



E C D

Early Childhood Development

I N P I C T U R E S

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

“Investing Early in Childhood Learning”

The expression ‘a picture says a thousand words’ is apropos of this beautiful publication showing World Vision Ethiopia’s (WVE) ‘Learning Roots’ Early Childhood Development (ECD) program. For years, this foundational intervention has improved the well-being of children aged 3 to 6 years in targeted communities across Ethiopia through effective and holistic initiatives. The program works in partnership with government and community. It establishes community managed ECD centers to have equitable, easy access for the most disadvantaged children to develop their physical, social, emotional and cognitive potential to fully succeed in school and in life.



This publication portrays our ongoing effort to implement cost effective and quality community managed ECD modality for the country. It describes in brief the basic three pillars of the WVE’s Learning Roots ECD model in pictures: parenting education, community managed ECD center program and strengthening systems for partnership. It presents information about the main features of the program for individuals and organizations who are interested in early childhood development or who already work in the sector. Most importantly, our ECD program offers hands-on, developmentally appropriate and culturally intertwined activities that encompass a variety of skills necessary for whole-child development and early learning.

I hope this booklet will be an inspiring resource for everyone interested in the important work of empowering children to live up to their God-given potential.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Edward Brown'.

Edward Brown

National Director

World Vision Ethiopia



“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Frederick Douglass

World Vision Ethiopia is the largest Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation in the country, closely working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Having over 1,500 staff and volunteers in nearly 100 districts, WV Ethiopia is committed to working with the most vulnerable populations, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

For over four decades, World Vision has been working to improve the lives of children in Ethiopia by improving health, nutrition, education and access to clean water in the communities in tackling the root causes of poverty. It also helps to empower partners and communities to lead and undertake their own development.

In the early years of life, children’s brain can form 1,000 neural connections every second - connections that are the building blocks of a child’s future. But those connections can be interrupted if the child is poorly nourished and nurtured. If the child does not have access to learning opportunities and protected from violence. A child whose brain does not develop

properly may not learn as well or earn as much, which translates in a diminished future for her and less sustainable growth for her society. Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes are powerful equalizers for children who live in resource poor settings and play an important role in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. A healthy, thriving child is the ultimate goal of World Vision’s Early Childhood programmes.

World Vision Ethiopia follows the ECD development model called “Learning Roots” that addresses the developmental needs of children from age three through six. The Learning Roots model aims to enhance the comprehensive development of children and improve parents’ skill to impart quality support for their children. WVE has been implementing community managed, cost effective and quality ECD programmes in order to address the needs of the most vulnerable children.

Currently, WVE is working in 20 Area Programmes (Woredas) benefitting over 5,000 boys and girls through 52 community managed ECD centres in collaboration with the community and government partners.

1 UNESCO (2009) *Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters. Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2009.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.



“RAISING THE BAR FOR CHILDREN”

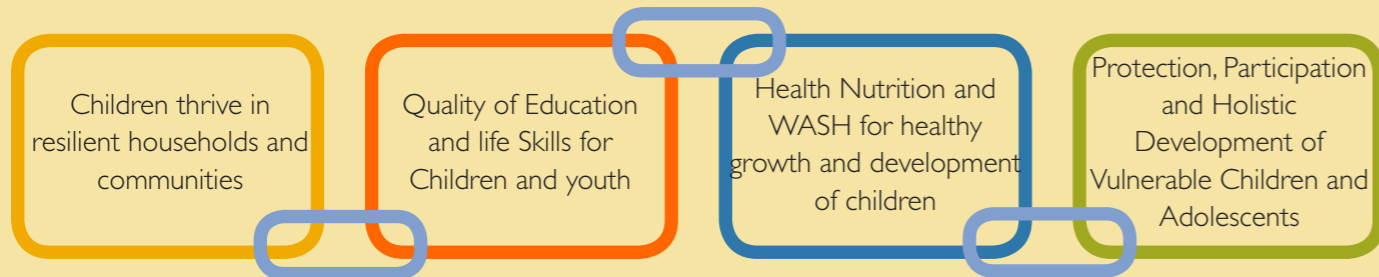
WorldVision Ethiopia (WVE) is one of the largest Christian relief, development and advocacy organisations in the country, with a focus on working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Its 1,500 staff and volunteers in nearly 100 districts are committed to working with the most vulnerable populations, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender. WVE's 2016-2020 Strategy outlines its continued commitments and aspirations toward child wellbeing and was developed based on WVE's accumulated experiences over the last 40 years that have brought meaningful and positive change in the lives of children and their communities. WVE will continue to prioritise its current operational areas where development and emergency programmes are implemented (all regions except Afar and Harari).

