

**Indigenization of Early Childhood Care and Development  
and the role of civic societies in Ethiopia**

**Final Research Report**

*A Research Report of the Norad Sponsored Project*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

‘Early childhood’ is understood as the period below the age of 8 years (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005: 2). Experiences, services and support to this group of children are known by different names internationally and nationally<sup>1</sup>. ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’ (ECCE) is an umbrella term used in the Jomtien declaration, the Dakar framework of Action, and the EFA GMR Strong Foundation (UNESCO, 2002) for all interventions with children up to eight years (Britto et al., 2012 in UNESCO, 2002). The concept is understood to entail a holistic, integrated, comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and child-centered approach (UNESCO, 2006) to policy formulation, activity programming and service provision addressing health, nutrition, and educational needs of children, their parents and caregivers (MoH, MoWA, MoH, 2010a). It generally contributes to children’s survival, development and learning in formal, organized and sustained center-based settings like “Day Care Centres”, “Kindergarten Schools”, and “Nursery Schools” (UNESCO ICBA,2010) as well as informal and non-formal (home and community) settings. It specifically encompasses (1) education related to basic learning skills (like pre-reading, pre-writing, pre-counting, and pre-arithmetic), (2) basic life skills (such as hand washing, good eating habits), (3) health care services (like supplementary nutrition, immunization), (4) monitoring growth and development of children with the participation of health workers, teachers, parents/ care givers, and (5) protection services for children from various types of violations and abuses (Delaney, 2012; DEP, 2001; UNESCO, 2006, 2010; MoH, 2006). Conceived with the objective of enabling all children (age’s birth to 8 years) develop and learn to full potential through effective support, ECCE bears the specific objectives of ensuring that parents and guardians have the attitudes, skills and knowledge to support the development (including care, learning, and protection) of children, that children aged 4-6 years are participating in programs that promote cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, that effective school and community support are in place to ensure successful transitions to primary school, and that collective actions take place at community, districts and national level meets the development needs of 0- 8 year- old children (MoE, MoWA, & MoH, 201a,b,c; PIE, 2013).

Provision of quality ECCE programs is based on the following assumptions

1. ECCE quality programs are embedded within the communities themselves. Hence, there is much strength within the communities that would give essence to quality ECCE. A preschool that is embedded within the community set up would entail a less westernized preschool profile and resources, an ECCE that is less costly in terms of design and conduct, more

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<sup>1</sup>“Early childhood care”, “early childhood care and development”, “early childhood care and education”, “early childhood development”, “early childhood education”, “early childhood intervention,” and “early childhood services” (Britto et al., 2012 in UNESCO, 2002) are some of these terms. This early years’ program has been designated with other different names being used interchangeably in Ethiopia: Pre-school education, KG, and preprimary education (UNESCO IBE, 2006). The term pre-primary is recently used as a more generic term consisting of daycare services (for those less than 3 years), KG or preschool education (for 4 to 6 years), zero-class (for 5 to 6 years), and child to child services (see EMIS, 2012; EMIS, 2013 ).

accessible to the greater majority, more relevant and useful to the children and to the nation, more able to mobilize community resources, and ensure its sustainability in the long run.

2. It has been common to talk about the problems of ECCE in Ethiopia. For example, it is said that children's everyday lives are characterized by malnutrition, poor health conditions, and lack of adequate education; preschool education of children in the early childhood have been left to NGO's and private investors, and only 2.7% of the Children have access to early childhood care and education (Tefera, et al, 2010; Pells, K. & Woodhead, M., 2014). This approach has limited the involvement of the efforts of various ECCD research and intervention activities to early psychosocial care in the homes of several disadvantaged families, orphanages and preschools of Ethiopia ( Klein, et al, 1997; Henning, et al, 2002)'. It has also limited the policies and practices aimed to support young children and their families living in poverty core challenges in order to fulfill children's rights" (Kjorholt, 2011: 1).
3. The call for increased public investment in Early Childhood Development as a strategic contribution to sustainable national development rests not only on the premise that early childhood is a period of human life in which the quality of development is likely to have significant long-term consequences for society, but also on the premise that specifiable types of intervention can reliably influence the quality of development in early childhood in a positive direction (Serpell 2009). And "most of the research evidence available to support these premises was generated outside the African continent with little or no attention to the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Africans" (Serpell, 2009:1)
4. The distinguished African developmental scholar, Bame Nsamenang (2012: 93) noted that in research designed to fill this gap, "we need to focus research attention on the agentive strategies with which African children navigate the harsh realities of their circumstances to survive and make progress on their own devices! The evidence for such agency is more evident within African family traditions and peer cultures than in the school or formal institutional education, though versions of it are to be found therein; they remain mostly unexploited, however. The largely ignored ingenuities that underwrite indigenous African craft and art work have their origins in such inventive agency, but spuriously adopted colonial school curricula, research agendas and policy development in much of Africa have hitherto ignored its potentially transformative processes and outcomes." Furthermore, the distinguished, late, African ethnomusicologist, Mapopa Mtonga (2012) has analysed and interpreted the indigenous Chewa and Tumbuka texts of more than 100 different children's songs and games observed in the 1980s in rural areas of Zambia's Eastern Province as well as urban areas. Close analysis of specific examples illustrates how these "games help children to think, intellectualize or discuss their own activities, and explore the world around them". Mtonga further emphasised that in the Chewa cultural tradition, "play and games also have a role in responsibility training and general socialisation. It has been observed in this study that in most traditional African societies they formed part of the indigenous education which was a life-long process of learning and acquiring knowledge."
5. Serpell (2009) reviewed a series of programmatic inquiries conducted in Zambia between 1971 and 2009 that have generated significant African contributions to developmental science, and reviewed the implications of this and other African research for the design of

ECD services in rural African communities. He outlined four principles of good practice that appear to have been largely neglected (and, in some cases, deliberately violated) by current ECCE programs for children of rural African communities:

- a. Use of an indigenous language familiar to the enrolled young children
  - b. Use of indigenous cultural games familiar to local adult family members/caregivers
  - c. Child-to-Child: involvement within the programs of preadolescent children of school-going age
  - d. Inclusion of children with moderate and/or severe developmental disabilities among the young children enrolled in the programs
6. Socio-culturally and historically informed research has shown that the elders of rural communities often hold social capital that is made available to children through the community's indigenous socialization practices, and that this social capital can be mobilized as a resource for effective and relevant education by recruiting participation in school activities by grandparents of the children enrolled and other community elders (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Moll et al 1992). Attempts to tap into this potential have seldom been made in standard ECCE programs in Africa. But a small number of programs addressed to the needs of orphans in Southern Africa have adopted with some success the strategy of working with grandmothers as key community resource persons for the care of the growing number orphans and vulnerable children in rural communities as a result of the HIV and AIDS pandemic (reference needed). Thus, we consider the **recruitment of grandmothers to contribute to ECCE programs through activities such as story-telling** to be a potentially valuable addition to the portfolio of intervention strategies for the promotion of ECCE in rural African communities, that could help to strengthen the connections between young children's home and school environments, and to build the confidence of those communities in the local cultural relevance of the services offered by NGOs.
7. Matafwali (2008) conducted a survey of six ECD programs offered by NGOs in rural Zambian communities spread across four provinces. While the quality of education offered varied across the sites, it was noted that not one of them incorporated either of the first two optimal design features listed above:
- a. use of an indigenous language familiar to the enrolled young children
  - b. use of indigenous cultural games familiar to local adult family members/caregivers
8. Reflecting on this anomaly, we note that
- a. the inspiration for ECCE programs in almost all African countries has come from societies outside the continent, primarily those known variously as "the West", "the global North", or the NoWeMics (Northern, Western, More Industrialised countries). The practices of ECCE in those foreign societies have a history that is deeply embedded in Western culture and their design reflects both scientifically validated and non-scientific,

conventionally accepted assumptions about child development and the best ways of promoting, supporting and nurturing its achievement of socially agreed goals.

