guides, and our translators. We felt repeatedly that these educated, articulate, and passionate-about-Ethiopia young men represent the future for this wonderful country.

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Executive Summary

To assess the CIDA-funded activities of the CODE Partnership Programme with CODE Ethiopia conducted between 2007 and 2012, a team of evaluators recruited by CODE Canada reviewed five years of annual and semi-annual reports and other project documents; visited 12 reading rooms in five different regions of Ethiopia; and interviewed education administrators at the national and regional levels, the Director and staff of CODE Ethiopia, teachers, community leaders, and youth on site in Ethiopia. Through training teachers and teacher-librarians, increasing access to relevant reading materials, improving reading room facilities and introducing the role of ICT, the programme was designed “to help students to acquire and sustain literacy skills.”

It was concluded that the Partnership Programme met or exceeded almost all of its expected outputs and outcomes, and that the expected impact appears to have been achieved. Particular strengths which should continue to be supported in future Programmes include: 1) the publication program of local language reading materials (especially on topics of gender, health, local culture and curriculum); and 2) forging stronger relationships between schools and reading rooms. It is recommended that future training focus on teacher-librarians only, with emphasis in the areas of a) using ICT to improve effectiveness of library management and b) supporting literacy and learning with the reading room materials. Professionalizing teacher-librarians needs to be prioritized to ensure the continued impact of the reading rooms. It is also recommended that clearer and more systematic accountability be established for all partners including CODE Ethiopia and local library management committees. The report concludes with questions that need careful consideration in moving the project forward, such as actual uses of digital technologies, the evolution of reading rooms into community libraries, and the establishment of additional reading rooms in communities where they have been particularly successful.

On the whole, CODE-E is well and competently managed under the leadership of its Executive Director. CODE-E has excellent cooperation and collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the implementation of the program under the tripartite Agreement between CODE-E, MoE and Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) – which was replaced by Charities and Societies Agency in 2010. The relationship between CODE-Canada and CODE-E is one of an equitable partnership. CODE-E does not feel that it is merely a donor-recipient relationship.

The major factors that hinder the full implementation of the program in the country are government bureaucratic ineptness and lack of initiative, rapid turnover of government officials, librarians and school teachers, and budgetary constraints.

The absence of a Governing Board and lack of succession planning is a matter of concern for the long-term sustainability of CODE-E as an organization. The current configuration of the leadership situation whereby the Founder of CODE-E is also its Executive Director who has served the organization for the last 15 years needs to be viewed in the context of the potential negative aspects of the phenomenon of the “Founder’s Syndrome.”
Taking into account the in-kind value of contributions from the Government of Ethiopia and the community, which has been estimated at 30% of the total expenditure, the program has been implemented in a very cost-effective way.

The five major purposes of the evaluation became the lenses through which the data collection/analysis/synthesis were conducted, and they form the framework for discussing the findings and making recommendations for the future. These five purposes are as follows:

1. **Relevance**: extent to which the objectives of partnership program are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements and country-needs;
2. **Effectiveness**: extent to which the objectives of partnership program were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance;
3. **Efficiency**: measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results;
4. **Sustainability**: The probability of continued long-term benefits from the partnership program; the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time; and,
5. **Impact**: positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the partnership program as a whole to literacy development, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

**Recommendations**

Based on site visits and on-the-ground observations conducted by the research team, a series of recommendations are being put forth to enhance the CODE-Ethiopia partnership project and assist in any future partnership planning.

**Relevance**

**Recommendation 1**
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia either gets out of the business of training primary school teachers altogether and concentrates on the other strengths of the program, or intervenes in this area in a more methodical and elaborate way.

**Recommendation 2**
It is recommended that for the next phase of the program, and with the technical assistance of CODE-Canada, a Logic Framework should be formulated along with its associated Performance Measurement Framework. The annual reports should be structured along the Logic Framework, in addition to a narrative of activities carried out.

**Effectiveness**

**Recommendation 3**
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia should revise its guidelines for the composition of the Library Management Committees to:

1. Emphasize the inclusion of teachers in the committees, in addition to the district and local council officials and other community members;
2. To ensure that half of the members are women; and,
3. To encourage the formation of student committees to supplement and augment the functions of the Library Management Committees.

**Recommendation 4**
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia should orient and encourage Library Management Committees to pro-actively seek donations from the local business community (corporate social responsibility).

**Recommendation 5**
It is recommended that it is now time for CODE-Ethiopia to play a more pro-active role in helping, guiding, stimulating, and activating the MoE and local government authorities to implement the program more effectively. Among other things, such a pro-active role should include allocating more resources and time for:

1. Meeting with all the heads of regional education bureaus on an annual basis during the annual conferences convened by MoE;
2. Carrying out lobbying work with MoE and the MoCT to ensure that their budgets permanently include salaries for librarians and other library workers;
3. Conducting one-day workshops with the local stakeholders on the most desired composition of Library Management Committees, the usefulness of having student committees, how to mobilize and involve the community in the affairs of the library, and approaches and methods in seeking financial contributions from the business community (as alluded to in separate recommendations above);
4. Based on the experiences and good practices of other libraries, demonstrate how the communities can be more actively and integrally involved in, and provide financial and material support to, the libraries; and,
5. Identify other potential organizations that donate books such as BookLink and Books for Africa that CODE-Ethiopia and the local authorities can tap into.

**Recommendation 6**
It is recommended that the staff complement be increased by at least two additional workers.

1. One position should be dedicated to professional development with responsibilities for:
   a) initial and ongoing training/support for reading room attendants, teachers, and Library Management Committees (LMCs)
   b) publishing and expanding the use of Sutafe
   c) working with the MoE and the MoCT to provide training for them to support local educators, LMCs, and reading room attendants
2. In addition, it is recommended that CODE Canada consider tapping into CIDA’s International Youth Internship Program to send a few interns to assist CODE-Ethiopia with some organizational tasks and activities including some relevant tasks in the libraries and schools.

**Efficiency**

**Recommendation 7**
It is recommended that before the negative aspects of Founder’ Syndrome potentially and inadvertently catch up with the founder/executive director of CODE-Ethiopia, and in order to
ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization and facilitate succession planning, CODE-Ethiopia should set up a governing board.

**Recommendation 8**

To begin to address some of the issues related to salaries and staffing, it is recommended that a comprehensive strategy be developed to facilitate the professionalization of reading room attendants. Such a strategy should include:

1. Acknowledgement of the professional status of the reading room attendant position;
2. Measures to ensure secure and growing salaries;
3. On-going professional development opportunities;
4. Training in the uses of digital technologies for student learning and library management;
5. Revisions to the current training program to emphasize the partnerships between teachers and reading room attendants in supporting student learning and building the culture for reading; and,
6. Opportunities for reading room attendants within nearby geographic areas to come together to share ideas and build collaborative relationships.

**Recommendation 9**

It is recommended that a system be developed for tighter procedures for accountability and reporting that would help ensure better follow-through on dealing with issues at the local levels.

**Impact**

**Recommendation 10**

It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia conduct an analysis of its current set of local language publications to identify strengths and gaps in its productions to date, match to student interests, and identify new content for curriculum support material.

**Recommendation 11**

It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia continue (and increase) its production/distribution of early literacy, local language materials such as Big Books, picture books, simple information books, and word books to support the early literacy development of preschool and primary-aged children.

**Recommendation 12**

It is further recommended that CODE-Ethiopia increase the publication of health-related materials, balanced views on the role of women, and specific education on HIV/AIDS. There were some examples of CODE-Ethiopia publications in these areas (and a few titles from UNESCO programs), but more materials are needed to meet the demand of the large numbers of students and teachers who need this information.

**Recommendation 13**

It is recommended that locations for future reading rooms be addressed early on with an eye to situating them close to schools, near other community resources, and within walking distance of many children and their families.
Recommendation 14
It is recommended that, in addition to holding Reading Week events each year, each Library Management Committee develop an annual strategic plan for promoting reading throughout the community. The local schools, businesses, reading room staff, and community members must be seen as active participants in encouraging children/youth/families to read and to use their reading room.

Recommendation 15
It is recommended that CODE and CODE-Ethiopia establish a comprehensive, community-based process for sharing the successful strategies used to build and sustain the reading room in one community with other nearby communities so “reinventing the wheel” can be averted.

Moving Forward

With the obvious success of the CODE-Ethiopia local language publication program, resources should be targeted to build on strengths and successes. Future partnership projects need to:

1. Ensure continued support of the nurturing and training local authors and illustrators;
2. Expand the number of books of cultural value including topics of gender and health; and,
3. Increase the publication of reading materials for very young children, especially Big Books.

Another major success from the CODE and CODE-Ethiopia partnership program was the support given to developing strong Library Management Committees (LMCs). Although not all of these committees were as influential in raising the profile and value of the reading rooms in their communities, it was clear that library committees composed of a wide cross section of the community were more likely to work as community partners. Committees that had clear agendas and pro-active members meant that the reading rooms were viewed as vital resources for literacy in the communities.

Reading room attendants need to be seen and supported as professional literacy leaders in their communities. Multiple forms of ongoing professional development are critical, not only to retain attendants in their reading room positions, but to ensure their leadership in literacy, learning and new technologies. A full-time, permanent CODE-Ethiopia staff position needs to be designated to facilitate this professionalization and to support the LMCs in mobilizing their community assets to strengthen the role of reading rooms.

Accountability needs to be tightened throughout the system not for the way funds are spent, but in the expectations placed on LMCs and MoE, and MoCT officials. This can be achieved through reports from CODE-Ethiopia itself, annual updates and strategic planning by LMCs, and clear expectations for regional education officers to connect schools and reading rooms, teachers and reading room attendants, and community members with the efforts to build a culture for reading.

The endeavour to provide internationally donated books needs to be carefully reconsidered. It creates enormous demands on CODE and CODE-Ethiopia staff where resources could be used more strategically, and effectively applied to improve literacy in the country by focusing on the librarian professionalization activities (listed above) and the production of local language literature and curriculum books. Such a re-focusing will become particularly urgent as Ethiopian...
society leaps ahead in the areas of access to digital technologies and the powerful resources available through the Internet.