CALL AND ASPIRATION

We are called to serve the poor and vulnerable children of Ethiopia to enable them to become empowered and responsible citizens. We aspire to see children of Ethiopia full of hope and dignity, living in safe, caring and enabling environments.

STRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELL-BEING OF 20 MILLION VULNERABLE CHILDREN BY 2020



PRIORITY POPULATIONS

WVE livelihood programming focuses on rural resource-poor smallholder farmers, female-headed households and people affected by disasters. Unemployed youth will also be a priority through vocational training. Pregnant and lactating mothers, malnourished children and households as well as schools and health institutions will also be the focus in implementing health, nutrition and WASH programming. The education programming aims to improve access and quality of education and life skills for children and youth with special focus on children aged three to eighteen, who are in and out of school. Boys and girls, poor and vulnerable children, children and adults with disability and vulnerable women and girls will be also the focus of WVE's child protection and participation programming.

THREE CORE COMPONENTS OF LEARNING ROOTS ECD MODEL



Community Engagement

Engaging and mobilising the community in a meaningful way around ECD is the foundation in our programme implementation. Proper love, and care for children from age three through six years and exposure to a quality early learning programme can help them well develop cognitively, socio-emotionally, linguistically, and physically. Since these are some of the most important years in the human life cycle and have major impact on later successes in school.



Strengthening the Learning Environment

The learning environment consists of people and places. People such as parents, ECD volunteers, and ECD teachers are major influencers of a child's development in the early years. Knowledgeable, trained adults are essential for an ECD programme's success. Most importantly, the home and the ECD facility must be safe, protective, and stimulating environment for children. This applies to indoor and outdoor areas and also includes the learning and play materials children interact with. These materials must be age and culturally appropriate.



Systems Strengthening

Strengthening the policy environment that surrounds young children from age three through six years is an important step towards sustainability of any ECD initiative. WorldVision's role is not to replicate what may already be happening, but rather to strengthen the formal systems that support the development of young children. Therefore we have the opportunity to provide a link between the formal system and the community. This linkage can be fostered by increasing the governments awareness of the needs at the community level and strengthening their capacity to respond effectively, as well as building the capacity amongst the community to influence change within the policy environment.



+ COMMUNITY MOBILISATION +

Community mobilisation and awareness programme is a vital first step of the ECD programme implementation process. The greater the investment in awareness raising and increased value for ECD at the community level, then the greater chance of ownership and sustainability of improved developmental outcomes for young children. Once the community understand the benefit of ECD, they are more likely to invest in the future generations of their community, and thus require less incentive to motivate their contributions, such as time, land, and resources.

In fact, all community members are very much pleased with the work of early childhood development centre. They give high credit to World Vision for effecting the centre in the midst of their residential areas. Mulumebet Mengistu, a local community member, explains the importance of having an ECD centre for children's healthy development and learning in Jeju Area Programme





"I do regularly keep records of the Centre Management Committee (CMC) activities in order to trace back the strides we have made for the quality of our ECD centre and to facilitate smooth transition by the time the new CMC will be elected!"

Rehima Sado from Jeju Area Programme



"As a centre management committee member, I bring parents' concerns and inquiries to the monthly meeting that we have with the ECD teachers for further consultations and possible solutions to enhance the quality of the services."

Tero Bedane from Degelu Tijo Area Programme

+ CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE +

Every ECD centre has its own independent management committee. They meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the overall learning process. Investment in strengthening the ECD Management Committee is more likely to result in sustained ECD initiatives and thus sustained child well-being outcomes within the target community.



