



Education for Sustainable Development

(ESD)

Community Conversation and Dialogue Guidelines

July, 2011



1. Organizational Background

1.1 Establishment

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a local non-governmental non-profit oriented organization committed to empower the marginalized children, youth and women in the rural areas of Ethiopia. It was established in November 2007 and envisages every child emerging and women economically and socially empowered to overcome poverty. Thus, it provides quality preschool education; assists the quality of primary basic education; facilitates skills training and women livelihood expansion strategies in remote areas of the country in partnership with families, communities, donors and local government bodies.

1.2 Vision

ESD envisages that children, youth and women are economically and socially empowered to overcome poverty.

1.3 Mission

ESD strives to create a brighter future for children, youth and women through education, skills training and women livelihood promotion in partnership with stakeholders.

1.4 Major Achievements of ESD

ESD has established 4 preschool centers with in the vicinity of partner formal schools in the last 4 years. All the centers have been equipped with teaching materials/medias, first aid kits, indoor and outdoor games like balls, seesaw, swing, slider and the teaching learning program have been child-friendly. 12 preschool teachers and 2 education officers are deployed at field level. About 400 preschool age children got access to preschool education throughout 4 years of intervention.

There are 4 partner primary schools sharing the same compound with the preschool centers with school population of 4610 students (50.3% girls) and 126 teachers (53% females). ESD has been facilitating smooth transfer of preschool completing children to primary schools. It has carried out trainings on teaching methods, production of media, lesson planning foe 56 primary school teachers. It has also supplied the schools with references and supplementary reading books.

14 Self help group composing 277 mothers have been organized based on geographical proximity and economical status and 4 facilitators who are living in the target kebeles have been deployed. Mothers are saving 1.0 birr to 3.0 birr on weekly bases. Members are engaged in several income generating areas like sheep fattening, cereals retailing, cotton spinning and others.

ESD has carried out baseline survey and identified marketable skills. It has trained 28 trainees in horticulture, Masonry and plumbing. It has constructed a training centre in Debre Birhan. ESD has provided basic working tools for the graduates of all training areas mentioned above.



2. Rationale for the preparation of CCD guideline

Education for sustainable Development is working in rural and semi urban areas of North Showa zone of the Amhara National Regional State. As a result, it needs the full cooperation of the community and developing community ownership and local resource mobilization. Effective grassroots leadership development strategy is an essential component of any community. This guide provides an overview of the information designed to elicit a thoughtful discussion of grassroots leadership skills.

CCD is a powerful tool that is highly flexible and participatory where all participants share their concerns and ideas. It also helps to bring about sense of cohesion and togetherness among the participants.

As a result it is precondition to facilitate discussions with the community and enhance community awareness about its interventions. As a whole the reason for developing this guideline book for the facilitation of CCD. As a result is seeking to:

- heighten the sense of public responsibility and improve their understanding of the project especially the school based preschool education and women livelihood improvements
- Foster collaboration and cooperation between various sectors within communities;
- Enhance the leadership skills and capacity of individuals who are, or will be, active in the civic life of their communities; and
- Focus on grassroots leadership needs for rural communities.

3. Concepts of CCD

2.1 Meaning of CCD

A community conversation is a good starting point for those who want to bring about a sense of cohesion and togetherness. Community conversations impact on participants by finding common ground and increasing respect for difference.

Community conversation is an interactive process which brings residents and experts together and engages them to raise, discuss and explore and look for solutions to their concerns and problems at the grassroots levels. It is a powerful toll to reduce risk/hazards faced to our community. It is highly flexible, participatory approach where all participants share their concerns and worries.

2.2 Cultural context and practices of Ethiopia in CCD

Conversation and dialogue had traditional roots in various cultural and social practices of Ethiopia. However, it is a recent experience when it comes to modern organizations as a problem solving tool. Thus, the intention of using CCD as the tool for problem solving requires the serious consideration of cultural and social values of the community. As a result, settings of community conversation and dialogue are based on the characteristics of project targets. Thus, in the course of preparing this guidelines, the cultural context of the project target group had been given due emphasis.