Consistency of language needs to be enforced. Throughout the documents, signage, discussions, and interviews, reading rooms were variously referred to as libraries, community libraries, public libraries, and reading rooms. Reading room attendants were referred to as librarians, teacher-librarians, and reading room attendants. Consistency will facilitate clarity and reduce confusion.

**Final questions to consider**

Any research project leaves people with new questions - ones not intended at the start of the process, but that have emerged throughout the research process. As researchers exploring the outputs of a major partnership project between CODE-Canada and CODE-Ethiopia, this research team has been fortunate to have seen the amazing work being done throughout the country. Reading rooms are making real contributions to literacy in Ethiopia and the time is right to pause and think about next steps. Should we continue to do what we have been doing, the way we have been doing it? Are there new priorities that need to be explored to capitalize on the successes of CODE-Ethiopia, and are there lessons that could be learned and applied to other CODE projects?

These and others are questions that need to be seriously discussed and explored by both partners. This partnership is definitely working, but the researchers in this case put forth these challenging questions to ponder:

1. Where do we go with digital technologies, both as means of advancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the reading rooms and of CODE-Ethiopia operations, and as a means of supporting literacy and learning in these communities?

2. Should the goal of any new partnership project be to continue to open new reading rooms? Should communities with successful reading rooms have a second reading room, or should new reading rooms continue to be expanded across the country?

3. Have we moved beyond the concept of a “reading room” and embrace the evidence that they are really “community libraries” that are emerging in many of these communities? These community libraries have buy-in from the community leaders, links with government officials, dedicated staff, and many supports from CODE and CODE-Ethiopia. Conceptually, community libraries are more closely linked to literacy and learning, so perhaps we need to see how this concept would change what we do in future partnership projects?

4. How are the international books really supporting literacy and learning in these communities? The reading level of many of these texts seems way beyond the English reading level of most students, and more research is needed on just what contributions they are making to their education. Would the country and the goals of “literacy for all” be better served with a full-time effort to produce and distribute indigenous-language materials tied to the curriculum and to the reading interests of male and female children and youth?
Introduction

Program Description

In 2007, CODE and CODE-Ethiopia agreed to a five-year partnership program with the goal of "improvement of basic education through the provision of appropriate reading materials for national development." Through the Partnership Program, CODE-Ethiopia expected to have an impact, “helping students to acquire and sustain literacy skills.” The five expected outputs included:

1. Increased skills of teachers /librarians
2. Improved skills that increase access to and usage of reading materials
3. Increased relevant reading materials
4. Strengthened library facilities and services
5. Increased understanding of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) role in enhancing literate environment

Purpose of the Evaluation

In the original Call for Proposals, CODE described the project as “primarily a formative evaluation, focused on learning and applying lessons to ensure sustainable results,” and intended for the results to be used to make future decisions about the direction and design of renewed projects in Ethiopia. The five major purposes of the evaluation became the lenses through which the data collection/analysis/synthesis were conducted, and they form the framework for discussing the findings and making recommendations for the future. These five purposes are as follows:

2. Relevance: extent to which the objectives of partnership program are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements and country-needs;
2. Effectiveness: extent to which the objectives of partnership program were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance;
3. Efficiency: measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results;
4. Sustainability: The probability of continued long-term benefits from the partnership program; the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time; and,
5. Impact: positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the partnership program as a whole to literacy development, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
Evaluation Methods

Review of annual reports
Before leaving for Ethiopia and gathering data from on-site, in-country visits, an analysis was done of the annual reports submitted to CODE by CODE-Ethiopia. A Canadian researcher with 15 years’ experience analyzing qualitative research used a “categorical qualitative data analysis” to analyze five years worth of CODE-Ethiopia’s bi-annual program reports (April 1, 2007, through to Sept 31, 2011). The analysis was conducted twice to add validity to findings, and a summary of findings were reported in categories that paralleled CODE Ethiopia's five main expected outputs.

Data collection map
Data collection was organized around the five major expected outputs with a series of sub-questions developed in order to identify key achieved outputs. Table 1 summarizes how data collection was conducted, noting: a) Key outputs; b) Sub-questions; c) Data tools used; and d) Key Participants/Informants

Table 1. Data Collection Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated Output 1</th>
<th>Data Tools</th>
<th>Participants/ Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased skills of teachers /librarians</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>RR attendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Questions:</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what specific areas have reading room attendants been given opportunities to increase skills (e.g., management procedures, uses of technology, promoting/teaching literacy)?</td>
<td>Workshop and training materials</td>
<td>Management committee members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what ways have reading room attendants been engaged in improving their skills?</td>
<td></td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what areas is more training requested/required?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anticipated Output 2 | Data Tools | Participants/ Informants


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improved skills that increase access to, and usage of, reading materials</th>
<th>Structured Interviews about reading room activities</th>
<th>Local RR attendants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Questions:</td>
<td>Document analysis of management procedures</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what ways have RR attendants been applying new skills to improve access?</td>
<td>Examination of Annual Reports</td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What new library management strategies are in place?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent have library circulation figures increased/decreased?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What areas of the reading room collection show increased/decreased usage?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Anticipated Output 3**

**Increased relevant reading materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Tools</th>
<th>Participants/ Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistics collected by reading rooms</td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Tools</th>
<th>Participants/ Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection Stats (number of volumes, where the books come from, sub-sections of the collections)</td>
<td>RR Attendants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory data</th>
<th>Management committee members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Anticipated Output 3**

**Increased relevant reading materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Questions:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent have reading room collections increased/decreased?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent are collection development plans used?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the strengths/weaknesses in reading room collections? (e.g., balance of fiction/nonfiction, local language/English, children’s/young adult/adult collections, magazines/e-books)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the percentages of the collection drawn from different sources? (e.g., national/international donations, local efforts, CODE-Ethiopia)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anticipated Output 4
Strengthened library facilities and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Questions</th>
<th>Focus group discussions</th>
<th>Reading room attendants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent has the Partnership Program led to improvements to the interior of RR facilities? (e.g., shelving, furniture, electricity, ICTs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent has the Partnership Program led to improvements to the reading room building and grounds? (e.g., structure, electricity, bathrooms)</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Management committee members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent have school/reading room services increased/decreased? (e.g., class visits, lessons with the t/l, study times.)</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>School personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent have community/reading room services increased? (e.g., family reading, meetings, workshops)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How have community members engaged in operation/management/development of the reading rooms? (e.g., board members, municipal leaders, women/men)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anticipated Output 5
Increased understanding of ICT’s role in enhancing literate environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Questions</th>
<th>Data Tools</th>
<th>Participants/ Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To what extent do reading rooms have various ICTs? (e.g., computers, telephones, fax, cameras, TV)</td>
<td>Photos collected at each reading room visited</td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what ways have new ICTs influenced the programs and services offered in the reading rooms?</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What plans are in place to add new ICTs to the reading rooms?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Visits
A total of 12 site visits were made between February 1-16, 2012, to reading rooms in five major regions in Ethiopia (Appendix A). Each visit took two to three hours to complete and followed a
similar procedure:

1. A social side including a welcome by local officials, introductions and first impressions
2. Tour of the facility—taking photos, checking organization of materials and book collections, examining of documents and artifacts; general discussion and questions about the programme and facilities.
3. Focus group meeting with library attendant(s) and members of the management committee (including school principal, teacher(s), municipal representatives, and local Ministry officials from Education and Culture and Tourism). Focus group discussions followed consistent set of questions (See Appendix B).
4. Talk with children/youth and adults from the community about their use of the facility and resources.
Major Findings

An Analysis of CODE-Ethiopia’s Annual Reports

As part of the planning and preparation for the in-country part of data collection, an analysis of the data in the annual reports submitted to CODE was conducted. This involved reading and re-reading the documents, coding major themes in the data, and identifying key areas to be probed when the in-country visits to reading rooms took place. Our analysis found that much of the data could be grouped and discussed under the three following major categories: a) Book distribution infrastructure; b) Gender issues and HIV/AIDS education; and c) Improving skills to increase access and use of reading materials.

a) Book distribution infrastructure

The four and a half years of annual reports focus largely on recording and reporting of the purchasing and donation of print materials for the reading rooms. Reports indicated that all 33 reading rooms received large numbers of print materials required to supply their diverse communities with authentic, reliable, and (hopefully) engaging information. The purchasing tables attached to each annual report confirm that the average reading room has received over 5,000 books through CODE-ECODE-Ethiopia. These numbers serve as a major success story that is made even more convincing considering the large distances between reading rooms and the central distribution warehouse, the means of delivery, and the often difficult terrain that must be covered. Any issues around supplying books to reading rooms revolved around distribution and ordering and types of resources.

Distribution and ordering.
Understandably, the distribution of so many materials requires a fairly well thought out and efficient delivery system. Although the annual reports indicated reading rooms were receiving their materials, the 2010–11 report also specified that “due to shortage of vehicles,” there was a slowdown in book delivery (p.4, ¶2). Additionally, the high turnover of staff in the reading rooms (and, presumably, the warehouse) would slow down deliveries as new staff learned their jobs while also learning, for example, how to place resource orders from the CODE-Ethiopia warehouse. CODE-Ethiopia indicated that they had hired a full-time employee which should minimize future impact that transient labour has in CODE-Ethiopia’s distribution of books.

Type of resources.
In 2010-11, it was noted that the books being donated did not meet CODE-Ethiopia’s book-type requirements (30% for primary, 40% for secondary, 10% for vocational, and 20% for higher institutions). More specifically, there were not enough primary and secondary books. Such shortages may not be meeting the needs of young reading room patrons, and possibly not firmly setting a reading culture in the age group most likely to perpetuate reading and literacy into their communities’ future.

b) Gender issues and HIV/AIDS

All of the annual reports reported on gender issues and HIV/AIDS (with the exception of the first report, 2007–08, which mentioned gender issues, but not HIV/AIDS).