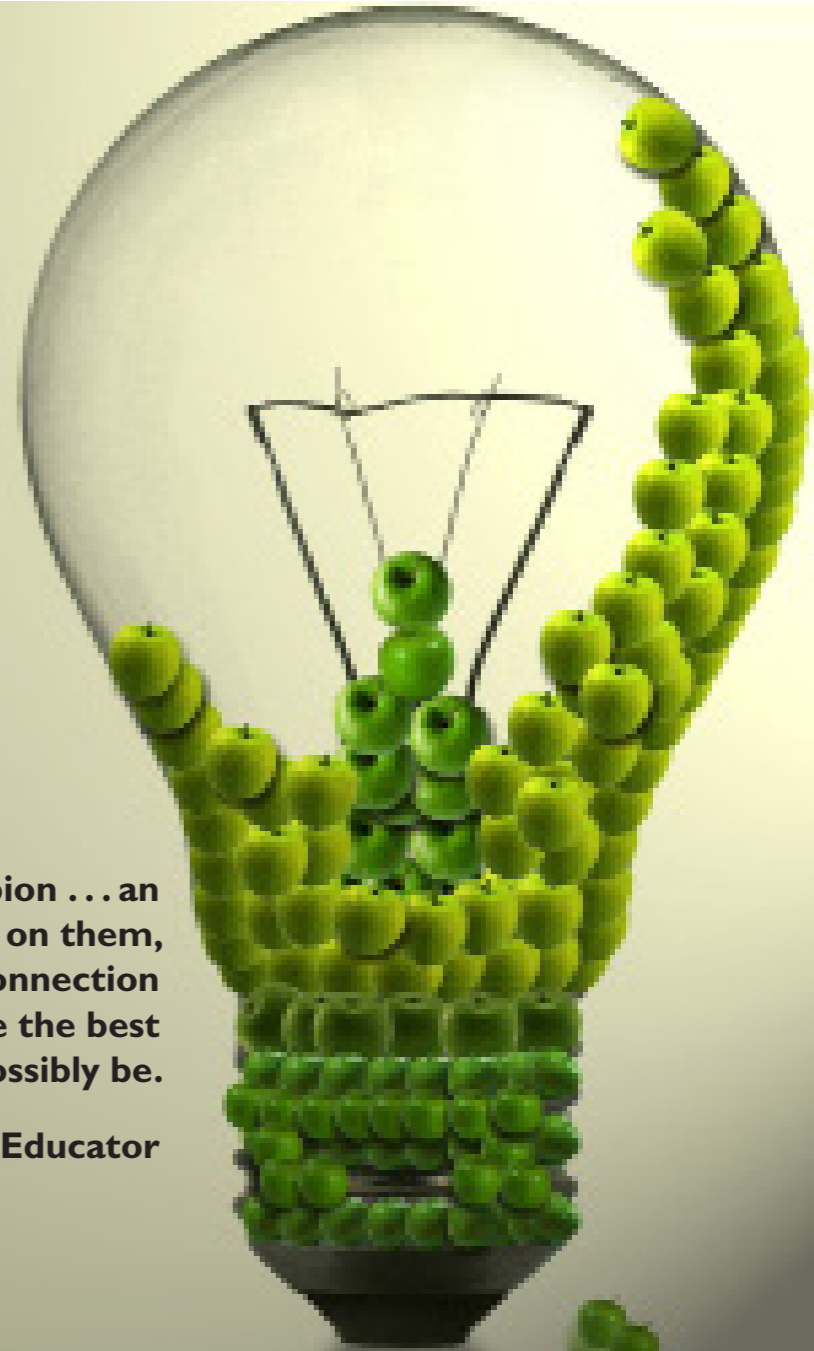
+ PARENTAL DISCUSSION +

Parents are their child's first teacher and have the most influence on their young child. Therefore, parenting education is a vital component of our Learning Roots approach. Parenting education aims to strengthen knowledge, practical skills and confidence to support their children's over all development. Parents are also key motivators within their community and have the ability to increase demand for quality ECD services when informed, participating, and empowered.

Parents attend parenting education session moderated by the ECD teacher, Amina Eresso in Deglu Tijo Area Programme. She witnessed that parents have shown positive changes on their engagement and follow up of children's progress.

Every child deserves a champion ... an adult who will *never give up* on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.

Rita Pierson, Educator





+ PARENT'S ESCORTING THEIR KIDS +

Child protection and safety is an integral part of World Vision Ethiopia's ECD programme where parents are advised to ensure the safety and healthy development of children at home, village and school levels.



"I care about my child's safety and protection. I am advised to do so during the parenting sessions. Besides, it gives me an opportunity to talk with my child about things we see on our ways. It is too much fun. I truly enjoy escorting my kid to the ECD centre."

Birtukan Negash, a parent, Degelu Tijo Area Programme



"I enjoy Colouring shapes with my favorite crayons at language corner. I feel so confident and successful in colouring the inside part of the shapes. I wish to have big shapes to decorate it the whole day."