- b. As with other sociocultural practices adopted by African societies from the NoWeMics, the rationale of public policy in many African societies is closely tied to the agendas of national development and progressive social change. For many educational and health service professionals those agendas tend to be interpreted as part of a broader agenda of modernization, which in turn is conceptualized as more or less equivalent to Westernization. Thus schools are understood as imparting to their students' knowledge and skills that derive from Western culture and that are not widely accessible to the indigenous adult population of African communities, especially those located in rural areas. Professionals embarking on the establishment and operation of ECCE services in Africa, especially in rural areas, therefore often believe that the best design to adopt will be a close replica of practices they have observed or read about in European or North American centers.
  - c. However, that kind of strategy overlooks the following facts:
    - (i) The socially agreed goals of child rearing in a rural African community, and indeed those expressed in an African nation's public policy may differ in significant respects from the child-rearing goals of a European or North-American community or national government.
    - (ii) The particular practices followed in NoWeMic ECCE centres may be so culturally alien to a rural African community that to introduce them as exact "nominally equivalent" replicas is liable to be incomprehensible and/or offensive to the parents and other caregivers of the children enrolled, thus fomenting a process of alienation for the children between the demands of their everyday family lives and the ECCE centre curriculum.
9. We are therefore of the opinion that, when a NoWeMic practice is considered for adoption in an ECCE program designed for the children of a low-income, rural African community, the design should consider carefully
- (a) the question of whether the goals towards which the practice is aimed are consistent with the local community's cultural values (eg is the goal of promoting 5-7 year-old children's verbal assertion of their personal interests and desires consistent with the child-rearing norms and values of a rural African community?)
  - (b) whether the function envisaged for the practice in its context of origin will be well served by introducing a nominally equivalent replica in the current, rural African context, or whether a nominally different practice may serve that function better in this context (e.g. will the function of promoting cognitive or moral development envisaged by English and American preschools for English storytelling be well served by telling those same English stories in a rural African ECCE centre or would those functions (of promoting cognitive or moral development) be better served in

this contest by telling the children African stories in the local language used in their homes ?

10. ECCD programs have been initiated by such NGO's as Save the Children Norway (SCN), Plan, and UNICEF, and interventions referring to nutrition, health, care and/or education have been offered in their various magnitudes and as per the priority given to each. However, the extent to which the activities of these aforementioned NGOs, have met the developmental needs of the children and consequently improved access to quality care and education have not been well assessed and documented. More importantly, the role they play in ensuring quality and sustainability of ECCE programs through promoting their indigenization either directly and indirectly has not been explored.
11. There is, therefore, a need to explore understandings among stakeholders, current ECCE practices and potentialities of ECCE stakeholders in designing and conducting locally relevant ECCE centers.

The aim of this project is to explore how ECCEs are indigenized and the role civic societies have been playing in this indigenization process.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW ON ECCE IN ETHIOPIA: PAST AND PRESENT**

### **2.1.A brief history of ECCE**

Ethiopia is a country with a longer history of early years' indigenous education. Rooted in the traditional Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Pankhurst, 1955), this education begun with the introduction of Christianity as early as 4<sup>th</sup> c. (Bowen & Horn, 1976; Pankhurst, 1990). This early education was recognized, for example, in the works of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopian philosophers, Zär'a Ya'aqob and his disciple Wäldä Haywat (Sumner, 1992), writing about their early years' education, their advises to parents about its importance and how to do it. Evidences indicate that at least male children were able to attend priest school education to learn reading scriptural literature (Negash, 1996). Many such schools function to this date, thus forming one of the oldest continuous systems of education in the world (Wagaw, 1979). Following the expansion of Islam along the western and northern Africa, Islamic education was also introduced in Ethiopia in the 7<sup>th</sup>c resulting in the opening of Quranic schools that teach early Arabic reading to Muslim children (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh, & Ekkehard, 2006). The evangelical movement in Ethiopia, particularly in the Southern and western Ethiopia, has also contributed to early childhood education in its own way. Onesimos Nassib was one of the vitally accomplished personality for the development of modern education in Ethiopia. Highly learned in Christian education and leadership in Sweden, Onesimos is best remembered for his monumental work of translation of the holy bible into Afan Oromo. He has played different roles not only in the evangelical movement but also in expanding modern education in Ethiopia. For example, he served as a teacher for many years in Massawa, Wollega, and Addis Ababa. Besides, he also laid



the very foundation of the Oromo literature in publishing primary reading materials for common people and children, opened primary schools in wollega and taught children with mother tongue, contributed a lot for the built of a hospital at Nekemte, which is very important for childcare and mothers' health (in Tesema, 2013).

In fact, the first modern preschool (kindergarten) was established in Dire Dawa (a town in the eastern part of the Country) for the children of French consultants who were helping build the first railroad in Ethiopia (Demeke, 2003); eight years prior to the first public school. Years later a number of other private pre-schools were gradually started attached to such other foreign-based educational institutions as the English School, the German School, the Lycee Gebre Mariam...and give services for children of the well-to-do parents in Addis Ababa. However, modern preschool as a general public service began in August 1963, with pilot projects established at the Community Centers in Ras Desta Sefer (Addis Ababa), Debre Zeit, Debre Berhan, Awassa and Asmara under the then Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (MNCDSA Report, 1972). Foreign nationals, mainly Swedish and American Peace Corp Volunteers, were the ones who ran these Centers. When these volunteers left for their country, the program was taken over by Women Village Level Workers who were not specifically trained for preschool. By the year 1972, there were more than 30 privately owned preschools mostly in the Addis Ababa area; and 30 preschools in both rural and urban areas sponsored by the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (MNCDSA, 1972) and headed by Village Level Workers. The need to strengthen the preschools run by the Village Level Workers, and expanding such services to other more areas became a matter of necessity. Accordingly, the MNCDSA took up an immediate task of training preschool workers and supervisors, by establishing an ongoing training program. Pursuant of these efforts, a six-month training program was established in December 6, 1971 at the Ras Desta Sefer Community Center in Addis Ababa.

These inspiring efforts laid an important foundation for ECCE in Ethiopia. In fact, the expansion of such kindergartens was very slow. For example, from 1908-1974, only 77 kindergartens were established allowing space only for 7,573 out of 3.5 million children age 4-6 (NCC, 1974a E.C.). Moreover, although the largest population of children lived in rural areas of Ethiopia, these kindergartens were limited nearly exclusively to urban areas of the Country and were run by missionaries, private organizations and Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs. Surprisingly, the Ministry of Education did not pay much attention to early childhood education during this time, since the government had a rather acute need for preparing quickly literate adults who could run its expanding modern offices (Demeke, 2003).

The 1974 socialist revolution rather seemed to herald remarkable development in the history of early childhood education in Ethiopia. It was felt that the success of the revolution wouldn't be possible without the full participation of women in the public spheres and this has resulted in establishment of many childcare centers and kindergartens to free them from routine home chores including childcare. Accordingly, there has been a tremendous rise in the number of KGs as well as enrollment of children from only 77 KGs accommodating 7, 573 before the revolution to a total of 912 KGs with 103,000 children after the revolution. During this period, major changes also emerged in the expansion of preschools location-wise; a tendency to move towards the rural areas along the then National Literacy Campaign (MoLSA & MoE, 1982 E.C). Moreover,

for the first time in the history of the Country, preschool education became part of the national education policy (NCC, 1974 E.C.) having its own national preschool curriculum. Professional preparation of teachers began almost a decade after in 1986. That is, with the support of UNICEF, Menen Preschool Teacher Training Center was established in Addis Ababa. In addition to these major changes, three separate departments were established within the new Ministry of Education each taking charge of training of teachers, curriculum and textbooks preparation, and supervision and evaluation of preschool programs.

With the fall of the Socialist regime, the Ministry of Education of the present Government came up with a different view. In one of its documents, it states the position of the Government regarding preschool education, "Even though the importance of preschool education is believed to be tremendous...it may not be an absolute necessity for children to pass through it... as children can get the required skill and knowledge informally from their families... pre-primary school is not a priority of the Government under the current economic status of the country. As a result, this program (i.e. programs for preschoolers) can be covered by private, public, religious and other organizations for those children whose parents can afford to send them" (MOE, 2002). This low priority of concern being the reality on the part of the Government, a number of preschools, however, begun slowly emerging particularly in urban areas but supported primarily through non-governmental organizations, private individuals, religious institutions and other organizations. Nevertheless, only very small children were able to access such preschools, as many of them require paying tuition fees.

Such unexpected expansion of preschools in the cities sent a message to the Government that its involvement particularly in standardizing, coordinating and regulating ECCE, to say the least, is not to be postponed. The international child rights movements that came with UN CRC and 'EFA' goals also put an added pressure on the Government to show a renewed interest in early years' education.

## **2.2.Policies, Programs and Curricula of ECCE**

The international child rights movement that eventually led to the formulation of UNCRC and its endorsement by different nations (including Ethiopia) has laid a strong foundation for the design and implementation of ECCE. The first recognition of children's rights by the Government was evident in the Constitution of the country (1995) where in Article 36 it recognized the right of the child to education; though these rights didn't mention preschool education. Ethiopia's National Education and Training Policy (NETP, 1994), however, recognized preschool education and stated that it will focus on all rounded development of the child in preparation for formal schooling" (p.14)<sup>2</sup>. Following this Education and Training Policy (NETP, 1994), the Ministry of Education also developed a twenty-years (1997-2016) indicative plan in 1997 covering all levels

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<sup>2</sup>According to this Policy, kindergarten will focus on all round development of the child in preparation for formal schooling and that this education has a significant role in introducing children to basic learning skills that are needed in primary schools and enhance their chances of success in the education system. The Education and Training Policy of the government contains provisions concerning the kindergarten structure, curriculum development and teacher training programs to meet the educational needs of children. Although, only limited number of teachers are trained.

and areas of education, all tiers of governments and all forms of expenditures with the aim of improving access, quality, equity and budget at all levels of education within the country (ESDP I, 1997, ESDP II, 2002, ESDP III, 2007, and ESDP IV, 2010). While the first and second ESDP plans failed to consider ECCE as absolutely necessary, ESDP III (2005) planned to review and revise curriculum and standards, the content of the programs to be delivered, training of teachers, safety standards, and other aspects of the program. In fact, ESDP IV (2010) even came up with a better package to give meaningful space for ECCE presence including intentions for increasing expansion of ECCE.