**Gender issues.**
As was summarized in the 2010-11 annual report, one of the key objectives of CODE-Ethiopia was to ensure “due regard has been given sensitization of gender equity issues in all possible means and occasions.” Annual reports seemed to support this objective indicating how more women and girls were being involved in CODE-Ethiopia operations. For example, more women are being included on the project management committee to develop strategies for attracting more girls to the reading rooms.

Although these gender issue reports were encouraging, rarely did the reports reveal hard data that gave solid evidence of the increasing numbers of women who were being hired and or engaged in CODE-Ethiopia’s operations (with the exception of reports that noted the poor representation of women on the management committee (e.g., 2007–08, p6, ¶2). Furthermore, the reports rarely indicated the number of women involved in positions of significant influence, such as the CODE-Ethiopia head office, the regional educational boards, the Ministry of Education, and local/regional governments. As a result, the reports give more information about the intent to include more gender equality in all aspects of the project’s operations, with very little evidence to support these intentions.

**HIV/AIDS**
Aside from the 2007–08 annual report, all yearly reports noted a concerted effort in the organization to continually increase the amount of information about HIV/AIDS in local and regional newsletters and books. Additionally, it was reported in all but the first year that CODE-Ethiopia “believe[s] teachers use these stories and poems for discussion in the class.”

Unfortunately, the validity of the data on the project’s efforts to develop community awareness of HIV/AIDS is questionable. That is, the paragraph on AIDS from the 2009–10 annual report seems to be just cut and pasted into all subsequent annual and interim reports. Additionally, all reports indicate that CODE-Ethiopia believes that this new information about HIV/AIDS is being used by teachers to promote discussion in the class; however, there is no evidence in the reports supporting this assumption. Finally, there is no evidence indicating if, and how, these HIV/AIDS materials are circulating and the potential impact they have on the lives of the local communities.

c) Improved skills that increase access to and use of reading materials
Improving teachers’ and reading room attendants’ skills in an effort to increase patrons' access to, and use of, relevant reading materials is a major focus of the CODE project. Reports claimed that there was an emphasis on training reading room workers how to catalogue, circulate, and attend to the general operations of a reading room. It was also indicated that such training was negatively impacted by a turnover of reading room staff.

Some evidence indicated that a small number of teachers and reading room workers were being taught how to teach reading to their patrons and students and/or how to motivate readers. Usually, this training was accomplished through regional workshops and conferences, and involved teaching teachers and reading room workers how to use a "big book." Such reading instruction was reported as being the only item on the list of 7 to 10 available workshop/conference topics (most of which focussed on cataloguing, circulation, etc.), and there was no indication if teaching reading was the final outcome of the workshop, or just to
convey methods for using this new format (how to hold the book, where to place the book, etc.).

Information from the annual reports also indicated that access to, and use of, materials was hampered by a limited number of distribution vehicles, staff turnover (e.g., some reading rooms were not being opened on time or at all), and unreliable electrical supply.

Finally, although several reports mentioned that the reading rooms were seeing increased usage, and that a culture of readers was being developed, there was little evidence in the annual reports to support these claims.

Limitations of the annual report data

Although the CODE-Ethiopia annual reports provided information that clearly indicated a significant increase in the number of resources being delivered to, and housed in, the 33 reading rooms supported by CODE-Ethiopia, they also contained sweeping generalizations that provided limited detailed evidence supporting other project goals. For example, the 2007–08 annual report states, “Children’s literary contests were held in Sidama, Harari, and Dire Dawa . . . In the contest, girls were highly involved” (p.2, ¶2). Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine just what the girls were doing, what skills were being developed, and/or how reading and/or writing was being promoted, making it difficult to determine if the goal of developing gender equity through the reading rooms was being attained.

Because it was difficult to determine where CODE-Ethiopia’s responsibilities began and ended in light of other organizations’ responsibilities, some of the questions that have been asked (and recommendations suggested) may not apply directly to CODE-Ethiopia. For example, it seemed as though the Library Management Committees (LMC), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Regional Education Bureaus, the local/regional/national governments, and other non-profit organizations (e.g., IBB, BAI) all influenced CODE’s efforts and their ultimate successes. It was also noted that in some cases (in particular, the sections on gender and HIV/AIDS in the annual reports), the information was either completely identical or segments were cut and pasted from one year to the next. There is some question to the reliability of the reports as it seemed unusual that new or unique information about, for example, HIV/AIDS or gender would not surface and be reported from year to year.

As this was an exploratory analysis of CODE-Ethiopia’s reported annual efforts (from 2007–2011) meant to help frame data collection in-country, there was no research triangulation developed. Triangulation could only be accomplished if multiple tools, data collection, and analysis methods were employed. Finally, findings from this analysis of annual report are limited in that they do not assess detailed reports of CODE-Ethiopia projects’ operations, and it most definitely does not draw detailed conclusions from detailed quantitative or qualitative data from each of the reading rooms. Therefore, in this manner, findings cannot be considered reflective of, or generalizable to, all reading rooms and/or of all CODE-Ethiopia program operations.
Expected Outputs & Actual Outputs

Table 2 summarizes the expected outputs outlined in the original Partnership Project proposal with CODE-Ethiopia, entitled Library and Reading Room Development for School-Aged Children. In addition, findings are reported for the actual outputs drawn from the data collection processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas</th>
<th>Expected Output</th>
<th>Actual Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development &amp; production of learning materials</td>
<td>• Six new titles in six languages will be produced in each of the five years for a total of 30 titles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1000 copies of each new title per year will be distributed to reading rooms and schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training will be provided to local writers/editors/illustrators for producing the books.</td>
<td>• The expected number of books was distributed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of reading materials</td>
<td>Relevant books to children will be selected by CODE-Ethiopia from publishers, individuals, and bookstores</td>
<td>• Total of 41,250 books were distributed to 33 reading rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 reading rooms</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Books consisted of 50 titles each year and five copies of each were provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated books from North America</td>
<td>• 2 containers of donated books per year (approximately 40,000 books per year)</td>
<td>• Donated books were distributed as planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Donated books will be distributed to 33 reading rooms, 13 universities, 110 primary schools, and 110 secondary schools</td>
<td>• An efficient system for ordering, receiving, storing, and distributing of the books has been developed by CODE-Ethiopia staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Thirteen reading rooms (Phase 3)
Will be strengthened by provision of books from IBB, purchased books, and locally developed books.

- Six reading rooms in Amhara Region.
- Four reading rooms in Tigray Region.
- Three RRs in SNNPs Region will receive books from the three sources.

- All reading rooms in Phases 1 and 2 will receive CODE-Ethiopia books and some IBB book.

### Establishment/set up of 20 new reading rooms & renovation of 20 new reading rooms

- **20 new reading rooms to be established**
- **The 20 new reading rooms have been set up and are operating**

### Production/purchase of furniture for 20 new reading rooms

Each reading room will be provided with:
- Six tables (6 x 20 = 120)
- Four shelves (4 x 20 = 80)
- Fifty chairs (50 x 20 = 1000)
- One wooden filing cabinet (1 x 20 = 20)
- One librarian desk (1 x 20 = 20)
- One librarian chair (1 x 20 = 20)

- **Furniture has been provided as expected**

### Set up children’s magazine production centres and provide supplies for six new magazine production centres and four existing centres

- **Magazine production centres established in six regions**
- **Set-up to include: computer, printer, duplicating machine**
- **CODE-Ethiopia will continue to provide supplies to the six new and four previous production centres**

- **CODE-Ethiopia continues to provide supplies as needed**

### B. Skills Development in Teaching, Newsletter Production, Management & Librarianship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas</th>
<th>Expected Outputs</th>
<th>Actual Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training in librarianship of reading room attendants</td>
<td>• 53 reading room attendants to be trained for 10 days – 7 hours a day</td>
<td>• Training was completed in year 1 of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training will include:</td>
<td>• There continues to be serious attrition as reading room attendants who received training have moved on to other positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• simple cataloguing system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• classification of books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organization and management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• how to attract readers to use the reading room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• promotional skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Content of training for reading room attendants was primarily focused on library management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training management committee members

- Addressing problems in RRs
- 100 reading room management committee members to be trained
- At least 50% of management committee members will be female
- Training will include:
  - Basic concept of management and planning
  - Problem reading rooms and problem-solving methods
  - Motivating readers, especially girls and women
  - Resource mobilization and promotion

- 100 reading room management committee members were trained
- Targets for female participation have not been met

Training teachers

- 20 teachers will be trained in teaching reading (Five days x seven hours per day)
- Training will include:
  - What is reading
  - Why we read
  - How children learn to read
  - Conditions for teaching reading at different levels
  - Aids for teaching reading
  - How we select books for primary school children

- 20 teachers were trained as expected
- Workshops covered the expected topics
- Most of the 20 teachers who received this training are no longer in the same teaching positions in the community

Training magazine producers and computer operators

- 18 magazine producers will be trained (five days)—women writers to be invited
- Six computer operators to be given basic computer training
- Training did take place
- Two production centres are operating very well; others have had some or limited production

C. Promotion of Literate Environment for Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas</th>
<th>Expected Output</th>
<th>Actual Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Week</td>
<td>Reading Week will be observed in all 33 reading rooms</td>
<td>Most reading rooms took part and completed Reading Week activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MC organizes Reading Week events</td>
<td>MCs did take responsibility of Reading Week events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia publishes posters to promote Reading Week.</td>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia met its commitment to produce and distribute Reading Week posters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Love kits

- Project Love kits will be assembled and distributed by CODE-Ethiopia (kits include: pencil, eraser, ruler, and notebook)
- Project Love kits were assembled and distributed to all reading rooms
- All reading rooms use the kits as rewards for children/youth who use the reading room—the kits are very popular and useful as rewards

Publication of Sutafe magazine

- 2 issues of Sutafe per year will be produced in two languages
- Sutafe was produced as expected—it was observed in every reading room (reading room attendants read it faithfully and value its content)
- Content will include best practices and ideas shared from reading rooms; children will also contribute their writing
- Proved itself as a valuable tool for sharing ideas and on-going professional development

D. Strengthening Resource and Education Network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas</th>
<th>Expected Output</th>
<th>Actual Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CODE-Ethiopia staff training</td>
<td>4 CODE-Ethiopia staff supported to attend local training course</td>
<td>Staff were supported to attend training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS and gender awareness</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS awareness will be part of workshops and publications</td>
<td>Workshops did have some attention to issues of HIV/AIDS and gender equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership exchange</td>
<td>Gender equality will be addressed by including females on management committees, including gender issues in workshops and in CODE publications</td>
<td>MCs did have at least one female representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female writers and editors were invited to support book publication and selection processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation and monitoring

• CODE-Ethiopia will continue to use existing government infrastructure to implement its programs & services

• Every year, reports from the regions will be submitted to CODE-Ethiopia

• CODE-Ethiopia staff will visit sample reading rooms every quarter and provide local support

• CODE-Ethiopia staff work actively with various levels and divisions of the government infrastructure—a process that is fundamental to CODE-Ethiopia’s success

• Yearly reports are submitted, but need to be more detailed and substantive

• CODE-Ethiopia staff visit reading rooms as frequently as possible

Recognition to CODE and CIDA

CODE-Ethiopia will make beneficiaries aware of the contributions of CODE and CIDA

• Signs recognizing CODE and CIDA were evident in reading rooms.