4. Principles of CCD

a. Recognize community capacity

Community conversation should identify and utilize capacity of community for the anticipated changes and help transfer the experience to other communities.

b. Encourage participation

Community conversation should encourage participation through listening and respecting other participants' point of view and openly discuss concerns to create mutual understanding.

c. Respecting community values

It is advisable to understand and respect the life style of the surrounding, families and the community to be the core factor in initiating their own decisions rather than imposing.

d. Partnership/joint forum for learning

The joint learning forums have to be organized and discussions between facilitators and the community, amongst communities', individuals and also among organizations have to be carried out to reach at practical solutions.

5. Participants of CCD

The intended participants in CCD vary from thematic area/problem to problem. But it is advised to think of the residents where the problem directly or indirectly affects them. It addresses different representatives of community segments. These includes Religious leaders, Elders, clan leaders, respected older people ((informal leaders), Teachers, Health extension workers, Women affairs experts, Agriculture extension workers , (development agents) and other civil servants in the area, Kebele administration, farmers, Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA), PTAs (Parent teacher Associations), Shop keepers and retailers, Crafts men and women, men, children and adolescents and other community members living in the area.

6. Strategies in CDD approach

Various approaches can be used in conducting CCD. These include surveys, focus groups, interviews, consultative workshops, traditional discourse, generative dialogue traditional discourse, tea and coffee programs, debates, discussions, workshops, seminars, experience sharing, and visit and award programs. ESD intends to use existing informal social structures and public meetings and existing social structures such as *Idirs*, *Senbetie*, *Equb*, *Debo*, and other related social gatherings. It also intends to explore national and international days like Children, literacy, patriots, women, labor, PTA meeting, school days, and school parent's day for this purpose.



a. Survey

A survey is a quest for facts; sort of a fact-finding mission. To conduct a survey, a group of people is usually selected and each person is asked a number of prepared questions. Results of the survey are combined and conclusions are drawn.

b. Focus Groups

Attendances at Focus Groups are usually by invitation targeting specific groups with relevant experience of the subject matter, eg. Meals on Wheels users and volunteers to discuss food tender, architects practicing in Mossman to discuss the Residential Development Control Plan. Randomly selected Focus Groups may also be convened from time to time to allow a wider perspective on specific issues. Focus Groups should continue to be used in such instances.

c. Interviews

From time to time, for example in the development of the Social Plan or a specific service, interviews are conducted including in the homes of some residents, such as the frail aged, the house bound, career etc; and occasionally at schools or at the Youth Development Centre with students with special issues or needs. Interviews should continue to be used in such instances.

d. Consultative Workshops

Consultative Workshops are open to the community with the aim of briefing interested residents on specific projects and to get their feedback prior to the preparation of plans such as the Local Environment Plan. Consultative workshops should continue to be used in such instances.

e. Debate

The participants involved into informal debate and defend a particular point of view without rules of formal debate

f. Discussion

Discussion involves the exchange of ideas between people on a given topic or topics. Discussion whether it be formal or informal, large group or small group, can be an effective technique which promotes the sharing of information /ideas. Discussion involves an organized but free exchange of ideas.

g. Traditional discourse



We are providing a point of view, seeking agreement or settling differences. It is directive, advocating and defensive.

h. Generative dialogue

We use stories to reconstruct practice and express perspectives on issues. Stories generate new understandings and new knowledge. It is “how can we do this better” conversation.

Other techniques like tea and coffee programs, Shop fronts/Market days, Workshops, seminars and trainings, experience sharing, visit program and award programs and others can be used depending on the purpose and context of the CCD.

7. Steps in Organizing CCD

In all the approaches that we use, there are recommended steps facilitators should consider (Give Kids Good schools. org. and (Community conversations: building bridges between people from different background, CITY Parochial Foundation, 2009, www.cityparochial.org.uk). These Recommended steps in organizing CCD include

- i. **Work with partners** – established relationships with local contacts is essential. Partner organizations often have a diverse membership and can invite people from different backgrounds. They can also provide an appropriate space in which to hold the conversations and a context in which the relationships built can be sustainable. It is important to negotiate working together so that the experience and resources of the partner are fully used and that respective aims are clearly understood.
- ii. **Selection of participants** - Recruitment works best when it is face to face, close to the date of the event and ideally with the support of dynamic local people with the will and personality to bring others in. An optimal size for a Community Conversation is 8 to 12 participants.
 - It is helpful to develop and utilize partnerships with other organizations to help recruit participants.
- iii. **Create a relaxed setting** – refreshments, food, and comfortable seating help to create an appropriate atmosphere.
- iv. **Opening Remarks.** A noteworthy local figure will open the community conversation with an introduction to the CCD, the rationale for the community conversation, and the subjects to be covered during the discussion.



