

Summary of Phase I CDCB/CCRDA/Packard Program RH/FP Project

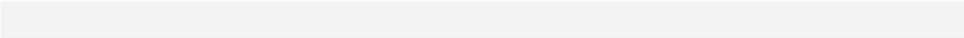


**January
2016
to
February
2018**

**CDCB/CCRDA/Packard Program
RH/FP Project Summary of Phase I
January 2016-February 2018**

Achievements and Areas of Priorities for Phase II





CDCB
February 2018
Addis Ababa

Address:

Acronyms

BoFEC-Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation

BoWCA-Bureau of Women and Children Affairs

CDCB-Center for Development and Capacity Building

CCRDA-Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations

CSOs-Civil Society Organizations

EBC-Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

FP-Family Planning Project

GOs-Government Organizations

ORHB-Oromia Region Health Bureau

OBN-Oromia Broadcasting Network

RH-Reproductive Health

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CDCB/CCRDA-RH/FP Project (Phase I)

1. Background

Center for Development and Capacity Building (CDCB) is a local civil society organization established in 2012 with the goal of providing support to regional states through research, training and advisory services to ensure their development. CDCB has been implementing Phase 1 of the Reproductive Health/Family Planning Project (RH/FP) for the past two years in collaboration with CCRDA with the fund secured from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The project was intended to do lobbying and advocacy activities with a view to enhance the political and financial commitment of the Oromia Regional State Health Bureau and other regional bureaus for quality family planning and reproductive health services in the region.

2. Why This Project Summary?

CDCB has been organizing and facilitating series of consultative workshops, panel discussions and other discussion forums so as to build consensus and common understanding on the importance of financing RH/FP services and on the need for increased political commitment to ensure the provision of quality RH/FP information and services in Oromia Region. CDCB has tabled for discussion some critical issues and encouraged and motivated concerned bodies to take actions to improve the regional RH/FP policy and services. Thus, as part of its continued effort to support the region in addressing the critical gaps in RH/FP programs and service delivery, CDCB has decided to compile this project summary as it serves as a springboard to learn from its Phase I experience

and implement Phase II of the project with better efficiency and higher impact.

This project summary also helps to:

- Communicate the project results with its stakeholders

During its two years implementation of the first phase of the project, the project has achieved a lot in bringing to the attention of the region's leaders at regional and zonal level the RH/FP issues. It made different capacity building interventions to help for officials and experts understand and include RH/FP programs and services in the regional state's plan. Following these capacity-building trainings, different workshops and consultative meetings were organized at different levels to create discussion forums for the leadership on the gaps of existing RH policy, program and system in the region. Thus, it is very important to let stakeholders know what CDCB has achieved so far and identify what remains to be done for its next intervention in phase II of the project.

- Urge policy makers and implementing institutions to consider RH/FP issues in their planning and programming.
- Remind policy makers and decision makers the important points raised to improve the reproductive health programs and address system-level challenges in the region during the first phase of the project during various workshops and panel discussions.
- Identify priorities for next interventions

The second phase of this project is also expected to be a continuation of the first one, and more importantly, an opportunity to scale up CDCB's impact and practice the real

inputs of its previous inputs generated from the two years effort exerted to address the RH/FP issues in the region. Thus, CDCB hopes that this project summary will help the Oromia Health Bureau, CCRDA and other stakeholders to reach an agreement on the next focus areas of the project.

3. Project Objectives

General Objectives:

The general objectives of the project is to improve access to and utilization of quality FP/RH information and services among girls and young women through demand creation, reduction of socio-cultural barriers and increased political commitment in Oromia Region.

Specific Objectives:

The project aimed to achieve the following specific objectives during its two years longproject period:

- I. Increase demand for and utilization of Reproductive Health and Family Planning services by addressing socio-cultural barriers and by holding the target beneficiaries accountable for the result.
- II. Enhance national and regional networking and partnership and engage in key FP/RH Policy Issues and generate political and financial supports at local, regional, and national levels.
- III. Enhance accountability and responsiveness of leaders of government organizations (GOs) for expanded and quality FP/RH servicesbyproviding political and financial support.
- IV. Foster policy commitment and ensure accountability for policy implementation and to improve quality RH/FP services and

expand information outlets by addressing socio-economic barriers to quality services.