• Individual books were stamped to indicate their source

• Sutafe highlights these contributions as do local newspapers and regional education bureaus

Welcome Poster - thanking CODE and CODE-Ethiopia
Summary of Results

Anticipated Output 1: Increased Skills of Teachers / Librarians

Face-to-face training sessions were planned to be held in Addis Ababa for 10–15 days at the beginning of the project. Teachers, reading room attendants, and Library Management Committee members were to attend the training sessions at the same time. Some time would be spent in their own group; other times, both attendants and teachers would come together; and other times, the Library Management Committee group joined the other groups. The purpose of coming together was to understand each other’s roles.

Selection criteria for attendants included possessing a grade 12 education, being a resident of area, being of a certain age, having a willingness for the role, and agreeing to the expectation to serve for a minimum of 2 years. Five to seven teachers per school were invited to attend these beginning training sessions. As the research team for this program evaluation, we met three people who had attended the library management committee (LMC) training and two attendants who were trained at the beginning of the project. About half of the attendants in our focus groups had some training, but not at the more extensive sessions held at the beginning of the project.

Attendant Training

The training program for reading room attendants was designed “to go beyond science” to include “the idea of a library, how to receive people who come, [and] how to help children use books.” Collaboration with teachers and the community was planned to be a central focus of the training. As well as general reading promotion, promoting reading with girls was planned. CODE-Ethiopia recognized the importance to begin to address ICT in the training programs, but it also recognized the limitations of any significant progress in this area due to inadequate infrastructure. It was also seen that training should seek out and foster people who have “even, positive temperaments.” Generally, library training was designed to be multi-dimensional to include technical/managerial skills, practical literacy support strategies, and the nurturing of positive attitudes towards reading for all involved.

Professional development materials were produced to provide a means of ongoing in-service. Sutafe (which means “participation”) magazine, produced two times per year, includes many teaching ideas and highlights of library activities around the country. One librarian explained that Sutafe “serves as a training course.” Implying it continues to support their growing front line RR skill development.

Librarians reported that their CODE-Ethiopia training focused on library management skills such as cataloguing, classification, and record keeping of circulation. Another feature of the training, according to the attendants, was “how to treat readers, how to behave in the library, how to choose the right book.” Several participating attendants described their role and responsibility in literacy development as “to inculcate a love of reading and to teach skills that help readers
find the right book for their purposes.” Some also reported that they help students with vocabulary and comprehension of the materials they are using for their assignments.

Several attendants also mentioned that training included guidance on how to serve on a library management committee.

All reading rooms and schools engage in Reading Week as the primary method of promoting reading on a large scale. The celebrations feature competitions for most books read and rewards (with special awards for girls). This event brings the entire community together—parents, school, library, health groups, sports and youth organizations, and the departments of Education and Culture and Tourism. People come for a variety of activities including reading, dramatizing, music, and awards. The opportunity afforded by Reading Week—to strengthen connections between the reading rooms and multiple community partners—was happening in different degrees and should be a goal of every local management committee. There seems to be limited understanding of the potential for other types of promotional events outside the CODE-Ethiopia Reading Week.

All of the attendants reported that they work with teachers in the local schools primarily as a place where students come to work on assignments. They also help students find helpful sources for the assignment. They reported that students mostly come on their own and that rarely does a teacher bring a class.

Teacher Training
We met only one teacher who had the CODE-Ethiopia teacher training at the beginning of the Partnership Project. We also met one person who knew of two teachers who received the training, but had since been transferred. Teachers agreed that although they did not have CODE-Ethiopia training, they were better informed about the role of the library and encouraged their students to use the reading room resources. The school collaborates with the library, mostly when teachers assign work in which students must use library supplementary materials, but also during Reading Week.

Teachers agreed it was part of their job to know the supplementary materials available in their community library so that they could direct their students to these sources for assignments. Therefore, teachers spent time in the libraries to learn about these resources and also for their own professional development. Teachers reported that over the project period, students have learned how to use a library where there had been none before.

Requests and Recommendations for Future Attendant Training

While the RR attendants spoke positively about the training they had received and for the ongoing support of resources like Sutafe, they also recognized their need for more training in these specific areas:
• It was unanimous that technology should be included in training
• Training opportunities should be continuous
• Principals should be included in major training initiatives
• More emphasis on how to use the books—not just organize and locate them for student assignments

**Anticipated Output 2: Improved skills that increase access to, and use of, reading materials**

There were multiple indications that attendants were applying skills that increased access to, and use of, reading materials. Every reading room was open at least five days per week, and some had evening hours and Saturday hours (especially during exam time). Collections ranged from around 5,000 books to 10,000 books. Usage figures were reported at a minimum of 50 students per day in one reading room, to over 100 per day in others.

In every reading room visited, there were obvious indicators that the library management skills featured in the training were being used including clear signage, organized areas of the collection according to subject areas and reading levels, instruction of proper circulation procedures, laying out the reading room so that the collection is in one place and the work/study/reading area is in another, providing hours of operation that are tailored to users’ needs, establishing an obvious librarian desk for circulation and user assistance, establishing efficient procedures for circulation of materials, and ensuring that CODE-Ethiopia books are easily accessed.

The research team observed the following specific library management practices: ID cards issued by school or district were being used to sign out materials; procedures were in place for tracking male/female use of the reading room; lending policies for loaning reading materials for three days were enforced; a logbook was kept of each borrower’s name, book title, date of sign-out, and signature on return; a designation of staff with different roles (chief librarian, checker, attendant) existed in some reading rooms; some use of alphabetical order to organize the borrower’s ID cards occurred; a consistent use of CODE-Ethiopia developed cards for borrowers; and some use of CODE-Ethiopia developed tracking sheets for male/female reading.

Reading rooms have posted annual graphs showing male/female reading habits. Several reading rooms have posted charts showing the total number of titles with some evidence of fiction/nonfiction numbers in the collection.

All reading rooms reported that over the span of the five-year Partnership Program, circulation has steadily increased. Reading rooms reported they are busier than ever, and several find they are cramped and usable to house all who want to be there. It was mentioned several times that increased post-secondary programs meant that more patrons were using the reading rooms for tertiary studies. This new reality has created more demand for books of technical and vocational topics (e.g., accounting, ICT, economics,
There were also requests for more books on gender and women. Due to heavy usage, specific requests were made for hard cover, rather than soft cover books.

The CODE-Ethiopia supplied donated books are heavily used by secondary and tertiary education students and reflect curriculum support and fiction reading needs. CODE-Ethiopia developed Big Books in indigenous languages, plus English Big Books are popular with young children. Children in the elementary grades enjoy the illustrations, and, with the teacher’s help, they discuss what is happening in the book.

CODE-Ethiopia produced fiction books are also heavily used because they reflect the tales of the indigenous languages. However, more program support of emergent and early literacy development is needed. The research team observed very little read-aloud and language play that is allegedly part of training—these strategies would increase usage of the books for young children. Training that focused on comprehension and study skills would improve effective usage of materials for older students.

**Anticipated Output 3: Increase Relevant Reading Materials**

As noted above, reading room collections have increased substantially over the five-year period. In many reading rooms, space and shelving have become such an issue that books are organized by double rows on shelves (some books and materials placed in high places), and donations are lying in storerooms. Attendants approached their collection development plans by analyzing what was needed and then selecting from the list of titles available from CODE-Ethiopia to fill any gaps.

Several attendants commented that they would like to have more options and opportunity for choosing their own books for the collections and not be so dependent on donated books. Most of the collections consisted of donated books from North America, although three reading rooms had developed other sources of funding for choosing their own books. In these cases, extra funding came from local industries, local development associations, and private citizens.

An abundance of English textbooks and trade books donated from North America constitutes the bulk of the collections. The complexity of these texts means they have limited affect on literacy and learning. CODE-Ethiopia's local language publications fill a vital role in achieving the literacy goals of the reading rooms. CODE-Ethiopia has written and produced over 300 titles, all in local languages: culturally relevant stories, information books, and supplementary curriculum texts in math, science and English. Although they represent approximately 20% of the collection in the reading rooms, they are well used. The materials support reading at multiple levels (early
grades through secondary), for multiple purposes (pleasure, information, curriculum support), and are produced in multiple formats (big books, novels and short stories, study guides). Both reading rooms and schools are supplied with multiple copies (minimum of five) in the indigenous languages of their regions. An important aspect of the success of the local language books is training local people in authoring and illustrating texts, and creating publication venues for children’s writing (the regional newsletters). This education aspect is in place, although it is challenging to identify people committed to taking the training, especially illustrators.

Reading room attendants reported that they need more curriculum-support materials developed by CODE-Ethiopia since they are popular with students. As one attendant put it, "Children are addicted to these books." Another attendant commented that the CODE-Ethiopia publications are "not just subjective [curriculum-based], but are valued because many of them inform culture." There was consensus from all reading room attendants the CODE-Ethiopia publications were better, more interesting and more relevant than any other collection."