Hindiya Nuri from Jeju Area Programme



Mintesnot Kuchera from ECD at Hulla Area Programme.

"I am angry at times for not easily fixing a puzzle but most of the time I put the pieces in their right places after some trials which motivates me to try more. Every month I am eagerly waiting for new puzzles which our teachers have developed for us!"

+ CORNER PLAY ACTIVITIES +

Children love to play; it satisfies an innate need for creativity and curiosity. Corner play is the most important activity of the day where the child directs the learning rather than the teacher. By choosing to play with the things they are good at and like to do, they will actually develop skills in all areas of development: intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. They will do this through hands-on learning processes, which is the way children learn.



+ CHILDREN WITH THEIR DISPLAY +

An ideal ECD class is identified mainly by the sample works of children displayed with their names which can be collected and kept in a folder on the form of portfolio to show children's continuous progress. Displaying children's best weekly work on the wall of the classroom enhances their self-esteem and boost their self-confidence.



"I feel so good and happy to see my works on the wall of our class. I enjoy showing my works to friends and family members!"

Eldana Wondimu, a student at Jeju Area Programme community managed ECD centre



+ PARENT -TEACHER INTERACTION +

Children's comprehensive development can be enhanced more when both parents and teachers have regular time to exchange information and consultation about children's schooling.

"I thought there were very strange and silly things are performed in the ECD centre. The joint discussion meeting helped me understand the things undertaken in the centre. And now I am very positive and supportive of the ECD programme."

Asnaku Legesse from Deglu Tijo Area Programme

"Thank God for having given you children, be happy in them and live them as part of your own selves; bring them up with great care and wisdom; see to it that you provide them with everything necessary for their life; guide them from childhood in the way in which God wants them to walk; teach them what they should know and do; do not give them bad example; let them not learn how to do evil by our example; give them an example of prudence and good conduct that they may be prudent and behave well"

Walda Heywat, prominent 17th century Ethiopian philosopher



STORY TIME

The positive reading habits required for school success are developed in the early years. Reading aloud to children has been called the single most important activity for building the knowledge for success in reading.

“Indigenous children stories bring forward familiar and culturally twined issues for the children which propels the continuity and respect of cultural values. Besides, it engages and motivates parents and elders to proudly narrate their cultural stories for the children.”

Mussa Gemeda from Deglu Tijo Area Programme





+ TEACHERS' ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT +

It is the responsibility of the ECD Teacher and caregivers to provide enough time for children to be engaged in child-initiated and adult supported play. Once a child has mastered a specific skill, they will typically become bored and will need further stimulation in the form of different learning materials and adult support for their brain to continue its development.

I enjoy watching children while they are highly engaging with their materials. I provoke them at times with questions and suggestions to try something different with their materials. Besides, I take time to evaluate children's status for further planned intervention. I feel as I am learning every day.

Abeba, ECD centre teacher, Jeju Area Programme





+ CHILDREN IN ACTIONS **+**

Play is our brain's favorite way of learning.

Diane Ackerman



Teachers use the transition time between lessons for this kind of action songs which make them to have fun and physical exercise at the same time.



Aiming for the target which improves children's hand to eye coordination skills at community based ECD centre in Hulla Area Programme



Passing through the tires tunnel which enhances children's physical fitness and movement ability in Jeju Area Programme



Hulla Area Programme Community members have constructed colourful and safe wooden slides from the available resources in their community to create attractive and joyful learning environment for their children.



“Building houses, mountains and roads with different shapes are my favorite activity on the sand corner. I use sticks, plastic bottles and bottle tops to decorate my work. I am very hopeful that I will build a big beautiful house for my family.”
Mirinda Tameru from Hulla Area Programme



Outdoor play is an important daily activity because it has so many benefits for physical health. It reduces stress and improves learning. Outdoor time is most beneficial when it includes a balance between structured physical education activities and free play.

All children enjoy playing on outdoor equipment – swings, balance beams, tyre tunnels, and climbing towers – if available. Building a play area for children can be a good way for communities to work cooperatively and do something very special for their children. World Vision Ethiopia facilitators worked with community members to produce outdoor playground equipment at low cost, using local materials like wood, ropes and tyres.

+ OUT-DOOR ACTIVITIES +



"I love to come here every day. I prefer to play with all these beautiful play materials. Mostly, I like to play with my friends. I miss my school on the weekends."