While ESD III was under implementation, a breakthrough experience opening a glimmering opportunity for children (Boakye, 2008) was the development of the National ECCE Policy Framework (MoE, MoWA & MoH, 2010) after its “long incubation period” (Boakye, 2008) and analysis of the state of conditions of ECCE in Ethiopia. A joint task force composed of three sectoral ministries (namely Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Women’s Affairs) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU, 2010) and designed this draft National Policy document as well as two other subsequent ECCE documents: Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (MoE, MoWA, and MoH, 2010c) and Strategic Operation Plan (MoE, MoWA, and MoH, 2010 b). Although the development of ECCE policy document cannot be taken as a miraculous event but rather a natural outcome of the socio-historical events that took place domestically and globally (Boakye, 2008)<sup>3</sup> and also that the Ethiopian government had responded to the development of a policy framework long after many African countries had already developed and adopted ECD policy, this policy was of course considered as a triggering factor for ECCE to take off.

The policy framework was designed on the bases of the National Education and Training Policy, the National Health Policy, the National Nutrition Strategy and the National Policy and Legal Framework on Child Rights (MoE, MoWA, and MoH, 2010 a). The synergy among the three ministries is especially a corner stone that would enable to undertake systematic and holistic interventions. As Boakye (2008) noted such holistic approach would shift the status of early childhood care and education from “survival to development, from needs to rights, and from sector-based thinking to cross-sectional” (p.175).

The National Policy framework stipulates four basic pillars of ECD service delivery: parental education, health and early stimulation program (prenatal to 3+years), preschools: community based kindergartens (4-6+years), and community-based Non-formal school readiness programs. Play will be used as the main means of enhancing the child’s learning experiences. The mother tongue or the language spoken in the catchments area will be used as medium of teacher/caregiver-child interaction, as it is the best instrument towards realizing the full potential of the learner (Ministry of Education, 2010). The policy document stipulates that ECCE should

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<sup>3</sup>A number of push and pull factors prompted the development of the policy document. The 1998 conference by African Ministers of Education (UNESCO, 1998), the steady and unprecedented support given by development partners such as the UNICEF and the World Bank to the sector created sense of urgency in Ethiopia to formulate sector wide and developmentally appropriate ECD policy that involved main stream ministries. The crisis Ethiopian education system is facing in terms of drop outs especially at primary level, the situation of orphans and vulnerable children for instance due to HIV/AIDS, and an obligation for the government to ensure the wellbeing and development of children in light of MDG and EFA goals are all push factors that contributed to the inception and formulation of the policy framework.

be built on four pillars<sup>4</sup>: Parental education, health and early stimulation program (prenatal to 3+ years), pre-schools: community-based kindergartens (4 -6+ years), and community based Non-formal schoolsreadiness. (MoE, MoWA, and MoH, 2010, p. 1).

Although the ECCE Policy may be an encounter of more recent developments, the curriculum has in fact made its presence long before the policy. The first ECCE curriculum was put in place in 1973 E.C (MoE, 1973 E.C.). This curriculum was comprised of seven subjects<sup>5</sup> that enhance the child's development<sup>6</sup>. Because the curriculum was developed during the Socialist regime, the objectives of the curriculum emphasized building socialist character rather than individualistic ones. The implementation of this curriculum in Addis Ababa was evaluated (Bizunesh, 1983) and subsequent revision was made hopefully accommodating the outcomes of this evaluation. The revised curriculum for pre-school education (1999) suggested that the assessment process in pre-schools should not be carried out only by the main pre-school teacher but in collaboration with the assistant teachers and parents. This curriculum served for 9 years and then was revised in 2006 (that is, MoE, Ginbot 1998 E.C.). Strictly speaking, this curriculum is not a new one; it is rather a revised version of the first ECCE curriculum. This second edition comprised five subjects instead of seven<sup>7</sup>. Acknowledging that play had previously been offered independently, the second edition had also incorporated it in each subject<sup>8</sup>. However, this curriculum was discipline-based and fitted more to children above preschool, and didn't meet preschoolers' interest to learn and learning styles and teaching methods (MoE, 2009). Hence, it was revised three years later in 2009. In the curriculum developed in 2009 (MoE, Ginbot 2001 E.C.), a new and more child-friendly approach was followed. This curriculum was comprised of learning domains that are developmentally organized, integrated, competence-based, and employed participatory methods<sup>9</sup>. This effort exerted by the Ministry of Education to design curriculum and ensure uniformity in the implementation of ECCE in the country has been encouraging. However, daily observations and experience indicate that there are dissimilarities among the curricula used by preschools/ kindergartens such that some preschools particularly those in the private sector were found rather using foreign curricula than MoE's (MOE, 2006).

Having designed ECCE curricula materials, the Ministry of Education has also set out standards for implementing and monitoring ECCE at different periods<sup>10</sup>. The first ECCE standard was

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<sup>5</sup>*These subjects include language (mother tongue), mathematics, environmental education, daily life skills, manual work, physical education, and music.*

<sup>6</sup>*The objectives of the curriculum were to enhance the child's sense organs, to improve the child's language and help him to express himself/herself freely, to lay the ground work of discipline, social work, and taking responsibility, and to inculcate in the child the concepts of patriotism and sacrifice.*

<sup>7</sup>*These five subjects are Amharic, English, Mathematics, Environmental Science, and Aesthetics & physical education.*

<sup>8</sup>*In general, the second edition clearly put that play should be an important feature of the curriculum in general and each and every syllabus in particular. It also gave recognition to the role of teachers in diversifying the use of play in implementing the curriculum. Teachers could add plays other than the ones included in the subjects as the latter could not be enough given the age of the children (see Ministry of Education, MOE, 2006).*

<sup>9</sup>*Contents were organized under five chapters: physical, motor, and sensuous development; social and interpersonal development; language use and development; development of understanding mathematical concepts, and understanding the environment.*

<sup>10</sup>*Such standards specify aims and meanings, administrative structure, norms and rules, personnel and their respective duties and responsibilities, and requirements of a proper KG etc. with the purpose of making services to*

issued during the socialist regime (NCC, 1974b E.C.) along with a preschool education teachers' guide (NCC 1974 E.C.b.). The next standard for preschool (or kindergarten) program and primary education was published in 1995 (MoE, 1995), a year after the issuance of the education and training policy . According to the description included in the introductory section, “the standard was prepared to implement the teaching learning process based on the new education and training policy (p. 3).” This standard generally presents detailed set of requirements that the Ministry of Education expects to see in any kindergarten or preschool<sup>11</sup>.

### 2.3. ECCE research and lessons

ECCE in Ethiopia has attracted different research investigations from government organizations, non-government agencies, and professionals both nationally and internationally, independently and jointly. Some of these studies were conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA and doctoral degrees in psychology, special needs education, and education. This issue of early years' education was also felt so important that government, non-government, and professional associations were found organizing conferences exclusively devoted to discussing scientific papers in ECCE. In the 1980s, for example, the National Children's Commission (1974a E.C.) has organized a national seminar on Ethiopian children, their developmental needs, basic services provided, and problems experienced. In the early 2000s, the Ethiopian Psychologists' Association had devoted its Seventh National Conference exclusively to child rights, childhood education and the use of mother tongue in schools with an attempt to bring to light the westernization of childhood issues in Ethiopia and the need to take an inward looking approach to reconstructing the Ethiopian child. In about the same time, ANPPCAN Ethiopia (2009), in collaboration with the head quarter, also devoted its 6<sup>th</sup> African conference of Child Abuse and Neglect to Early Childhood Development and Education whereby African experiences were brought to the fore through different scientific papers.