Materials for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) education were extremely limited. Given that English is the language of instruction in the upper grades, these materials are critical. Available materials for learning English (donated books) rely on US English as first-language programs (in phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, writing), rather than English as a Second Language.

Each reading room was checked for evidence of materials concerning health, HIV/AIDS, and women with poor results in the number of titles found. There were a few examples of the CODE-Ethiopia publications in these areas (especially related to general hygiene) and one example of how CODE-Ethiopia connected with UNESCO to obtain their relevant materials..

**Anticipated Output 4: Strengthened Library Facilities and Services**

Each reading room has its own facility and most are all in central locations in the community. Reading room locations that were closer to schools had more interaction with schools. Reading rooms located adjacent to the community, youth centers, or other services were also more integral to community life. For example, the Beyo Awalie reading room is located within a compound of community services including the school, community center, television room, and youth center. Several reading rooms still had fairly primitive buildings with no lighting, although the library management committees spoke of plans in place for improved facilities.

All facilities, except for one, were guarded for security purposes and were maintained to different degrees of cleanliness. Access to safe and clean toilets was a major concern in all of the reading rooms. Staff and library management committees commonly requested help with more shelving; in two reading rooms, hundreds of books were sitting on the ground waiting for shelves to be built.
Local teachers advocate having their students use the reading rooms, and they design assignments that use the reading room resources. Because of the shift system of schooling, teachers are not with the same group all day, so classes do not normally come as a group to the reading rooms. However, students fill the reading rooms during the time they are not in class—primarily to study for exams. There were fewer instances of reading room community services (e.g., meeting space). Opportunities for such programs as family literacy, adult literacy, and book clubs were not yet realized.

Community members were highly engaged in the operation and management of their reading rooms. There was a wide range of representation of both individuals and community organizations sitting on the Library Management Committees (e.g., Board of Education, Youth Services, Culture and Tourism, schools, women's groups). In one instance, a local industry had made generous contributions to the reading room, and in another, a local community member who had moved to North America was generously supporting the reading room.

**Anticipated Output 5: Increased Understanding of ICT's Role in Enhancing Literate Environment**

Digital technologies have not yet influenced the programs and services offered in reading rooms. Reading rooms have extremely limited ICT resources. Some reading rooms that have access to electricity have fax machines; no digital cameras or televisions were seen, although attendants did have personal cell phones. Two reading rooms had computers that were accessible to staff; however, they were not used for library purposes as the attendants did not know how to use computers. All attendants recognized the potential use of computers for cataloguing, member records, etc. ICT training is a priority for the next stage of CODE-Ethiopia programs for all attendants and management committees.

All members of the focus groups agreed that a major benefit of having computers is motivating students to use the library even more, in such areas as a) information for assignments; b) personal knowledge; and, c) communication and Facebook. One management committee member mentioned the need for computers to use e-books.

The situation with new technologies in schools is similar. Secondary schools have computer labs and courses for teaching basic computer skills, but there are very few computers for the numbers of students. Additionally, most schools do not have Internet, since there is great concern about the potential harms of exposing primary children to the Internet.
Teacher training now includes ICT education. Instruction for students in the schools focuses on basic computer operation (how to turn it on and off) and word processing and spreadsheets. All library management committee members and every reading room attendant stated that technology should be included in training. When asked how they would use a computer, attendants and committee members suggested they would be best used in terms of library management work with no one suggesting computers have a role in literacy or learning matters for students.
Conclusions, Discussion, & Recommendations

Introduction

The research team’s discussion and recommendations are built around the five areas named as the overall purpose of the evaluation which was to examine results in terms of:

1. Relevance: extent to which the objectives of partnership program are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements and country-needs;
2. Effectiveness: extent to which the objectives of partnership program were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance;
3. Efficiency: measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results;
4. Sustainability: The probability of continued long-term benefits from the partnership program; the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time; and,
5. Impact: positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the partnership program as a whole to literacy development, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

1. Relevance

The extent to which the objectives of partnership program are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements and country-needs.

Appropriateness of the program’s design

The overall design of the CODE-Ethiopia program is appropriate and is based on a sound understanding of the local context and needs in Ethiopia’s education sector. In particular, the program provides better educational opportunities for primary and secondary education in the rural and impoverished areas of Ethiopia by setting up community libraries and supplying them with appropriate books and other reading materials. CODE-Ethiopia also supplies books to colleges and universities. In addition, the program significantly contributes to the implementation of a new language policy of Ethiopia that is intended to introduce the use of local languages in primary schools. In this regard, CODE-Ethiopia has produced and published tens of thousands of books in six local languages.

Overall, the program is in line with the government’s education policy, and it has been designed through consultations and a formal agreement with the Ministry of Education (MoE). Through this consultation process, the risks are minimized and appropriate strategies developed. The goal of the program is the “improvement of basic education through the provision of appropriate reading materials for national development.”

CODE-Ethiopia’s project proposals and annual reports use the term “reading rooms” and sometimes use the term “libraries.” However, when one considers the kind of collection of the books that is available and the close links/involvement of the communities, a more accurate term to use is “community libraries,” which also have space and furniture for reading.
The element of the training of primary school teachers on how to teach reading skills to children has not been well conceived. At the beginning of a five-year phase of the program, CODE-Ethiopia trains primary school teachers on how to teach reading to children. This has been a rather superficial and one-off intervention. There is no follow-up made to this training and the attainment of the children’s reading skills is not assessed. After a year or two, many of these trained teachers leave the schools and find, or are transferred to, other schools or jobs. In other words, CODE-Ethiopia’s intervention in this area is rudimentary.

Recommendation 1:
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia either gets out of the business of training primary school teachers altogether and concentrates on the other strengths of the program, or intervenes in this area in a more methodical and elaborate way.

Creating a Logic Framework
The full and effective implementation of the program varies from region to region and from district to district. Complete and effective program implementation is constrained due to various elements. These factors are beyond the control of CODE-Ethiopia. However, CODE-Ethiopia can do a number of things to mitigate this situation as suggested in the management section of this report.

The results-based Management of the program has some shortcomings and inadequacies. While the program has a Performance Framework that includes some elements of the Logical Framework Analysis (but without the verifiable objective indicators), it does not have a complete Logic Framework. The annual reports are not structured under the expected outputs and outcomes; the bulk of the reports consist of a narrative of activities undertaken and some outputs achieved (such as the number of books selected from IBB and IBA, and the number of books purchased, published, and distributed). Achievements of several stated expected outputs and all the stated expected outcomes are not reported. This way of reporting obscures many of the results (both outputs and outcomes) which have actually been achieved.

Recommendation 2:
It is recommended that, for the next phase of the program and with the technical assistance of CODE-Canada, a Logic Framework should be formulated along with its associated Performance Measurement Framework. The annual reports should be structured along the Logic Framework in addition to a narrative of activities carried out.

2. Effectiveness
The extent to which the objectives of partnership program were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Effectiveness of management
On the whole, CODE-Ethiopia is well and competently managed under the leadership of its executive director. The management of the organization is assisted by two committees: the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) and the Book Selection and Allotment Committee (BSAC). However, there is a room for improvement for a more effective management of the program which is elaborated in this section of the report.
LAC comprises of five members who are drawn from both the MoE and the public who have worked in the education sector. The committee meets quarterly to approve the program’s strategies, supervise the activities of the organization, monitor the project, and give guidance.

BSAC comprises of six members. Three of them are drawn from the MoE (planning, curriculum, and supervision divisions), and three members are appropriate staff members of CODE-Ethiopia including the executive director. The committee selects books from annotated lists, allots books and other reading materials to beneficiaries, holds meetings on book program activities, and provides technical advice on book distribution and selection.

While those parts of the program for which CODE-Ethiopia is responsible are fairly well managed and implemented, the effective management and implementation of those elements of the program that are the responsibility of the MoE and the government’s administrative infrastructure varies from region to region and district to district. The major factors that hinder the full implementation of the program in the country are government bureaucratic ineptness and lack of initiative; rapid turnover of government officials, librarians and teachers; and budgetary constraints.

A few examples can be cited to show how some aspects of the program are not well implemented and how others are well implemented. Although CODE-Ethiopia provides guidelines on the composition of the Library Management Committees, membership of these committees varies from library to library. In several libraries, the Library Management Committees are either non-existent or dysfunctional. In some libraries, the librarians are not paid their salaries.

At one library near Addis Ababa, as a result of the non-functioning of the Library Management Committee, a group of 10 secondary school students took the initiative of constituting itself as a committee to help the librarian manage and run the library. Among other things, this committee runs the library after the official hours and weekends, and tracks down those students who have not returned their borrowed books on time.

Depending on the composition of Library Management Committees and the extent of the involvement of the local government authorities, some libraries have close links with, and involvement of, the community in the affairs of the libraries, while others are peripherally linked with the communities. In one library in the Harari region, there is a considerable involvement of the community primarily due to two main factors. First, the district administrator is personally interested in making the library flourish. Second, the Library Management Committee is chaired by the principal of a nearby primary school, while other members of the committee are four teachers, one farmer, and two factory workers. Of the eight members, four are women. The women members are very active, and they have a better flair and talent than men to mobilize the community for its involvement in, and support to, the library. As a result of
the close and active involvement of the community and the strong sense of community ownership such an involvement engenders, the community members make financial contributions to the running of the library including the payment of the librarian’s salary. Some members of the community who now reside outside the community (including one who now lives in Canada) make substantial financial and material donations to the library. In short, it can be said that the library and the community are organically linked with each other.

Recommendation 3:
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia should revise its guidelines for the composition of the Library Management Committees to:

1. Emphasize the inclusion of teachers in the committees in addition to the district and local council officials, and other community members;
2. Ensure that half of the members are women; and,
3. Encourage the formation of student committees to supplement and augment the functions of the Library Management Committees.