Eyerus Ketema from Jeju Area Programme



Walking on the wood to gain balance and physical strength in the community managed ECD centre in Jeju Area Programme



A child walks on the rope which enhances basic motor skills at Hulla Programme Area



"Playing with water is enjoyable and I am also quick fetching water from one container to the other." Nafyad Usmael from Jeju Area Programme

Play is the beginning of knowledge.

George Dorsey

+ OUT-DOOR ACTIVITIES +



LOCAL MATERIAL PRODUCTION

“In my 30 years of service in the education sector, I have never seen such kind of practical and easy to do learning materials for preschool aged children utilizing the locally available resources. I am now capable of cascading this training and enriching our schools with a multitude of learning materials. I hope WVE will remain our partner in providing quality education.”

Gizachew Abdo, Durame Woreda Education Office Supervisor

WV Ethiopia’s ECD team supports the development of locally made learning materials that are safe, low cost, developmentally appropriate and attractive. Engaging the community in the production of locally made learning materials is able to raise awareness of the importance of learning through play for children, and promote a sense of pride and empowerment in the process.



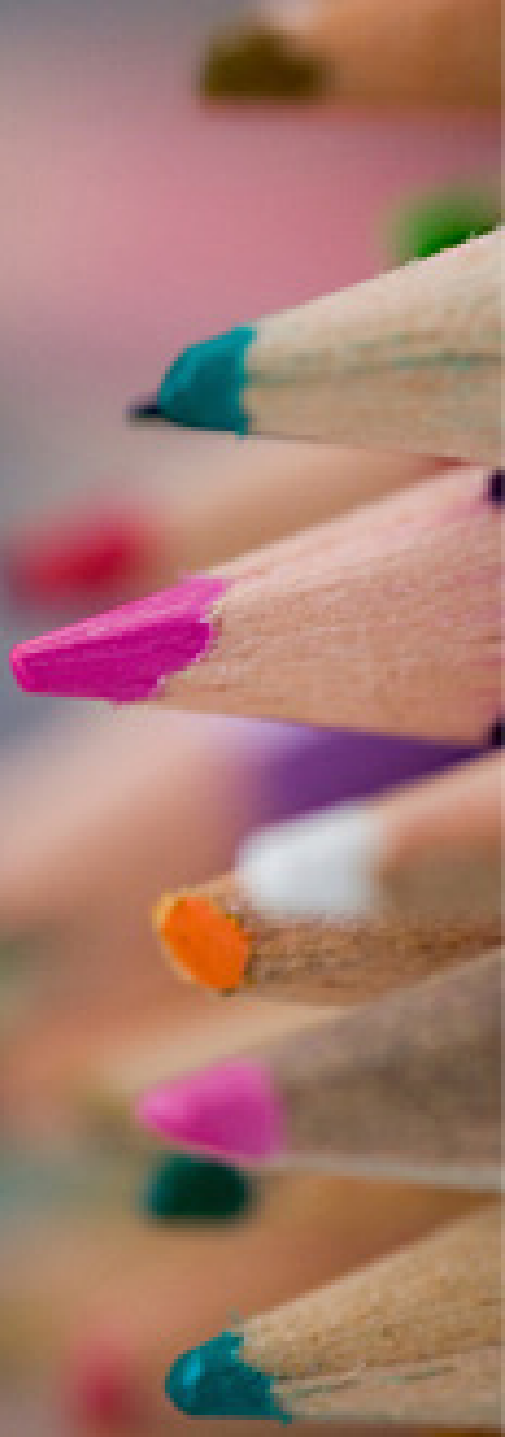


+ PEER TO PEER SUPPORT +

The ECD teachers benefit from monthly meetings with other ECD teachers where they can build knowledge and skills, prepare and practice for the coming month, and reflect on practice. Professional development is tightly linked to the work in the classroom. Strengthening the capacity of the ECD workforce is an essential component of any effective ECD programme. World Vision Ethiopia is committed to strengthen the capacity of the country's ECD workforce so that the most vulnerable children have access to quality ECD centres.

"It is a learning opportunity for all of us to exchange feedback and clarify on the use of some of the locally made learning materials. I feel empowered and capacitated during the joint discussion with my colleagues on the betterment of children's learning and development."

Sofia Kelil, ECD teacher in Deglu Tijo Area Programme





+ GRADUATION **+**

Celebrating the joyful time of the first graduates in the community based ECD centres in Jeju Area Programme



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