Some of these published and unpublished conference, academic, and practitioners' study reports are thematically organized and presented only to give a bird's eye-view. We may begin with studies that focused on history (Demeke, 2003, 2007; Hoot et al., 2006), philosophy (Demeke, 2003), and traditional intervention practices (Demeke, 2007) of early years' education in Ethiopia. More extensive and recurring theme rather pertains to the status, situation, or practices

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*children uniform across KGs in the country and ensure their qualities, as well as enabling stakeholders understand their duties and responsibilities.*

<sup>11</sup>*The standard set by the Ministry of Education for preschools specifies that kindergarten program is a two-year preschool program that serves children between the ages of four and six. It also indicates that kindergartens serve children with and without special needs at two levels: level one for children 4-5 years old and level two for children 5-6 years old. According to the standard, one preschool program year (calendar) extends in the range of 203-206 working days divided in two semesters. Furthermore, the length of a period is 25 minutes (for children aged 4-5 years) or 30 minutes (for children aged 5-6 years old). Moreover, the standard describes the requirements pertaining to the preschool environment, size of the compound and classrooms, facilities, offices, toilets, dining room, kitchen, first aid kit, etc. The standard further describes play and educational materials necessary for preschool program. In sum, the standard describes many important elements that need to be fulfilled by kindergartens. This standard was also revised in 2009 (MoE, 2001 E.C.) making it more compatible to the new ECCE policy.*

of early childhood education during the socialist regime (MoE, 1971 E.C.; 1995a; MoLSA & MoE, 1982 E.C; Habtamu, 1996), after this regime (Hoot et al., 2006; UNESCO, 2006; Teferra et al., 2007; Tirussew, 2007; Tirussew et al., 2009) and most recently (Sophia, 2014) in Ethiopia in general and in Addis Ababa (1978 E.C., Hailesellasiye, 1979 E.C), Robe (Tesema, 2012), Nekemte (Dinke, 2014), and the Guji People (Tadesse, 2014) in particular. Other related studies were rapid assessment (PIE, 2011a; 2011b) and baseline study (PIE, 2013) of ECCE in Klinto Woreda, educational opportunities of pre-school age children in Addis Ababa (Dereje, 1994), and educational and health hazards among young children of the Argoba communities in five administrative regions (Assefa, 2009).

Quality concerns of ECCE were also addressed in different ways: quality (Tirussew, 1998; Fantahun, 2013; Girma, 2014; Orkin et al., 2012; Woodhead et al. 2009) and equity (Woodhead et al. 2009) of early years education, in low-resource settings (Orkin et al., 2012), and as related to psychosocial interventions (Tirussew, 1998), child labor (Tirussew et al., 2001), peace and human rights (Bizunesh et al.), cognitive (Tassew, 2011; Fantahun, 2013) and socio-emotional development of children (Girma, 2014), and improving basic education (FET, 2014).

ECCE has still been an area of more focused studies that included Kindergarten curriculum implementation (Bizunesh, 1983), preschool educational programs (Tirussew, 1979), basic education services (KES, 2012), organization and leadership of preschool education (Eleni, 1980 E.C.), early childhood teacher education policy (Hoot et al., 2006), teacher issues and policy recommendations (UNESCO-IICBA. 2010), ways forward for early learning in Ethiopia (Young Lives, 2012), feasibility study for the implementation of the early childhood care and education policy framework (Britto et al. 2012). Mother-child relational behaviors (Teka, 1996), and behavior management practices (Tsehay, 2013) were some of studies that examined the communicative aspect of the child and caregivers. Preschool material production (Alasebu, 1981), children's literature (Azeb, 1982; Zerihun, 1996; Dereje, 2005), preschool children's vocabulary (Elias, 1995) and use of mother tongue education (Alem, 2007) were concerns voiced since the time ECCE was taking shape in Ethiopia. Some new initiatives for promoting school readiness: a child-to-child approach in Ethiopia (Maekelech, 2009)

Finally, a limited number of research also dealt with experiences of different non-governmental organizations: experiences of Save the Children Alliance (Ambachew, 2003), community-based organizations in ECCE provision (APAP & FEAT, un), major problems of a failing but innovated community-based preschool program in rural Ethiopia (Demissie, 1996), and best practices on community-based early childhood development program in Ada'a Woreda (Desta & Azmeraw, 2009)

Research investigations conducted in ECCE above have generally pinpointed the distinctive features, concerns and opportunities of ECCE in Ethiopia with direct and indirect reference to access, equity, quality, and relevance.

Recently, pre-primary education in Ethiopia is conducted through three modalities (preschool, Zero class, and Child-to-Child); thus improving the General Gross Enrollment from 2.1 % in 1990- at the time the present government ascended to power (EMIS, 1990)- to a total of 26% in 2013 (EMIS, 2013). Yet, coverage is quite small compared to millions of underserved children particularly in the rural areas (Young Lives, 2012) and the urban poor (Tirussew et al., 2007;

UNESCO, 2006). Preschools are nearly non-existent in rural areas, few children (males) may have access to traditional schools (Tirussew, 2007), while many others engage in work (Young Lives, 2012) with little time left for education. In the urban centers, too, private ECCE is accessible only to very few wealthy families. The majority of urban families are unable to meet the expenses of private school education. The option available for them was enrolling their children in government-subsidized centers (Tirussew et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2006). However, these community ECCE centers that mushroomed in the mid-1980s and were easily accessible and affordable for the low income families were dwindling rapidly because of financial setback resulting in a very low salary rate as well as scarcity of resources (Tirussew, 2007). These centers were almost vanished and now Zero classes seem operating instead. Experiences in other African nations (e.g. Kenya) have also shown that the introduction of Zero classes was noted yielding certain negative/unintended outcomes including extinction of community based ECD centers (Mhangami, 2009). In the same way, the expansion of Zero classes in Ethiopia at the moment may further weaken the traditional priest and Quranic schools.

The need for establishing nursery in every kebele for children of age 3 years and below was stressed even in studies as early as 1978/9 (MoE, 1971 E.C.). However, education and care for children under the age of three years are still left to parents (UNESCO, 2006) because most available programs are limited to children with ages 4-6 years (Tirussew et al., 2007). In fact, recent developments are witnessing an emerging expansion of daycare services for children less than 3 years in Addis Ababa (Belay & Hawaz, 2015; Hawaz, 2012; Martha, 2013) and parents were happy about the services (Martha, 2013); although such services retain certain problems (Belay & Hawaz, 2015; Hawaz, 2012).

A number of early childhood care and education centers here in the capital and the regions especially in the urban areas claim that their programs are crafted along the Montessori approach. It is not clear to what extent the physical environment and processes in these centers are contributing to these aspects of development in a natural and orderly manner. Apart from the use of different curricula in preschools (or kindergartens), the social and cultural relevance of the curriculum and its developmental appropriateness to the target children has been a point of concern (Tirussew et al., 2007; Demeke, 2007). Most private preschools use curriculum borrowed from other countries (like India, England, and America) and none of the elements reflect the Ethiopian culture and tradition (Demeke, 2007).

Many preschools resorted to Indian and European books possibly because culturally relevant storybooks maybe unavailable in Ethiopia. Paradoxically, the classroom is far removed from modern pedagogy because practices are too often focused on teaching the children formal/academic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic exercises, and not structured and managed to addressing the rights of the child to holistic development; psychosocial aspects of care, health and nutrition and related other needs are not taken care of (Habtamu, 1996; Tirussew, 1979; Tirussew, 1998).

The ECCE standard used to gauge the implementation of EEC policy and curriculum reflect the requirements of preschools in advanced countries and hence only few preschools meet the expectations (UNESCO Cluster Office Addis Ababa, 2006, P. 11). Obviously, the standard doesn't give recognition to traditional schools. It is also our concern that the standard rather marginalizes indigenous resources because quality is defined in terms of external standards. The

use of English as a medium of instruction beginning from preschools has still been a major barrier at indigenizing the ECCE program in Ethiopia (Alem, 2007; Demeke, 2007).

## 2.4.Civic societies in ECCE provision in Ethiopia

There are divergent conceptions of ‘civic society’ in international legal instruments as well as in relevant literature (Sebastian et al., 2002). Putting some of these views together, we may describe it as non-political (in Kassahun, 2002, p. 122), non-profitable (Anton, 2007), complex and dynamic ensemble (John, 2009) of autonomous, voluntary, formal (Dessalegn, 2002), and legally protected nongovernmental institutions (John, 2009) organized at local, national or international level (Anton, 2007) with resources dependent on donations partially or fully (in Anton, 2007) in addition to voluntary services. Occupying the space of intermediary between the states, on the one hand, and the lowest unit of social life, the family, on the other (in Masresha, 2013, p.10), civil societies articulate interests of and provide basic services to individuals, groups, and communities (Anton, 2007) or undertake community development (Dessalegn, 2002); pursue activities to resolve suffering, promote the interest of the poor, protect the environment (Anton, 2007); promote the broad interests of their constituencies; put demands on the state for goods and services; help to extend the social space between the state and the individual (Masresha, 2013, p.10); follow nonviolent, self-organizing, and self-reflexive approaches, and tend to be permanently in tension both with each other and with the governmental institutions that frame, constrict and enable their activities (John, 2009). Accordingly, civil society organizations in Ethiopia include NGOs, advocacy organizations, professional associations, cooperatives, trade unions, religious organizations, community-based organizations like Idir, and independent press (in Masresha, 2013, p.10).

Civic societies play a critical role, along with the government, in the design of ECCE policies and programs that create a foundation of support for children, their caregivers, and the community. They are, more specifically, expected to undertake on community empowerment and advocacy for execution of existing laws and formulation of clear policies on ECCE, work with children to promoting their identities, engage stakeholders in ECCE, initiate and support child protection programs, build bridges and create networks, with other development organizations for sharing information and good practices, promote inter-sectoral collaboration, initiate a communication strategy for tracking and documenting the contribution and role of different service providers in ECCE, and design a mechanism of continued dialogue and joint monitoring and evaluation issues of ECDE (Benda, 2009).

