

# JeCCDO

## Pioneering Change in Ethiopia

**Partners for Change: SMCF & JeCCDO**

### *Background*

In 2008 JeCCDO was one of six Ethiopian NGOs chosen by The World Bank and DFID to coordinate a pilot in its Protecting Basic Service programme. The programme's objective is to monitor the quality and access of educational provision in government run schools and make educational bureaus more accountable to citizens for the planning and provision of education.

JeCCDO's methodology was directly informed by its community development experience. In the six regions it set up Social Accountability Councils (SACs) comprised of parents' representatives from schools. JeCCDO employed the more in depth Citizen

Report Card (CRC) as opposed to the Citizen Score Card (CSC) method used by the other organisations. The CRC involved a six month in depth survey. The findings were presented by JeCCDO for validation to an interface meeting of parents and schoolteachers. The rigour of the study served to assist the SAC's in their discussion and

negotiations with schools resulting in the development of a memorandum of understanding. An action plan was then drawn up identifying key areas of improvement and ways to address them. Furthermore an agreement to accept all key recommendations was reached in all 6 SAC areas with government education bureaus.



**A SAC representative from Bahir Dar addressing the meeting**

### *The Seminar*

In late May 2009 a JeCCDO organised seminar in Addis Ababa brought together representatives from the six SACs and from the regional education bureaus. Also attending was a representative from the World Bank Management Agency and Director of Poverty Action Network of Civil Society

Organisations in Ethiopia (PANE), a member of the steering committee of the World Bank Management Agency. The seminar marked the end of the pilot project and was aimed to examine the progress made in each of the target areas, identify challenges, and look ahead to further interventions.

*'To strengthen voice and client power of citizens in the context of decentralized service delivery, and to also build the capacity of citizens to engage in public budgeting processes.'*  
- World Bank



st. Matthew's  
Children's Fund Ethiopia

3rd Floor, Downstream Building, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG. Tel: 020 7022 1860/1861

## Social Accountability Council (SAC)

The SAC programme is one of the first times in Ethiopia's history where citizens have been consulted about government service provision. This represents a symbolic step towards enhancing democratisation in Ethiopia. It is generally recognised that activities undertaken by SACs represent only the beginning of the process towards achieving the World Bank objectives.

Drawing from its community development experience JeCCDO placed great emphasis on developing dialogue between parents, schools and the education bureaus. One of the princi-

pal ways of doing this was through parents leading by example.

Many of the activities undertaken by the SACs involve parents and children contributing time and money or securing financial contributions from other members of the community. The direct involvement of SAC members in the improvement of schools served to establish a healthy dialogue with school teachers, heads and education bureau officials. Fostering a partnership culture instead of a blame culture, the SAC process

emphasises the need for all stakeholders to work together to improve school performance. Following the initial dialogue a memorandum of understanding was established by the SACs and local government helping to define their roles and responsibilities.

Throughout the seminar, each of the SACs presented their accomplishments and discussed their challenges and failures. The following are excerpts from the discussions that took place.

### Bahir Dar SAC

As with the other SACs attending the meeting, the Bahir Dar SAC gained inspiration from their visit to one of the best schools in Ethiopia in Harar. Following the visit it selected two schools in its region to become models using the Harar school as a template. These pilot schools will be used to inspire other schools in the area.

JeCCDO assisted the SAC with capacity building, training people in the skills required for different roles such as chairperson, treasurer, secretary etc and arranging visits to high performing schools.

The SAC obtained permission from one of their schools to open an office on school grounds. In association with the school it developed an action plan. Additional resources were identified in order to improve school performance. Through discussion with the education bureau and school the SAC acknowledged that the bureau does not, at present, have the additional resources required. Given the urgency of the need to improve standards the SAC contacted the local air force base in Bahir Dar and through them secured help with funding.

SAC members observed significant change in attitude amongst teachers in the schools where SAC operates.



Salem Behailu tells Sisay Getachew she is reading poetry.  
Salem aspires to be a doctor when she is older.

When asked why this was the teachers attributed this to the renewed focus on improvement brought by the SAC as well as the interest and respect SAC members have shown for the teaching profession. The SAC stated that teachers believe they now have an ally for change and development.

Examples of change brought about by this new partnership include;

- suggestion boxes in schools. For the first time children were encouraged to develop their vision of what they want their schools to be like in the future.
- information committees were established in each village where the SAC works. Their committees' role is to give parents more information about school issues and the progress of their children. There are promising signs that this initiative is helping to

lower the drop out rate. This new avenue of communication has helped to reengage parents and many, for the first time, have started to discuss their children's performance in school.