4. Major Project Activities

The RH/FP project enhanced the engagement and responsiveness of regional political leaders on key RH/FP policy issues through various dialogues and forums, which increased political support and financial commitment for RH/FP program. The Project achieved a system-level success at regional and zonal levels by influencing important political leaders.

4.1 Leadership Capacity Development

As part of its strategy to address program-level policy challenges and barriers of reproductive health in Oromia Region, CDCB has provided various capacity building trainings. Accordingly, members of the regional cabinets who have direct say in policy making process were among those who participated in the trainings. Others are deputy heads of the different bureaus of the region that also have significant contribution on policy and program designing, monitoring and evaluation of the reproductive health and other issues in the region. The trainings were so relevant to reproductive health programs and other related matters. They include issues of population, development and RH nexus, good governance and leadership to create political space and financial commitment at system-level for provision of quality RH/FP information and services.



Participants of leadership capacity building

Suggested points for next leadership capacity development during the trainings

- Cascade the trainings on issues of population and development and RH nexus to zone and woreda experts and officials to scale up the provision of quality reproductive health and family planning service in region
- Provide additional trainings to higher officials and cabinets members of the region on leadership, management and good governance of reproductive health and family planning services.
- Provide training on health financing and quality improvement with special focus on RH/FP program
- Organize experience-sharing visits for some regional officials to enhance their political commitments, networking and partnership.

4.2 Research

Research was key component of the project. It was aimed at exploring factors affecting access to and utilization of quality RH/FP services in Oromia focusing on socio-cultural barriers, wrong perceptions, and inadequate political and financial commitments. The research was conducted by a consultant experienced in the field of both policy analysis and program design and implementation in the region at various levels.

The research has helped CDCB understand the program challenges and barriers in the reproductive health policy. Accordingly, socio-cultural barriers affecting access to and utilization of quality RH/FP services in Oromia Region were identified. Additionally, it also helped CDCB to find out wrong perceptions relevant to the utilization of RH/FP services; and finally the research explored existing political commitment as explained by financial support extended for RH/FP programs.



The research team during tools development workshop

Suggested points for next intervention based on the research

- Organize and facilitate policy and program dialogues at regional, zonal and model districts levels
- Organize and facilitate awareness creation and raising workshops for middle and lower level officials and leaderships on reproductive health policies, strategies and programs
- Sensitize the public extensively and continuously to mitigate socio-cultural barriers to reproductive health service utilization



While the research is being presented

- Conduct assessment on the ethics, skill and capacity gaps of health professionals to contribute for provision of quality RH/FP services
- For the successful implementation of the Reproductive Health programs, do RH planning at district (woreda) level and conduct continuous community dialogues

- Build the ownership and commitment of the government, the community and all other stakeholders
- Provide capacity building trainings for offices working on population (like Planning Commission, BoFEC, BoWCA...etc.)
- Strengthen the RH multi-sectorial taskforce (Forum) on population and development nexus and importance of population control.

4.3 Policy Dialogue

High-level consultative workshops have been organized by CDCB and chaired by Oromia Health Bureau to identify existing policy gaps, barriers and challenges at system level, which hinder the provision and service utilization of reproductive health and family planning in the region. The regional health bureau has welcomed this platform as an opportunity to explore and identify any gaps and challenges in this regard which was seldom practiced before this project.

Suggested points for next intervention based on the policy dialogue

- Extensively create awareness for all regional government bureaus, zonal departments and district offices on existing reproductive health policies and programs
- Compile and disseminate all policies designed by multi-sectorial task force/stakeholders



Participants during policy dialogue

4.4 RH Multi-Sectorial Taskforce

After developing RH quality improvement tools and after GO-CSO Partnership for Oromia Region Health Bureau (ORHB) was established, the project strengthened Regional RH forum by revitalizing and enhancing government sectors and NGO's since there was invaluable support of partners working on RH within the region. In addition, the project addresses key issues like partners mapping, enhancing networking and partnership, initiate mainstreaming of RH, making RH as a development priority agenda in the region.

The overall contribution of the project is to improve the access and utilization for quality RH/FP information and services among girls and young women by addressing social determinants of RH, by raising

awareness of male partners to involve in FP and by creating a physical space and political space for RH program. This also in turn contribute to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality through expansion of quality RH/FP services and information in the region.