In Ethiopia<sup>12</sup>, about 2,695 civil societies and charities were registered at the federal level as per the new CSO Law in 2011/12 implementing a total of 5,709 projects in 2011 ( of which 357

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<sup>12</sup> *The emergence of civic societies, mainly Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), in Ethiopia was largely traced back to the 1974 famine that urged some NGOs to come in with food aid and rehabilitation programs. These NGOs continued to have much larger presence in Ethiopia following the 1984 drought. The number of NGOs has gradually increased since then, and their intervention areas have also been expanded to provision of basic services including education, livelihood, health and nutrition, capacity building, and development of infrastructure. NGO directions were further oriented to long-term development endeavors following the global strategic change as well as the Ethiopian government’s response to such changes by drafting a new CSO law. A number of INGOs were therefore required to register as long term development partners working to create sustainable community development by promoting capacity building and self-reliance.*



were professional association, 395 Agriculture, 420 environmental protection, 531 capacity building, 640 social support, 754 Education, 986 Child Affairs, 1626 health) (in Masresha, 2013, p.13). One can assume that many of these projects deal with ECCE. We can see from these figures that there are possibly good number of civil societies working on ECCE and, as a result, many projects must have dealt with ECCE from these figures. Evidences indicate that these CSOs generally contribute a significant share of financial resources in Ethiopia amounting to over 8% of the annual GDP of the country (World Bank, 2007); are more accessible to the poor, the marginalized, and the invisible; and are known to be more efficient and flexible than government institutions (Desalegne, 2002). Furthermore, a research conducted by the Ad Hoc CSO/NGO Task Force (Dessalegn et al., 2008) has also indicated that NGOs in Ethiopia have experimented and successfully piloted approaches and technologies which eventually came to be part of the governments' national strategies and programs in different sectors. Examples include community-based approaches to health services; alternative basic education; technologies for water-lifting and apiculture; improving access to finance and market by the rural poor and promotion of new and high-value crops and stocks. Some of these innovations contributed to areas where Ethiopia registered relatively best result towards attaining the national and Millennium Development Goals. However, Desalegne (2002) indicated that the overall impact of NGOs, measured against the resources they have mobilized, is quite disappointing. Development projects run by many NGOs have done little to improve the livelihood of the communities concerned. NGOs have been very good at emergency operations and the delivery of food aid to vulnerable populations; however their interventions in the field of development have not been equally successful. A number factor has been mentioned regarding the success and familiarity of programs implemented by NGOs. In this regard Desalegne (2002) mentioned unfriendly policy environment since 1970 has contributed to the limitations of their performance.

According to Maserash (2013), the new Ethiopian Civil society Organization Law of 2009 has in fact affected relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of programs of INGOs. Addressing the causes as well as symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalization were affected due to strategic changes. However, the new CSO law has created a foundation for citizens to take charge of their own destinies and realize their full potential through existing local resource and systems created by the community and the government at large. The law gave emphasis in putting system in place where NGOs regulate themselves and responsible for their action. It also supported organizations to be accountable, cost effective and assess previously designed activities whether suffice enough to bring the desired outputs.

When it comes to ECCE, existing few studies seem to send conflicting evidences particularly pertaining to the role of community-based organizations. Demissie (1996) investigated the NGO backed community-based preschool education programs initiated in rural Ethiopia in the 1990s and found that such initiatives were a failure. According to him, the major reasons were lack of need assessment, absence of community awareness about the significance of the program, administrative problems (like lack of bottom-top-bottom coordination of activities, inability of different parties to perform their task etc.), lack of systematic follow up during the implementation of the program, lack of community participation in the evolution and growth of the program, and roles and responsibilities of the community representatives to preschool affairs

not clearly identified. On the contrary, Desta and Azmeraw (2009)<sup>13</sup> examined the best practices of NGO supported community-based early childhood development programs in Ada'a Woreda and found that these programs have brought about significant positive impacts on target children as well as the families. These positive impacts included improved health, hygiene and nutrition of children and mothers. Besides, parents opted and practiced modern methods to traditional treatments and explicitly depicted the benefit they got from modern treatments. They have also improved feeding practices for their children in terms of quality and pattern. The intervention has also brought about improved parenting skills, increased knowledge of parents on harmful customary practices and promoting children's rights. Children's gains in both social and cognitive aspects have been significant. As rated by teachers and parents, children promoted from ECDE centers to primary schools are assertive, better in social skills, neat and clean, respectful and obedient, better in understanding classroom lessons, and active participants in classroom activities. They are self-assured, able and motivated, fast learners. Their academic and social readiness is better than their non-ECD classmates. All ECDE group has joined primary school, has better class attendance, better performance, higher pass rates, lower repetition, and dropout rates compared to their non-ECD peers.

APAP and FEAT (undated) also examined opportunities and challenges of Community Based Organizations' (CBO) involvement in the provision of ECCE in Addis Ababa. According to these organizations, the opportunities noted included the issuance of the ECCE national framework and the emphasis it gave to the role of CBOs, interest in the CBOs to engage in the service, existence of relevant technical tools and resources facilitating engagement in ECCE service delivery and existence of various modes of program implementation that take into account the existing contexts of these local institutions. Delay in establishing the ECCE governance structure, the limited efforts to popularize the policy and related frameworks at the grassroots level, the current directions by the government which ultimately result in community engagement in the administration and management of ECCE centers are found to be critical. Moreover, institutional competence of CBOs in terms of limited pragmatic experience in the field as well as inability to allocate the required resources to comply with minimum standards are also indicated as the major challenges for CBOs' participation in ECCE service delivery. Extensive engagement in community level ECCE policy awareness, strengthening governance structure at all levels, piloting CBO-managed ECCE centers, and developing the overall institutional competence of CBOs were enlisted as strategies for better CBO involvement.

## **2.5. Plan International Ethiopia (PIE) and the Save the Children Norway (SCN)**

PIE and SCN are one of the NGOs having larger presence, visibility, and publicity in Ethiopia. Both of them registered, as per the new CSO Law, as international non-governmental (community development) organizations working in partnership with local organizations to enable deprived and marginalized children, families and communities meet their basic needs. Envisioning a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation, they operate as catalysts to steer up breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. They work to promote child

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<sup>13</sup>*This study examined the best practices of Ratson-Save the Children Norway supported community-based early childhood development and education in six rural villages of Ada'a Woreda targeting 1,200 households (Desta & Azmeraw, 2009).*

survival, development, care and education, through creating child-friendly environment, building the capacity of institutions, stakeholders and partners, and delivering services to target groups<sup>14</sup>. These organizations have been active indifferent regions of Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara regions as well as the less developed regions like Afar and Gambella. In fact, there are differences in the nature, scope, partners, and beneficiaries, and durations of their programs. For example, while the ECD program in Klinto woreda, Akaki Kality sub city, Addis Ababa is one of the projects that PIE implements in collaboration with Ratson Ethiopia, SCN has been implementing ECD and basic education improvement projects, among other regions, in the Lay Armachiho woreda of the North Gondar Zone in collaboration with the Regional, Zonal, and Woreda education offices.

Klinto woreda is basically least populated, agrarian, and rural in many ways. (In fact, it has become one of Addis Ababa's most recent extensive construction sites for condominium houses and this is believed to shortly transform the area into a semi urban suburb). Teff and wheat have long been the main cereal items of the villages. The community farmers use a traditional type of farming system, individual subsistence farms and small-family mixed-farm. All farmers are engaged in rain dependent farming activities. There is no access to bring a supply of water to a dry area, especially in order to help crops grow. In addition to this, domestic animals are raised for commercial purposes. Others engage in daily labour and small commercial activities. Christianity and Islam are the main religions. The villages are home for Oromifa and Amharic speaking ethnic groups.

Plan International Ethiopia (PIE) Addis Ababa Program Unit (AAPU) had conducted a rapid assessment of the Klinto project site in 2011 so as to prepare its five years Long-Term Plan (for July 2012-June 2016). It was noted in this assessment that there were many harmful traditional practices: Abduction, rape, and FGM of girls (There were more than 10 abducted and raped cases only in 2004 E.C.), uvula cutting, tonsillectomy, milk teeth extraction. Members of the community said that they are practicing 'the Oromo culture' than practicing any other harm on their children and women.

There are no pre-primary and primary schools (except for one Government Primary school with ECCE centre) in these areas. Neither are there priest school nor a child-to child approach of learning for children to attend as an option. Therefore, children had to cover 1 ½ -2 hours of walk from home to attend school every day. Consequently, most children had to wait till they grow to be able to walk to the nearest possible school and yet to directly join formal school in an age-inappropriate manner and without preparation. Distance has been a barrier particularly to girls. Community attitudes were also deterring girls from attending school. The traditional division of labour keeps them tied to home activities. Parents had no knowledge on proper feeding and health care of their children.