- v. **Facilitate with empathy, active listening and mediation.** It is sometimes necessary to reframe words that are accusatory in a way that keeps the meaning but takes away the blame. If there is a group that is not represented at the conversation, the facilitator can consider bringing in their voice.
- vi. **Small Discussion Groups.** Attendees will be divided into smaller groups and given a list of questions/topic areas to explore.
- vii. **Reporting Back.** Each small group will be responsible for reporting back to the larger group on their conversation and their recommendations for moving forward.
- viii. **Event Conclusion.** The meeting leader will collect feedback, announce a plan for follow up, and conclude the meeting.
- ix. **Promote self-sufficiency** – A Community Conversation is a significant event in itself. However, to become a building block for longer-term group activity, it is important for the group members and any partner staff to recognize and understand the value of participatory and inclusive meetings, and to be in a position to facilitate future meetings in this way. It is therefore helpful to add an element of coaching and training.
 - The positive and future-focus of community conversations can enable participants to go on to take part in shared activities. In this event, it is helpful to provide training in facilitation skills to participants and to partner organizations' staff so that the inclusive approach can be taken forward.

8. Issues to be addressed in CCD

The issues to be addressed in CCDs covers:

- ECCDE (health , Education and development of 0-6 year old children)
- Parenting styles and child –parent daily interactions
- Indigenous teachings, educational folklores and proverbs
- HTP
- FP , HIV/AIDS
- Economic issue : savings, IGA, loan system , job creation and self support
- Gender , focusing on a child girl
- Conflict resolution
- Education and its role
- Local resource mobilization



9. Venue

Schools, under tree shades, shades, resident's house, Kebele administration offices, Farmers Association offices, ECCDE centers, clinics/health post, churches/, Mosques

10. Facilitation Skills in CCD

- Competency in basic literacy
- Creating safe environment, keeping the conversation focused and managed on time
- Training on CCD with background information on group dynamism and cultural differences
- Identifying skilled facilitators for successful implementation is critical task
- Documentation
- Adherence to the issues under discussion
- Respect group norms , and respect diversity of opinions
- Following participatory approach
- Critical observing community's local context and promote good practices
- Value the cultures and local community experiences, gender sensitivity , respect ethnicity and religious differences , appreciate the community values , experiences and capacities, respect freedom of expressions,
- Lead to community decisions rather than facilitator's decisions
- Giving more chances to audiences and elders
- The facilitator shall assign a reporter
- Close follow-up and documentation of the progress and practices of the community
- Develop framework for measuring emerging outcomes and impacts at individual and community levels.
- Preparing guiding questions for CCD
- Developing agenda schedules, materials , venue and other inputs before CCD and action agenda after CCD

11. Norms of facilitation

- Strive for diversity in opinion that reflects the makeup of the community
- Minimize inviting the usual participants in the CCD
- Brief why the community participation is valued and how their feedback will be utilizing in the next planning
- Discuss what their contribution could be and reach to mutual agreement on their participation
- Make personal contacts and communications while inviting participants
- Leverage personal contacts to ensure good participation
- Stick to the prim agenda of our organization and be sure that you got what you are looking for
- Don't get carried out in the discussion and loose the track of the purpose.

12. Success indicators in CCD /changes in Behavior

- CCDD become a culture of the community , well accepted and become a regular form of solving and discussing community challenges
- CCDD meets regularly and identify problems to be addressed for the wellbeing of their community and lives
- Condemn people who practices Traditional practices like early marriage,
- Continuation of girls in their education and reduction in forced early marriage
- Participants decided to practice sexual reproductive practice like FP, stop FGM and segregate those who were practicing these.
- Demand for CCD and culture of mutual respect in CCD is developed
- Better decision making
- Shared commitment to peruse the decisions of CCD

13. Duration

CCD shall be conducted on convenient time determined by the participants, when all members are likely to attend. The time frame for a specific CCD will be 1-2 hours.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

CCD implementation needs to be monitored and evaluated continuously. Hence, the implementation and results achieved will be monitored through reports, meetings, and round table discussions. Evaluation on the process, success and challenges of CCD will be conducted annually so that improvements on the program will be made accordingly.