Participants of the multi-sector taskforce meeting

Suggested points based on multi-sector taskforce meeting for next intervention

- Strengthen more regional RH multi sectorial taskforce once again
- Establish and strengthen zonal RH multi sectorial taskforce
- Develop Regional RH service directory for partners mapping
- Mainstream RH program to incorporate RH issues into the system and respond via multi sectorial

4.5 Panel Discussion

Panel discussions were also major part of the project engagement. The panel discussions helped to know the budget allocation and utilization of government bureaus. And it was found out that the budget allocated was not sufficient enough to expand and support provision of quality RH/FP services at all levels in the region. The participants of the panel

discussions also agreed to have a strategy for domestic resources mobilization to finance RH/FP sustainably. They also underlined the importance of creating ownership of RH/FP programs by the community and the government at all levels to create equality and equity on access and utilization of quality RH/FP information and services. The panel discussions also helped the participants to understand the importance of making RH/FP part of the Woreda Based Planning. It was also suggested that RH/FP programs can be more effectively addressed through integrated approach and mainstreaming into existing organizational main agenda in a multi-sectorial way.



Partial view of participants of one of the panel discussions

Suggested points from Panel Discussions for next intervention

- Make RH part of Woreda Based Planning to allocate sufficient budget at system level/grassroots level
- Create the ownership of government and community for their increased commitment to ensure quality RH/FP service

- Strengthen regional and sub-regional provision of RH/FP service through supportive supervision, monitoring and technical supports

4.5 Consultative Workshop

The main objective of the sub-regional/cluster workshops were to generate ideas, to conduct evidence-based discourses, to identify gaps and challenges that negatively affect the networking and partnership of regional and national stakeholders on RH/FP policy, guideline and strategy design and their implementation.

The consultative workshops were conducted in four clusters. South West Cluster which comprises of Jima, Ilubabor, Bunobede, and South WestShoa Zones of Oromia region. Zonal sector offices including Health Department, Women and Children Department, Labor and Social Affairs Department, Youth and Sport Department, Finance and Economic Cooperation Department and others participated in the workshops and discussed RH/FP policy and program level issues in detail. The major points of discussion were:

1. How to ensure quality RH/FP information and service
2. How to enhance political support and financial commitment to provide quality RH/FP services
3. How to address socio-cultural barriers and wrong perceptions towards RH/FP programs information and services.

Suggested points from consultative workshops for next intervention

- Establish/strengthen RH Multi-sectorial Taskforce at zonal level as RH Multi-Sectorial Taskforce was strengthened at regional level
- Conduct the same discussions on this issues at woreda level where there is the opportunity of making RH/FP part and parcel of Woreda Based Planning
- Capacity building and experience sharing for officials at zonal and woreda levels.

4.6 Media Engagements and Publication

Media like Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN) and Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) were also used to raise the awareness of both service provider and service seekers so as to improve access and utilization of quality RH/FP information and services. The media engagement was also meant to create regional and national RH/FP programs integration, to increase political commitment for budget allocation and collaboration among stakeholders.

CDCB has organized a meeting and disseminated a research conducted at regional level by an external consultant to stakeholders and partners to provide evidence and information about existing situations of RH/FP policy and programs in Oromia.

Suggested points for next intervention from Media Engagements and Publication

- Organize media platform whereby decision and policy makers can be informed and provided with existing RH/FP policies
- Organize media platform whereby the community can be informed and provided information and data about RH/FP services, and provide feedback on their challenges accessing those services

5. Challenges

The following were the major challenges faced during the implementation of Phase I of the project:

- The project lacked monitoring and evaluation components.
- The project lacked capacity building packages for its project implementing partners and its staff.
- External factors like political unrest in Oromia Region and the resulting high turnover of the leadership has in some ways affected the implementation of the project.

6. Lesson Learned

There were some important lessons learnt while implementing the project. They include the following:

- There is a practical gap between the existing policies and strategies for RH/FP and the practical service delivery at facilities levels. As a result, there is wide gap and challenges on getting quality RH/FP information and services in the region.

- Major thematic and intervention areas on RH/FP were identified which can improve the service provision and intake.
- CDCB was able to bring the higher leadership of the region on board concerning RH/FP program to ensure sustainable development in the region.