Health service provision was of a very low profile-mothers delivering at home, low vaccination coverage, lack of access to safe and clean water, use of open toilets and yet health extension workers not effectively helping the people. One government owned and two private KGs available in the whole woreda. The woreda does not have information about the private KGs

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<sup>14</sup>*This information is secured from 'Save the Children' and 'Plan International Ethiopia' flyers that describe the missions, programs, goals, and approaches of the organization.*

while the government KG is closely followed up. Children with additional needs are unidentified and no data is available. No health service provision center in the woreda and hence many of the pregnant women did not deliver in health centers except in few exceptional cases; even the expanded immunization program was hardly practiced; no practice of using properly built toilets rather open defecation was common; lack of clean and safe drinking water (PIE AAPU, 2011). Moreover, Plan has also conducted a more formal and focused study on the status of early childhood care and development in Klinto Woreda a year later to establish baseline data against which it will gauge the intervention package (PIE, 2013). Status of ECD provided by parents and guardian: provision of care (no knowledge about importance of exclusive breastfeeding before six months and additional for after six months, health, nutrition, stimulation, special care for those with disabilities) and protection is substandard, children's participation in quality early learning program (no traditional centers, no ELP centers), school-community support in place to ensure successful transitions to primary schools, health extension workers and education workers lack knowledge about importance of ECD and hence parents are not getting professional support from them, GOs and NGOs actors work in partnership in the woreda to ensure development and protection of children at community, district, region, and national level.

In recognition of all the problems above, Plan Ethiopia, in association with Ratson's Women, Youth and Children Development Program, came in and launched a holistic Community Led Action for ECCD project addressing the four pillars of the National ECCE Policy (Parenting education, early learning program, Effective transition to primary school and partnership), since January 2013<sup>1</sup>. As part of this project it opened 5 preschool establishments, employed 10 facilitators, rented houses for the centres, provided all the teaching and play materials and aids and then enabled the centres function smoothly.

In a similar way, Save the Children Norway has been implementing different projects in various parts of the country including the relatively recent and comprehensive project "Improving Quality of Education Project in Amhara, Afar and SNNP regions" project part of which included establishment, strengthening, monitoring, and scale up of community-based ECCE centers. In the Amhara region, this project was implemented in all the 167 Woredas of the region since June 2010<sup>15</sup>. According to the status assessment of Early Childhood Development Pilot Project, the initiative for the project was taken for the following reasons (SCN, 2010):

- Low enrollment, high dropout and gender disparity (disfavoring girls due to child marriage and child labor) in primary schools and ABE centers calling for introduction of ECCE centers to alleviate the situation.
- Absence of ECCE centers due to lack of awareness on its importance and shortage of finance. Children's lack of access to other alternative early years' education centers. There are limited number of priest schools and Quran schools. Furthermore, the objective of these schools is to prepare children for religious purposes.

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<sup>15</sup>The components of the project are establishing model classrooms, upgrading ABE facilitators' capacity, scaling up best practices of QCEP, converting ABE centers to first cycle formal schools, upgrading first cycle primary schools to complete primary schools, strengthening Dessei Teacher Education College ECD facilitators training unit.

- ECD would reduce the burden of mothers and elder female children. It was also felt that elder girls will be relieved from caring for their young brothers and sisters and have time to go to school.
- Enrollment in ECD centers will help to improve children's health. This was felt realizable through making children exercise hand washing at critical times and using toilets, providing them de-worming tablets, etc.
- Training mothers in personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, family planning, using fuel saving devices was also felt important for the benefit of children as well as mothers.
- Teaching and learning is based on rote learning, which is not supported for practice in ECD centers.
- The scattered mode of settlement of households. Presently, smaller villages are evolving and favorable conditions are created for ECD development.

The project came into being to address these problems in the region. Lai Armachiho woreda has been one of the woredas that has benefited from the project. In this woreda alone, ten ECCE centers were established enrolling a total of about 669 children and 14 facilitators. These centers were initiated, supported, and guided by Save the Children Norway (SCN). SCN constructed buildings, supplied materials, and facilitators. Most of the facilitators had completed grades 10 and 12, and they were not supported by training with ECCE. Initially, there were 20 employed facilitators whose salaries were paid by SCN. Gradually, the Woreda administration took over the responsibility of paying the facilitators' salaries (*Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*). Currently, the screening and employment of facilitators have been taken up by the government, while SCN provides support in material provision and training (*Head, ECCE, Gondar*). Side by side, the Organization has been engaged in extended tasks of calling mothers to meetings to provide them with awareness on how to keep their children clean and healthy, and on the importance of child play that parents should heed and permit (*Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*). SCN has also highly contributed to the community's development and has registered results. For instance, it has raised community awareness on ECCE, participated in the construction of different types of buildings, indirectly served the community as it has also constructed the linking roads when building the schools, and carried out community awareness and sensitization activities. The SCN sponsored ECCE activities that started with few centers some time ago are now spread to several places. For instance, ECCE activities are being carried out in 54 of the 61 primary schools of the Woreda (*Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*)...

A midterm (KES, 2012) as well as end-term (Fromseas, 2014; KES, 2012) assessments were made to examine program effectiveness and gaps observed in the implementation processes, challenges and promising practices in the project under implementation. The midterm evaluation<sup>16</sup> outcome has indicated that the IQEP project has greatly supported the region education bureau to improve different aspects of the school environment, personnel and functioning<sup>17</sup>. One such notable improvements was that of establishing ECD facilitators' training

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<sup>16</sup>Taken from Save the Children Norway Ethiopia Education Program (2012). *Terms of Reference (ToR) to Carryout Midterm Evaluation on "Improving the quality of basic education in Amhara Region, Addis Ababa.*

<sup>17</sup>Example of changes noted include improvements in *the school environment, teachers' qualification, continuous assessment, construction of schools, upgrading ABE centers and facilitators, introducing model classes and school based action researches, etc all of which have their own contributions to quality education. School-community*

institution and associated model community-based ECCE center attached to the Dessie Teacher Education College as well as the subsequent initiative planned to scale up this innovative and measure to all the ten teacher training colleges found in different zones of the region to address the current access and quality concerns of ECCE in a sustainable manner (KES, 2012). The end line evaluation of this project was also conducted to document and learn the accomplishments, outcomes, best practices, challenges and lessons of the project and finally deduce lessons and recommendations for future project planning<sup>18</sup>. This assessment (Fromseas, 2014) indicated that the projects were relevant and timely in terms of addressing access to ECCD and quality of education, were aligned with the priorities, strategies and policies of the ECCE policy framework, were effective in terms of meeting intended objectives, efficient in resource utilization and time value, and showed many emerging positive impacts in the implementation of the projects. For example, PSTA, schools and District offices have already started managing ECCD centers, and facilitators have been upgraded and considered in the GO structure, the community has shown interest to send children to ECCD centers, and employed Facilitators from the local context and earmarking a budget for them, ECCD centers are being effectively used and have become overcrowded. The ECCD children enrolment has increased from 1640 from the base year 2011 to 6755 in the year 2013 in all the ECCD project woredas (Assayita, Lay Armachiho, Chilga, Wogera, Hamer, Dasenech and Gngangatom). Out of the total enrolled ECCD children, 90% of the children have developed the skills of proper social interaction, climbing ladders, properly painting pictures, Amharic and English letter, and Arabic numerals identifications, and reading and writing skills of two to three words.

### III. OBJECTIVES, METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### 3.1.Objectives of this research project

The aim of this project is to explore ECCE implementations in the Plan-Ratson sponsored “Feche Preschool” and the two SCN-sponsored () preschools ECCEs are implemented and the role the two civic societies have been playing in process. More specifically, it attempts to:

1. Explore conceptions and practices’ in current ECCE programs for children supported by civic societies in Ethiopian:
  - a. Indigenous learning, care (health, stimulation and nutrition) and development
  - b. Parental goals, values, and expectations in childcare, education and development?