Funding and salaries
The payment of the reading room attendants’ salaries varies from place to place. Some attendants are paid by the MoE; some are paid by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT); some are not paid at all; and others are teacher/librarians whose salaries as teachers are paid by the schools. A few libraries (e.g., Beyo Awalie in Oromiya Region, Hakim in Harari Region) receive financial donations from the corporate/business community.

Recommendation 4:
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia should orient and encourage Library Management Committees to pro-actively seek donations from the local business community (corporate social responsibility).

Effectiveness of local implementation
As a result of 15 years of work, CODE-Ethiopia has become a mature organization. All the systems and the nuts and bolts for managing its program are in place and are fully operational. However, the implementation of the program on the ground, which remains the responsibility of the MoE and local government authorities, is not as effective as desired. CODE-Ethiopia’s executive director has made presentations to MoE officials and other professionals on the work of the organization and CODE-Ethiopia has been recognized for its work by government officials. Since CODE-Ethiopia has a strong and positive reputation for its work, more pressure and direction needs to be given to local authorities to hold up their end and see the program through to its fullest potential.
Recommendation 5:
It is recommended that it is now time for CODE-Ethiopia to play a more pro-active role in helping, guiding, stimulating, and activating the MoE and local government authorities to implement the program more effectively. Among other things, such a pro-active role should include allocating more resources and time for:

1. Meeting with all the heads of regional education bureaus on an annual basis during the annual conferences convened by MoE;
2. Carrying out lobbying work with the MoE and the MoCT to ensure that their budgets permanently include salaries for librarians and other library workers;
3. Conducting one-day workshops with the local stakeholders on the most desired composition of Library Management Committees, the usefulness of having student committees, how to mobilize and involve the community in the affairs of the library, and approaches and methods in seeking financial contributions from the business community (as alluded to in separate recommendations above);
4. Demonstrating how the communities can be more actively and integrally involved in and provide financial and material support to the libraries (based on the experiences and good practices of other libraries; and,
5. Identifying other potential organizations that donate books such as BookLink and Books for Africa that CODE-Ethiopia and the local authorities can tap into.

CODE-Ethiopia staffing
CODE-Ethiopia has a lean staff complement of six people including the executive director. The workload of CODE-Ethiopia has been increasing steadily over the years, which, in recent years, has included the important and valuable production and publication of books in six local languages.

Recommendation 6:
It is recommended that the staff complement be increased by at least two additional workers.

1. One position should be dedicated to professional development with responsibilities for:
   a) initial and ongoing training/support for reading room attendants, teachers, and Library Management Committees (LMCs)
   b) publishing and expanding the use of Sutafe
   c) working with the MoE and the MoCT to provide training for them to support local educators, LMCs, and reading room attendants

2. In addition, it is recommended that CODE Canada consider tapping into CIDA’s International Youth Internship Program to send a few interns to assist CODE-Ethiopia with some organizational tasks and activities including some relevant tasks in the libraries and schools.

Cost-effectiveness of the program
Between 2007 and 2012, the cost of salaries, rent, utilities, and administrative expenses totalled $193,792 CAN. The total CODE contribution was $1,260,000 CAN for program and overhead expenditure. Since the overhead cost (salaries, etc.) represents 17.2% of the total CODE contribution, CODE-Ethiopia’s program has been implemented in a very cost-effective way.
The in-kind value of contributions from the government of Ethiopia and the community has been estimated at 30% of the total expenditure. This in-kind contribution includes, among other things, transportation of books, warehouse rent, building and renovating libraries, library furniture, salaries of librarians and other library workers, and publication of library newsletters.

Taking this in-kind contribution into account, the program becomes even more cost-effective and represents good value for money invested.

3. Efficiency
The measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

Partnerships
CODE-Ethiopia has excellent cooperation and collaboration with the MoE in the implementation of the program under the tripartite agreement between CODE-Ethiopia, the MoE, and the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA)\textsuperscript{1} signed in 2008. The agreement clearly spells out the respective roles and responsibilities of CODE-Ethiopia, DPPA, and the MoE; regional education bureaus; zonal education desks; Woreda education offices; Library Management Committees; and schools in the implementation of the program. Mutual consultations between CODE-Ethiopia and the MoE in the course of the implementation of the program are carried out on an on-going basis. MoE considers CODE-Ethiopia as a real partner.

The program’s contributions to the development of basic education in the country are highly valued and appreciated by the MoE, its regional education bureaus, and its ultimate student and community beneficiaries.

The relationship between CODE-Canada and CODE-Ethiopia is one of an equitable partnership. There are clear expectations of both the partners. CODE-Ethiopia does not feel that it is merely a donor-recipient relationship. CODE-Canada respects the autonomy of CODE-Ethiopia and is very responsive and flexible to CODE-Ethiopia’s needs. CODE-Canada provides advice and suggestions to CODE-Ethiopia but does not interfere in its work. This partnership relationship is characterized by a high degree of mutual trust and mutual transparency.

4. Sustainability
The probability of continued long-term benefits from the partnership program; the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

\textsuperscript{1} DPPA has now been replaced by Charities and Societies Agency in 2010 which is a regulatory agency for NGOs in the country.
Governance

While CODE-Ethiopia has a small local advisory committee which plays only an advisory role and whose chair is aging, the organization does not have a governing board that can set policy and oversee the affairs of the organization. Now that the organization has grown and matured, it is time to consider the setting up of a board to govern the operations and activities of the organization in order to strengthen the organization, ensure its sustainability, and further enhance its soundness. In addition, since succession planning is not in place, an appropriate body that can facilitate the process of succession planning would be a board.

The need to have a board becomes even more critical considering the fact that the founder of CODE-Ethiopia is also its executive director who has served the organization for the last 15 years. Such a configuration of leadership needs to be viewed in the context of the phenomenon of “Founder’s Syndrome.”

Founder’s Syndrome occurs when a single individual creates an organization from scratch, protects and nurtures it, and becomes the virtually sole decision-maker of the organization. It is also a label normally used to refer to a pattern of behavior on the part of the founder(s) of an organization that, over time, becomes maladaptive to the successful accomplishment of the organizational mission.

Some founders dominate and control their organization, block challenges to their own power base, and stifle organizational change if it is seen to divert from the core vision or bias of the founder. This is not always true—there are other founders who foster innovation and inspire their staff, challenge their organization to continually reform itself and examine its organizational assumptions, and query its methodologies of work in an effort to continually improve and strengthen its role and impact.

The positive aspects of Founder’s Syndrome include personal drive, initiative, vision, passion, dedication, and commitment to an organization. The negative aspects of Founder’s Syndrome include the total control of the organization, monopolization of decision-making, and a lack of open-mindedness to new ideas from other people in the running of an organization.

While the positive aspects of Founder’s Syndrome benefit the organization, its negative aspects have the potential to adversely affect the organization’s existence in the long run. Once the organization has grown and matured, and has been successfully run and managed for many years, the decision-making needs of the organization change, requiring mechanisms for shared responsibility and authority.

It is when those decision-making mechanisms don’t change, regardless of growth and changes on the program side, that Founder’s Syndrome becomes an issue. If something unexpected happens to the “founder”, the organization is most likely not sustainable and all the good work the organization has done over the years is in danger of screeching to a halt. Organizations facing Founder’s Syndrome usually have little management and decision-making infrastructure in place outside of the founder because it simply hasn’t been needed.

In describing the phenomenon of Founder’s Syndrome in theoretical or anecdotal terms, it is not intimated here that the founder of CODE-Ethiopia is necessarily afflicted by the syndrome. It is clearly evident that CODE-Ethiopia is an organization that has been dramatically shaped by its
own founder, who has played an important and positive role in visioning, organizing, mobilizing, financing, establishing, and successfully operationalizing the organization. However, what is being expressed here is the concern for the long-term sustainability of the organization in the absence of a board and the lack of succession planning.

Recommendation 7:
It is recommended that before the negative aspects of Founder’ Syndrome potentially and inadvertently catch up with the founder/executive director of CODE-Ethiopia, and in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization and facilitate succession planning, CODE-Ethiopia should set up a governing board.

Salaries and staff turnover
Libraries have been established and they have been equipped with furniture. They have been supplied with books and other reading materials, and librarians have been trained. To make these libraries run on a sustainable basis, they have to be incorporated into the regular services and support provided by the government.

Since the program is supported and implemented by the MoE and the government infrastructure on an on-going basis, there is great likelihood of sustaining these libraries. In most libraries, the salaries of reading room attendants’ and other library workers’, and the cost of utilities are paid for by local government authorities. If such salaries are not paid, as is the case in some of the reading rooms, it will be difficult for these libraries to operate effectively or survive in the medium to long-term.

One major and regular input that will be needed to further ensure the sustainability of the libraries is to continue supplying more and new books. In addition, the rapid staff turnover of both government officials and librarians poses a risk, disrupting the smooth and effective running of the libraries.

Recommendation 8:
To begin to address some of the issues related to salaries and staffing, it is recommended that a comprehensive strategy be developed to facilitate the professionalization of reading room attendants. Such a strategy should include:

1. Acknowledgement of the professional status of the Reading Room attendant position;
2. Measures to ensure secure and growing salaries;
3. On-going professional development opportunities;
4. Training in the uses of digital technologies for student learning and library management;
5. Revisions to the current training program to emphasize the partnerships between teachers and Reading Room attendants in supporting student learning and building the culture for reading; and,
6. Opportunities for reading room attendants within nearby geographic areas to come together to share ideas and build collaborative relationships.

Informed and timely action
CODE-Ethiopia staff members visit the community libraries/schools twice a year to monitor the libraries. After the visits, the staff members meet with the regional education directors to discuss the issues/problems identified. In some cases, timely and appropriate action is taken by...
the CODE-Ethiopia staff to resolve some of the issues and improve the operation and management of the libraries; in some cases, some of the issues are addressed by the regional education directors. However, there does not seem to be any follow-up made with the regional education directors on the actions they have taken.

Recommendation 9:
It is recommended that a system be developed for tighter procedures for accountability and reporting that would help ensure better follow-through on dealing with issues at the local levels.