Through this engagement parents have started to make financial contributions and some unable to afford money have contributed their labour to their children's school.

Following implementation of the plan schools now consider SAC as a key partner, enabling them to monitor and improve themselves. In addition schools now develop teaching schedules after discussion with the SAC.

One of the schools chosen by the SAC to work with had the worst performance of all 81 schools in the region. Today, it is one of the best performing schools in the area

## *Bishoftu SAC*

The Bishoftu SAC outlined a series of targets they agreed with the school

-after one year reduce physical punishment by 100%

-improve the school environment by 50%

-reduce sexual harassment by 60% and achieve this through working with the Police and the city administration

-improve the school library by 50%

-reduce school dropout rate by 30%

One area of concern identified through the report card exercise was that teachers were not correcting homework. A commitment from schools to rectify this has been included in the action plan developed by the SAC and school.

## *Aje SAC*

The Aje SAC reported on the following accomplishments.

- Selection of a model school - As with the other SACs Aje selected a school to be developed as a model and are working closely with the education bureau to turn it into an example for other schools in the region.
- Aje SAC have identified gender and disability as key areas . 'In rural areas most people see disability as a curse from God. We

are working to change this in schools and with parents.'

- The Aje SAC established children's clubs in order for children to talk about issues of concern. For example girl's clubs help girls to talk about the problems they face with teachers who may give boys more attention. The SAC then brings teachers and clubs together to find solutions.
- Through discussion with children about the problems that poorer children face the better off

children in the school contributed pocket money to help those children poorer than themselves.

- Aje SAC has established a school council to give a collective voice to children as a means to influence the school administration. For example the school council voted in favour of children establishing appropriate forms of punishment as an alternative to corporal punishment. This issue was discussed with the school authorities and the idea has been implemented.

**'This is a sign that everybody has a part to play. We are all part of the solution, nobody can ignore the problem.'** – Aje SAC member



### *The Aje Education Bureau:*

The education bureau representative from Aje made the following comments about the SAC.

'The SAC acts as a bridge between the community and the education bureau, they show us where the gaps are and we talk together to establish a way forward.'

We have increased the resources for disabled children as a result of discussion with the SAC. Before we could ignore this problem, now we can't. We have to be in line with the principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are now planning a class for children with hearing difficulties.'

## *Shashemenie SAC*

The Shashemenie SAC reported a series of achievements made during a twelve month period.

The local education bureau committed to replicating the Harar model school and to get a school in Shashemenie to the same standard in

1 year.

The SAC convinced teachers to provide extra tutorial classes for free. Children in Ethiopia only receive half a day of education.

SAC collected school equipment for

the most vulnerable/poor children from donations from private businesses. It also introduced positive competition amongst children, parents and teachers in order to encourage personal and professional improvement.

# *Poverty Action Network of Civil Society Organisations in Ethiopia (PANE)*

The Director of PANE attended the seminar and represented the the World Bank PBS programme.

'We appreciate the education bureaus participation in this event and also in the SAC process. It shows they are not afraid to speak openly and are not afraid of criticism. This is a new thing in Ethiopia and must be encouraged.'

'It is possible to roll out JeCCDO's model in other areas, even to include the police in social accountability, this will help the government to be more efficient and effective.'

'JeCCDO is the first organisation to use the Citizen Report Card method in this way in Ethiopia.'



The director of PANE addressing the seminar

The success of this will encourage government to use the CRC in other areas of civil society.'

'JeCCDO is shifting the culture in Ethiopia toward community participation with service providers through such activities as participatory budgeting and management through SAC representatives sitting on school management boards.'

'The main point about social accountability is to ensure government is providing the right services within its existing resources.'

'Social accountability does not only include the government it includes everybody in society.'

## *Dire Dawa Education Bureau*

'We are committed to working with the SAC as a key partner: to improve the quality of education. Will work with the SAC to take forward school improvement plans. Before the SAC we did not have a clear strategy, we see that working with parents and schools is the best way, it is not easy but it is the best way.'

## **Partners for Change: SMCF & JeCCDO**

**3rd Floor, Downstream Building  
1 London Bridge  
London SE1 9BG**

**Tel: 020 7022 1860**

**Ext: 1861**

**E-mail: [info@smcfethiopia.org](mailto:info@smcfethiopia.org)**

**Find us on:**

**Web: [www.smcfethiopia.org](http://www.smcfethiopia.org)**

**[www.twenty5ethiopia.org](http://www.twenty5ethiopia.org)**

**Twitter: [SMCF Ethiopia](#)**

**Facebook: [Twenty5 Ethiopia](#)**