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*relationship, local resource mobilization and girls’ participation were also greatly improved because of the new teaching methods introduced such as zero class and model class approaches.*

<sup>18</sup>*Some of the activities done regarding ECCE were construction and furnishing of ECCD, Construction of ECCD shades, Basic training of ECCD facilitators on Montessori methods of teaching, Refresher training for ECCD facilitators, Refresher training on Parenting Education for ECD facilitators and Health Extension workers, Training on Child Growth and development for ECCD facilitators and Health Extension workers, Provide 21 weeks (1 session/week) parenting Education session for mothers, Quarterly discussion on enrollment, attendance and children handling by ECCD facilitators, WEO, supervisors and directors, Bi-annual discussion forum on the implementation of ECCE SOP guideline and curriculum guide for ECCD facilitators, supervisors and directors, and Rollout ECCE policy framework (Fromseas, 2014, p.20).*

- c. Conception of a preschool, qualities of a good preschool, and resources (materials, human...) needed
- d. incorporation of desirable community values, child rearing goals, methods, and techniques in the ECCE goals
- e. preschool environments' (compound, classroom, and playground) incorporation of community setup and incorporate community features
- f. Use of indigenous ECCCE curricula, syllabi, and books among the ECCE programs
- g. Use of an indigenous language familiar to the enrolled young children as the principal medium of communication and instruction within the programs
- h. Use of locally made aids, materials, and resources in caring for and educating the children
- i. Use of local proverbs and songs in educating the children
- j. Use of indigenous cultural games familiar to local adult family members/caregivers as educational resources within the programs for the promotion of young children's cognitive, emotional and social development
- k. Child-to-Child: involvement within the programs of children in the home, at school, in the playground, and in the community at large to participate actively in the cognitive, emotional and social support of young children's cognitive, emotional and social development
- l. Involvement of parents and grandparents as community resources in educating the children
- m.** Inclusion of children with moderate and/or severe developmental disabilities among the young children enrolled in the programs
- n.** Preschool-home, and Preschool- community nexus in the design, conduct, and improvement of the ECCE programs

2. Map out the typical days of a child (in classroom, playground, and home) to learn about parental goals?

In addition, the project will assess the feasibility of incorporating within existing Civil Society ECCE programs of innovative practices designed in the light of African developmental research to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the programs to the needs and aspiration of rural African communities.

The following research questions will be addressed:

- To what extent do the ECCD programs apply a 'culture -sensitive' and community based approach connecting the content and practices in ECCD programs to local cultural knowledge and practices, and dialogue with families in the communities?
- How are children's rights to care, education, play and participation practiced within the ECCD programs in Ethiopia?
- How do children experience these programs? (health, care, relationships, connectedness, rights and learning)

- How do family-members (including grandparents and extended families) in the local communities experience the effect of the programs on children’s education, health, and wellbeing? And the effect of the programs on everyday life practices in the local community (social economic continuity and change)?
- Do communities (including grandparents and extended families) participate in the development of ECCD programs?
- How do policymakers in Ethiopia experience the effect of the programs for national policies related to ECCD
- How do key persons in SCN, Plan and UNICEF in Ethiopia and Zambia experience the effect of the ECCD Programs for children, their families and the local communities?

In addition, the project will assess the feasibility of incorporating within existing Civil Society ECCE programs of innovative practices designed in the light of African developmental research to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the programs to the needs and aspiration of rural African communities.

### 3.2. Study sites

To begin with the Klinto site, the preschool visited is “Feche Preschool”. It is located within the catchment areas of three agrarian villages in Klinto woreda: Koye, Feche and Tulumute. It was one of the five preschools established in 2013 as part of the community development project under implementation by Plan International and Ratson. According to the Coordinator<sup>19</sup> of this project, this centre as well as the remaining others have been equipped with locally developed culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate play and learning materials. The classrooms have been organized into learning areas/corners to stimulate the active interaction of children in the classrooms. In addition, the outdoor play materials were constructed and put in place using locally available materials through the active engagement of community members. All centres have their toilet, dining room and school garden. At the moment, 154 (77 male and 77 female) children are attending in five centres. The children come from different socio economic backgrounds. Children stay half a day with in the centre. Ten centre facilitators all of them females were hired at the beginning of the project to care and support children. These centre facilitators were trained on facilitation skills, child development, active learning, classroom management, inclusive education, learning through play and production of locally made teaching aids on continuous basis. According to the coordinator, a good opportunity for the children is the availability of the center close to their homes, and their enrolment and learning at the expected age for preschool. However, what the threat is the non-availability of a primary school in the area and also the poor status of the developmental infrastructure around the vicinity.

As regards the Lie Armachiho site, two preschools were considered as data sources: Selam Fire and Tigwuha<sup>20</sup>. While Selam Fire is attached to a primary school, Tigwuha is established within

<sup>19</sup> *ECCE Project Coordinator since January, 2009, Klinto ECCE.*

<sup>20</sup> *Data were obtained from Interview with the Head, ECCE, Gondar and the Focal Person of ECCE, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative.*



the community unattached to a preschool. They were among the ten other centers established by SCN in the woreda as part of the education quality improvement program in the Amhara and other regions. The centers are well supplied with learning and play materials. The facilitators were trained with their teaching and care skills of the children (*Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*). At the beginning, ECCE activities were not much attractive. The number of preschool children was also small. But, the number began increasing from year to year, particularly as a result of awareness training offered to mothers (*Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*). Now in 2014/ 2015, the number of the children and facilitators of the two ECCE centers are 128 and 3 respectively.

Children attend the center in two shifts in Selam Fire, morning and afternoon. The younger children aged 4- 5 years are taught in the morning shift, while those who are six or older are taught in the afternoon shift. The children attend their early learning with songs and play like activities (*Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*). The centers are in good condition. They enable the children to know their environments, to respect their parents, and to learn the basics generally before they go to the formal schools (*Head, ECCE, Gondar*). The education is offered with play materials, and children learn their lessons being very relaxed. There are Montessori play materials, and that the children are happy with them. They are also eager to stay prepared wide awake for the next task when brought to their attention about what we did today, and what are we are going to do tomorrow (*Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire*).

### 3.3.Data sources

Children (orphans and non-orphans, boys and girls), guardians (parents and grandparents), facilitators (all females), and administrative personnel (ECCE heads, ECCE focal persons in education offices, directors, and supervisors) were employed as participants; a total of 40 interviewees (see Table 1 and associated descriptions for details in the appendix). They were interviewed on the various aspects of the ECCE practice.

Children: The following 10 children were interviewed; some live with both parents while others are either full or single orphans; both boys and girls were represented; and their age ranged from 5 to 7 years:

1. *A 5 years old girl child, lives with both parents, Klinto Center.*
2. *A 6 years old boy child, lives with both parents, Klinto Center.*
3. *A 5 years old girl child, lives with Mother, Klinto Center.*
4. *A 5 years old boy child, lives with Mother, Klinto Center.*
  
5. *A 6 years old, girl child, lives with both parents, Selam Fire.*
6. *A 6 years old boy child, lives with both parents, Selam Fire.*
7. *A 7 years old girl child, lives with grandparents Chig Wuha.*
8. *A 6 years old boy child, lives with both parent, Chig Wuha.*

9. *A 6 years old girl child, lives with mother Selam Fire.*
10. *A 6 years old boy child, lives with a grandparent, Selam Fire.*

The interview was made individually and in an age-appropriate way. Children were very active and expressive. In fact, some distortions were noted when it comes to factual information. For example, when asked about the number of their siblings, some gave information that was not similar with their guardians. The interviewer noted this “The child stated that she has four brothers and three sisters, but has none of these according to information from parents” (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center). In the same way, “The child stated that he has four sisters and one brother. But, information obtained from his parents revealed that he has only one brother” (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center). These situations do not, however, invalidate the responses of the children because other items were content or fact-free. In fact, interviewers were impressed with the interest, verbal fluency, and memories of these rural children. The interview items generally focused on indigenous childcare and education (songs, games, materials); daily routines of their child at home, in the playground and at school; goals, values, expectations (of being a good child, for example); relationship with careers, mentors, and partners (i.e. siblings, grandparents, and friends), views about the ECCE center the child attends and the facilitators; contribution of the ECCE center.

Guardians: A total of 18 Parents and grandparents were interviewed on indigenous childcare and education; daily routines of their child at home, in the playground and at school; goals, values, interests; concerns about childcare and education; beliefs and attitudes about current practices of childcare and education; views about the ECCE center the child attends and the facilitators; contribution of the ECCE center; and their relationship with the center. Here is profile of these interviewees.

1. *Twenty nine years old mother, in marriage and with a family size of five members (Mother of a Female Child, Klinto center).*
2. *Twenty five years old mother, in marriage, a mother of three children (i.e. two female and one male), and with a family size of five members ( Klinto Center).*
3. *Twenty eight years old mother with a family size of 5 persons; two boys and one girl (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*
4. *Forty five years old Father with a family size of 5 persons ( Klinto Center).*
5. *Twenty eight years old Father, with a family size of 4 persons (Klinto).*
6. *Fifty six years old grandmother living with two children (Klinto Center).*
7. *A fifty years old Grandmother with a family size of 7 persons including 3 grandchildren (Grandmother I, Klinto Center).*
8. *Fifty years old Grandmother with a family size of 8 persons (Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*
9. *Forty eight year old Grandfather with a Family Size of 12 persons (with 8 children, and the male and female spouses).*
10. *Seventy years old Grandfather, family Size is 12 out of whom one is a grandchild (Klinto Center).*
11. *Fifty eight years old father, in marriage and living with spouse and children, 6 persons, Selam Fire.*

12. *Thirty six years old Father Lives with a wife and children, family size of 6 persons, Selam Fire*
13. *Twenty seven years old Mother, lives with a husband and child, 3 persons, Selam Fire.*
14. *Thirty five years old mother, married and living with the spouse and children, family size is 7 persons (Chig wuha).*
15. *Seventy years old grandfather, lives with wife and children, family size of 7 persons, Selam Fire.*
16. *Forty five years old, grandmother, lives with husband and children, family size of 8 persons, Selam Fire.*
17. *Fifty eight years old grandfather, lives with wife and children family size is 5 persons, Chig wuha*
18. *Forty nine years old, grandmother, lives with grandchildren, family size of 3 persons, Chig Wuha*

The interview was for about an hour and was enriching. All recording was made with their full consent. Some hesitations were raised but they were cleared up at the beginning with the support of ECCE facilitators who, being familiar to them, gave us a hand to build trust any time concerns arise.