5. Impact
The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the partnership program as a whole to literacy development, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

CODE-Ethiopia publications
There is overwhelming evidence that the various CODE-Ethiopia publications are having a major impact on the literacy and learning of children and youth throughout Ethiopia. Repeatedly, the research team heard stories of how the books produced in local languages are popular with children and teachers:

- Anecdotal reports from Library Management Committees suggest students who use reading rooms and CODE-Ethiopia publications score better on government exams.
- Indigenous materials are used a great deal, valued by children and teachers, and are helping to create a reading culture.
- CODE-Ethiopia publications that have been developed to provide curriculum support for students were found to be particularly popular and helpful since they contain plainer language, diagrams to support the text and clearer explanations of concepts being taught with MoE-provided materials.
- Reading room attendants reported how children enjoyed the stories (“fictions”) in these books and the Big Books were great sources of conversation and book sharing.

Obviously, the needs of teachers and children are great and CODE-Ethiopia is to be commended for establishing and building this effective local language publishing capacity. It is clearly the best direction for CODE-Ethiopia to continue to increase these publications and distribute these materials throughout their network of schools and reading rooms. Some system to assess the impact of the local language materials would be useful for future planning and help CODE-Ethiopia target its publishing program closely to meet the needs and interest of teachers and students.

One complaint regarding these specific publications was that the CODE-Ethiopia publications no longer match up with the current MoE revised curriculum. However, the research team found that, in many cases, curriculum topics (e.g., weather topics in science) may have originally been produced by CODE-Ethiopia for Grade 7, when now that topic is covered in Grade 8. Teachers and reading room attendants need to learn how to transfer the use of one resource to another
context, and not simply feel that because a text was produced for one context, it cannot be transferred to another one. That process could be covered in training sessions on how to effectively use resources.

Recommendation 10:
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia conduct an analysis of its current set of local language publications to identify strengths and gaps in its productions to date, match to student interests, and identify new content for curriculum support material.

Recommendation 11:
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia continue (and increase) its production/distribution of early literacy, local language materials such as Big Books, picture books, simple information books, and word books to support the early literacy development of preschool and primary-aged children.

Recommendation 12:
It is further recommended that CODE-Ethiopia increase the publication of health-related materials, balanced views on the role of women, and specific education on HIV/AIDS. There were some examples of CODE-Ethiopia publications in these areas (and a few titles from UNESCO programs), but more materials are needed to meet the demand of large numbers of students and teachers who need this information.

Role of local people
Without a doubt, the stronger and more active the Library Management Committee (LMC) was, the stronger the literacy program and the more integrated the reading room was into the school and community life of the area. The LMC members provided excellent examples of how they had gone into schools and encouraged children and teachers to use the reading room, and how teachers had given students assignments that required them to visit the reading room to complete their work. These are obvious examples to the ways members of local communities will harness the impact of their reading room and make it a valuable community asset.

Similarly, reading rooms that were located close to schools and in central locations in a community were better used and more actively promoted. Others seemed off the main routes for walking to and from schools and less integrated into the community.

Staff in the MoE, Regional Education Bureaus, and MoCT were also seen as active players in those reading rooms that have been more successful in terms of usage, facilities, and staffing. Several made it quite obvious they knew the value of the reading room and they had strategies in place to connect education and the role of the reading room.

Coordinating the various roles in the success of the reading room is a major area that needs to be addressed. The need for shelving example and the need for local communities to take up the provisioning of such simple resources is just one of several that arose during focus groups. LMCs
need to explore ways it can take more leadership and simply be waiting for CODE-Ethiopia and other organizations to “send more shelving and send more books.”.

Everyone in the focus groups spoke highly of the success of Reading Week as a way to promote reading and build community excitement about the reading and using their reading room. However, it seemed people needed help in taking the lessons learned from a successful Reading Week and applying them to new contexts and new ways of exciting children and their families about reading.

In summary, local committees and government agencies can’t sit idly by while books are piled on the ground waiting for CODE-Ethiopia and/or CODE-Canada to send them more shelves. Having Reading Week once a year is not enough to build and sustain a reading culture in the community. Ownership and responsibility need to be built into future implementation frameworks so that targets can be set, roles articulated, and local human resources and community assets tapped to stabilize and increase the impact of reading rooms.

Recommendation 13:
It is recommended that locations for future reading rooms be addressed early on with an eye to situating them close to schools, near other community resources, and within walking distance of many children and their families.

Recommendation 14:
It is recommended that, in addition to holding Reading Week events each year, each Library Management Committee develop an annual strategic plan for promoting reading throughout the community. The local schools, businesses, reading room staff, and community members must be seen as active participants in encouraging children/youth/families to read and to use their reading room.

Impact in the community
Reading rooms have raised awareness amongst community members of the use and value of such a community resource. People spoke proudly of their reading room and were thankful for the work of CODE-Ethiopia and CODE-Canada. Community members spoke about their vision of the reading rooms as "an agent of social change" and "as a weapon of civilization." These are powerful indicators of the community's growing awareness of the impact of the reading rooms, both present and potential. The research team noted that when a reading room is located near a school, a youth centre, or other such community institutions, the more impact it has. There needs to be more concerted effort to position reading rooms as centres of communities, geographically and culturally. The idea of establishing a second reading room in a community where their first reading room has been tremendously successful should be given serious consideration in future Partnership Projects. Simply moving on and establishing more RRs in communities without one may not be the most effective strategy for building the impact of RRs on literacy in the country. It could be that building a second RR in a large community that has been successful with one RR could be a better way to further deepen the impact of the CODE and CODE-Ethiopia partnership by building on current successes.
In addition, the successes in one community need to be highlighted and shared within and across communities. Currently, success stories are communicated through Sutafe and word of mouth. A new partnership venture needs to see tangible plans for inter-community sharing of best practices and best solutions to common problems.

Recommendation 15:
It is recommended that CODE and CODE-Ethiopia establish a comprehensive, community-based process for sharing the successful strategies used to build and sustain the reading room in one community with other nearby communities so “reinventing the wheel” can be averted.
The Voice of One Young User

Acknowledgement for CODE-Ethiopia

As we took part in a Focus Group at the Merawi Reading Room, this letter was given to us as testimony of the impact of RRs on literacy in this community. It was written by one Grade 12 student and is re-printed here with permission. The language was not changed or corrected and reflects his words exactly.

CODE-Ethiopia, thanks, thanks, and thanks now and forever by the way. If there is a word greater than “thanks” to give acknowledgement for CODE-Ethiopia, I will use that word. But there is no word more than this, so I will simply say thanks now and forever. Because of CODE-Ethiopia has donated so many reference text books, recreational texts, and general knowledge text books for Merawi town library.

These donated texts from CODE-Ethiopia have changed the attitude of students’ reading and adults’ reading habits. Specially, these texts increase the student’s ability to pass different regional and national exams with a good score from year to year. For example, if we see the number of students who score 4.00 in grade 10 is growing and if we see grade 12 students who join university, it shows this library has a great role for students to get a good score and to become competent with a new world.

This is not the only advantage for this library. The library decreases the number of unemployed and scavenger adults in the town. This changes the town’s unemployed adults to the employed ones by creating their own work using different references which are donated by CODE-Ethiopia, and helps the scavengers to spend their time by reading different novels, magazines, and general knowledge texts rather than spending their time and money by chewing and smoking.

Generally CODE-Ethiopia helps to:
Increase the qualification of education
Increase the number of qualified students
Increase the habit of reading
Decrease the number of unemployed
Decrease the number of scavengers and loss of economy
Aggravate creativity
Interaction with the new world, etc. by giving different texts, references, and recreational texts:
CODE-Ethiopia gave 2100 texts in 2008, 887 texts in 2009,750 texts in 2010, and 880 texts in 2011 (so far, 4617 texts)

Anyway, whatever I would like to say is that, thanks CODE-Ethiopia now and forever and continue your donation until what anything we can.
But as much as you can, in addition to texts and references please help us by donating different laptop computers and desktop computers to connect us with a world within a few seconds and running equally with the globalization. Because you know that computers have an innumerable advantages to different classes of the people regarding to the interest of the individual, what type of information he wants to gain. So try to help us to play with the world using computers. CODE-Ethiopia, thanks now and forever, because you were helping us run towards an educated human being.

I am sure that we will be an educated human being within a few years because of your assistance. Thanks CODE-Ethiopia.

Sent by one of the user/readers of a CODE-Ethiopia library

Dagnachew Gashaye
Grade 12th in 2004 E.C
Summary of Recommendations & Moving Forward

Recommendations

Based on site visits and on-the-ground observations conducted by the research team, a series of recommendations are being put forth to enhance the CODE-Ethiopia partnership project and assist in any future partnership planning.

Relevance

Recommendation 1
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia either gets out of the business of training primary school teachers altogether and concentrates on the other strengths of the program, or intervenes in this area in a more methodical and elaborate way.

Recommendation 2
It is recommended that for the next phase of the program, and with the technical assistance of CODE-Canada, a Logic Framework should be formulated along with its associated Performance Measurement Framework. The annual reports should be structured along the Logic Framework, in addition to a narrative of activities carried out.

Effectiveness

Recommendation 3
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia should revise its guidelines for the composition of the Library Management Committees to:

1. Emphasize the inclusion of teachers in the committees, in addition to the district and local council officials and other community members;
2. To ensure that half of the members are women; and,
3. To encourage the formation of student committees to supplement and augment the functions of the Library Management Committees.

Recommendation 4
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia should orient and encourage Library Management Committees to pro-actively seek donations from the local business community (corporate social responsibility).

Recommendation 5
It is recommended that it is now time for CODE-Ethiopia to play a more pro-active role in helping, guiding, stimulating, and activating the MoE and local government authorities to implement the program more effectively. Among other things, such a pro-active role should include allocating more resources and time for:
1. Meeting with all the heads of regional education bureaus on an annual basis during the annual conferences convened by MoE;
2. Carrying out lobbying work with MoE and the MoCT to ensure that their budgets permanently include salaries for librarians and other library workers;
3. Conducting one-day workshops with the local stakeholders on the most desired composition of Library Management Committees, the usefulness of having student committees, how to mobilize and involve the community in the affairs of the library, and approaches and methods in seeking financial contributions from the business community (as alluded to in separate recommendations above);
4. Based on the experiences and good practices of other libraries, demonstrate how the communities can be more actively and integrally involved in, and provide financial and material support to, the libraries; and,
5. Identify other potential organizations that donate books such as BookLink and Books for Africa that CODE-Ethiopia and the local authorities can tap into.

Recommendation 6
It is recommended that the staff complement be increased by at least two additional workers.

1. One position should be dedicated to professional development with responsibilities for:
   d) initial and ongoing training/support for reading room attendants, teachers, and Library Management Committees (LMCs)
   e) publishing and expanding the use of Sutafe
   f) working with the MoE and the MoCT to provide training for them to support local educators, LMCs, and reading room attendants
2. In addition, it is recommended that CODE Canada consider tapping into CIDA’s International Youth Internship Program to send a few interns to assist CODE-Ethiopia with some organizational tasks and activities including some relevant tasks in the libraries and schools.

Efficiency

Recommendation 7
It is recommended that before the negative aspects of Founder’ Syndrome potentially and inadvertently catch up with the founder/executive director of CODE-Ethiopia, and in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization and facilitate succession planning, CODE-Ethiopia should set up a governing board.

Recommendation 8
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2. Measures to ensure secure and growing salaries;
3. On-going professional development opportunities;
4. Training in the uses of digital technologies for student learning and library management;
5. Revisions to the current training program to emphasize the partnerships between teachers and reading room attendants in supporting student learning and building the culture for reading; and,
6. Opportunities for reading room attendants within nearby geographic areas to come together to share ideas and build collaborative relationships.

Recommendation 9
It is recommended that a system be developed for tighter procedures for accountability and reporting that would help ensure better follow-through on dealing with issues at the local levels.

Impact

Recommendation 10
It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia conduct an analysis of its current set of local language publications to identify strengths and gaps in its productions to date, match to student interests, and identify new content for curriculum support material.

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It is recommended that CODE-Ethiopia continue (and increase) its production/distribution of early literacy, local language materials such as Big Books, picture books, simple information books, and word books to support the early literacy development of preschool and primary-aged children.

Recommendation 12
It is further recommended that CODE-Ethiopia increase the publication of health-related materials, balanced views on the role of women, and specific education on HIV/AIDS. There were some examples of CODE-Ethiopia publications in these areas (and a few titles from UNESCO programs), but more materials are needed to meet the demand of the large numbers of students and teachers who need this information.

Recommendation 13
It is recommended that locations for future reading rooms be addressed early on with an eye to situating them close to schools, near other community resources, and within walking distance of many children and their families.

Recommendation 14
It is recommended that, in addition to holding Reading Week events each year, each Library Management Committee develop an annual strategic plan for promoting reading throughout the community. The local schools, businesses, reading room staff, and community members must be seen as active participants in encouraging children/youth/families to read and to use their reading room.
Recommendation 15
It is recommended that CODE and CODE-Ethiopia establish a comprehensive, community-based process for sharing the successful strategies used to build and sustain the reading room in one community with other nearby communities so “reinventing the wheel” can be averted.

Moving Forward

With the obvious success of the CODE-Ethiopia local language publication program, resources should be targeted to build on strengths and successes. Future partnership projects need to:

1. Ensure continued support of the nurturing and training local authors and illustrators;
2. Expand the number of books of cultural value including topics of gender and health; and,
3. Increase the publication of reading materials for very young children, especially Big Books.

Another major success from the CODE and CODE-Ethiopia partnership program was the support given to developing strong Library Management Committees (LMCs). Although not all of these committees were as influential in raising the profile and value of the reading rooms in their communities, it was clear that library committees composed of a wide cross section of the community were more likely to work as community partners. Committees that had clear agendas and pro-active members meant that the reading rooms were viewed as vital resources for literacy in the communities.

Reading room attendants need to be seen and supported as professional literacy leaders in their communities. Multiple forms of ongoing professional development are critical, not only to retain attendants in their reading room positions, but to ensure their leadership in literacy, learning and new technologies. A full-time, permanent CODE-Ethiopia staff position needs to be designated to facilitate this professionalization and to support the LMCs in mobilizing their community assets to strengthen the role of reading rooms.

Accountability needs to be tightened throughout the system not for the way funds are spent, but in the expectations placed on LMCs and MoE, and MoCT officials. This can be achieved through reports from CODE-Ethiopia itself, annual updates and strategic planning by LMCs, and clear expectations for regional education officers to connect schools and reading rooms, teachers and reading room attendants, and community members with the efforts to build a culture for reading.

The endeavour to provide internationally donated books needs to be carefully reconsidered. It creates enormous demands on CODE and CODE-Ethiopia staff where resources could be used more strategically, and effectively applied to improve literacy in the country by focusing on the librarian professionalization activities (listed above) and the production of local language literature and curriculum books. Such a re-focusing will become particularly urgent as Ethiopian society leaps ahead in the areas of access to digital technologies and the powerful resources available through the Internet.
Consistency of language needs to be enforced. Throughout the documents, signage, discussions, and interviews, reading rooms were variously referred to as libraries, community libraries, public libraries, and reading rooms. Reading room attendants were referred to as librarians, teacher-librarians, and reading room attendants. Consistency will facilitate clarity and reduce confusion.

Final questions to consider

Any research project leaves people with new questions - ones not intended at the start of the process, but that have emerged throughout the research process. As researchers exploring the outputs of a major partnership project between CODE-Canada and CODE-Ethiopia, this research team has been fortunate to have seen the amazing work being done throughout the country. Reading rooms are making real contributions to literacy in Ethiopia and the time is right to pause and think about next steps. Should we continue to do what we have been doing, the way we have been doing it? Are there new priorities that need to be explored to capitalize on the successes of CODE-Ethiopia, and are there lessons that could be learned and applied to other CODE projects?

These and others are questions that need to be seriously discussed and explored by both partners. This partnership is definitely working, but the researchers in this case put forth these challenging questions to ponder:

1. Where do we go with digital technologies, both as means of advancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the reading rooms and of CODE-Ethiopia operations, and as a means of supporting literacy and learning in these communities?

2. Should the goal of any new partnership project be to continue to open new reading rooms? Should communities with successful reading rooms have a second reading room, or should new reading rooms continue to be expanded across the country?

3. Have we moved beyond the concept of a “reading room” and embrace the evidence that they are really “community libraries” that are emerging in many of these communities? These community libraries have buy-in from the community leaders, links with government officials, dedicated staff, and many supports from CODE and CODE-Ethiopia. Conceptually, community libraries are more closely linked to literacy and learning, so perhaps we need to see how this concept would change what we do in future partnership projects?

4. How are the international books really supporting literacy and learning in these communities? The reading level of many of these texts seems way beyond the English reading level of most students, and more research is needed on just what contributions they are making to their education. Would the country and the goals of “literacy for all” be better served with a full-time effort to produce and distribute indigenous-language materials tied to the curriculum and to the reading interests of male and female children and youth?
Appendices

Appendix A: List of Reading Rooms Visited

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions: Library Attendants, Teachers and Library Management Committee Members, and CoDE-Ethiopia Staff
Appendix A
List of Reading Rooms Visited

The research team visited a total of twelve reading rooms in a three-week period. The specific reading rooms visited are broken down as follows:

Three around Addis Ababa:
- Akaki
- Holeta
- Sebeta
  Yusuf Kassam also visited Kaliti and Lideta Reading Rooms

Two in Oromia:
- Merawi
- Durbete

Two 1.5 hours south of Addis Ababa:
- Mojo
- Alemetena

Two in Harari:
- Hakim Woreda – Hamaressa Library
- Amirnur Woreda – Kebele 07 Reading Room

Two in Dire Dawa:
- Kebele 02 Reading Room
- Beyo Awalie

One in Tigray:
- • Axum Reading Room
Appendix B
Focus Group Questions: Library Attendants, Teachers and Library Management Committee Members, and CODE-Ethiopia Staff

Tasks at each reading room visit included the following:

1. Social side and introductions
2. Tour of the facility, review of photos, documents, artifacts
3. Meet with teachers/librarian
4. Meet with management committee
5. Meet with school officials, see the school
6. Talk with children/youth

Focus Group Questions in the Reading Rooms

These are the question used to guide focus-group discussions in each of the twelve reading room visits. The reading rooms were provided with the questions before the visit took place. Note: These questions were not asked in formal sequence, but were used to guide a “conversation” with the participants. Both researchers kept copious notes during the conversations.

1. Did you attend any CODE training sessions?
2. Which ones did you feel helped you the most?
3. Show us something you learned/used from the sessions.
4. What other things would you like to get more training in?
5. Tell us about your work with teachers at the school.
6. Tell us how you help the children/youth when they come to the reading room.
   - How do girls use the reading room?
   - How do boys use the reading room?
7. Tell us how the adults in the community use the reading room.
8. Tell us about your library management strategies.
9. What would help improve things in the reading room?
10. Collection:
    - How has CODE helped increase the collection?
What areas in the collection need more resources?
What resources are popular with youth and with adults?
What do boys/girls like to read?

11. CODE publications:
Management of that collection
Popularity of that collection – promoting it?
Who uses them?
How they use the books?
What suggestions to improve/increase the CODE publications?
What topics are needed?

12. Facilities:
What furniture/shelving did you get from the program?
Electricity/ICT
Security – day and night
Bathroom facilities

13. Role of the management team
How do they direct your work?
How do they assist in your work?
How else could they contribute to improving the reading room?

14. Community Involvement:
How do the community members use the reading room?
What services do you offer? – workshops, family literacy
How does the community support the reading room?

15. Reading Promotion:
What are examples of the ways you promote reading for the children/youth?
What are examples of the ways you promote reading for community members?

16. ICTs
Current inventory
How are ICTs used in programs (school ones and reading room ones)?
What are the hopes for ICT in the future?