Facilitators: A total of six female facilitators were interviewed; in fact, all facilitators in the ECCE centers were females:

1. *A 20 years facilitator with 3years and 3 months of experience (Klinto, Facilitator One, Female, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
2. *A 42 years old facilitator with one year and seven months' work experience (Klinto, Facilitator Two, female, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
3. *A 30 years old facilitator, female, married, two children, family size of 4 persons, 14 years of teaching experience, 4 years in this center, Selam Fire.*
4. *A 35 years old facilitator, female, single, no child, 10 years of teaching experience, Chigu Wuha.*
5. *A 30 years old facilitator, female, married, two children, family size of 4 persons, 14 years of teaching experience, 4 years in this center, Selam Fire.*
6. *A 35 years old facilitator, female, single, no child, 10 years of teaching experience, Chigu Wuha.*

The facilitators were interviewed nearly for an hour about children's participation, interest; how individual differences unfold themselves and children with special needs; guardians' participation; views about the ECCE center; situation of children in the community; how local or indigenous are the ECCE implementation.

Administrative personnel: These were participants selected from individuals assuming different administrative responsibilities regarding ECCE in the two sites: Six such individuals were considered that are grouped into three categories as follows:

- ECCE Project Coordinators:

1. (ECCE Project Coordinator since January, 2009, Klinto ECCE).

- ECCE Head and Focal persons

2. *Head, ECCE, Gondar*

3. *Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative*

- Directors and Supervisors

4. *Director of full cycle, Selam Fire School, 8 years teaching experience, Selam Fire School*

5. *Supervisor from Selam Fire, 10 years work experience, Woreda Education Office.*

6. *Supervisor for 10 Unaffiliated Child Centers, 10 years of experience ( began work in 1997 E.C), Save the Children Norway (SCN).*

These interviews were asked about basic information about the ECCE center-related project implemented; role of the organization in the process; views about the ECCE centers; design and implementation of a community- inclusive project. They were also contacted so many times to give researchers the context of the projects, used to connect interviewers with the study sites, and also provided important insights about ECCE in the area.

Table 1 presents the summary profile of the participants by gender center type.

Participants		Gondar-Lie Armachiho					Klinto		Total
		Selam Fire		Tig Wuha		For all center	Male	Female	
		Male	Female	Male	Female				
Children	Orphans	1	1	-	-		1	1	4
	Non-orphans	1	1	1	1		1	1	6
	Total	2	2	1	1		2	2	10
Guardians	Parents	1	1	1	1		2	3	9
	Grand Parents	1	1	1	1		2	3	9
	Total	2	2	2	2		4	6	18
Facilitators			2		2			2	6
Administrators	Coordinator, Focal Persons					2	1		3
	Supervisors	1	-	-	1				2
	Directors	1	-	-	-				1
	Total								
		6	6	3	6	2	7	10	40

### 3.4.Procedures

The process of data collection went through two important phases. In the first phase, the lead researcher and his associate paid visits to the project sites of SCN at Gondar. Contacting the ECCE Head for the Gondar project, the researchers learned about ECCE developments in Gondar and SCN's involvement. Explaining the purpose of their project, the researchers solicited for SCN's consent as well as support in data collection. Securing most welcoming and supportive spirit from SCN, they proceeded on to identifying, with the support of the Head, the woreda as well as the specific ECCE centers to be considered for data collection. Proximity being the major factor, a decision was reached to pick up Lai Armachiho woreda of which one government school attached (Selam Fire) and another non-attached (Chig Wuha) ECCE centres were selected. Then making prior arrangements with woreda ECCE focal persons and ECCE supervisors/ directors in the two sites through telephone, the Head of ECCE at Gondar has again escorted the researchers with a vehicle from SCN to the two ECCE sites for a physical visit. Discussions with these personnel and facilitators, classroom and outside classroom observations were conducted. However, the children were not met in the classrooms because the centres were closed for summer vacation.

The researchers were then able to recruit two MA graduates in developmental psychology (now doctoral students) to work as interviewers. Then they were given the interview guide to thoroughly review it and appear for a discussion. Then days later, discussion was held to check the relevant, level, and clarity of the items. Adjustments were made based on the discussions. Then it was also decided to begin with Selam Sefer and then continue with the rest by successively making adjustments in upcoming data collection based on feedback obtained from the prior administrations. Accordingly, data collection in Klinto, interviewer was again MA graduate in developmental psychology, was made after the two sites; thus it was better situated in learning from the preceding data collection in Gondar.

### 3.5. Analysis

The interviewers were required to take notes of the interview through writing, video recording, and snap shooting (with a still camera); of course with the consent of the interviewees. The recording created little difference in the behaviour of the participants even among the children; except for initial distractions of attention that subsided shortly. No discomfort was noted among adult interviewees about recordings once they consented for the interview. Interviewers were also given a check list to observe classroom and outside classroom conditions of the ECCE centres. They were still required to take their own personal memos of outstanding experiences and their reflections on the whole process of data collection.

Data transcription proceeded simultaneously with data collection. These transcribed data took about 60 pages. These transcribed voluminous data were translated in to English by the lead researcher and then checked by his associate. The transcription was read and reread along with the research objectives and identification of major themes was, therefore, a synthesis of both apriori and posterior methods. The expected and theoretical themes derived from review of literature on ECCE in Ethiopia as well as the specific research objectives (apriori), on the one hand, and the major themes that emerged from reading and re-reading of the transcribed data

(posetriori) were identified, regrouped, and further thermalized. These themes included child work, play/ games, learning, local aids, good ECCE, good child, good facilitator...

Then transcribed data were presented under each theme with direct quotes acknowledging the data sources in parenthesis. These themes were then subjected to further integration in the discussion section so that the tree (purpose of the research) can be seen for the forest (massive data).

## IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section explores conceptions, practices, and contributions of current ECCE programs for children supported by civic societies in Ethiopian based on data obtained from the field work. Data presentation and discussion are organized under four themes:

- Childhood experiences: past and present- Childhood experiences (of parents, grandparents), parenting goals and values practices, typical days of a child
- ECCE centers: physical environment, qualities of good centers and facilitator, and required inputs
- Indigenization, Parent, community-center relationships, and child rights issues (child-friendly, inclusion of children with special needs)
- Effects, contributions of the ECCE centers (on children, parents, communities, and the government)

### 4.1. Childhood experiences

#### 4.1.1. Childhood experiences of guardians

Interview was held with parents and grandparents regarding their childhood upbringing, issues they remember most, experiences with play, stories and songs, and views about childrearing of their time compared with the present. Recurrent themes emerging from the transcribed interview include issues like "...limited school attendance, intensive engagement in work, limited play, social interaction with peers in the neighborhood being limited, stories and songs scarcely noted, if at all existed, physical punishment in place for disciplining the children, early marriage commonly practiced, physical needs (health, nutrition, clothing) not attended to the satisfaction of the participants, and, hence, preferences for present childcare practices to that of their time..."

*As my parents were poor, they were not able to provide proper health care and feeding (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*My parents didn't look after my cleanliness, there was no experience of changing clothes, or washing one's bodies...they haven't given much care for their children. parents not concerned much about the child's food or cleanliness (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*I used to enjoy the wealth of my parents. But I didn't enjoy the severe punishments they meted out on us. There was too much of parental control over things that were mere trifles. I can say that we were brought up with good manners...(27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*We used to eat, and sleep with our sisters and brothers, mothers punished their children by demanding children to inhale smokes of burning pepper... Parents did not take the children to the medical services...expecting them to recover (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*parents used to take care of our cleanliness with regular washing of our bodies. They also used to breastfeed me and encouraged me...(45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

**A 70 years old grandfather narrated child upbringing of his time in a very comprehensive way as follows:**

*I was brought up without much care about our clothing. I remember when I was with or without clothes. The clothes we wore were from cheap and rough cotton linen, called abojedie & merdofa. The child wearing merdofa was usually the one from a family that was a bit better off. We were also partially clad. Even a female child is not worried about being partially covered when she sits. We used to borrow clothes from friends to partake in weddings and other similar holidays. As children, we slept on dry floors, with mats carpets and sheepskins spread on them. Our fathers slept on beds of woods and hides. In addition, we were brought up with values of mutual sympathy and concern. Today, these values are no more seen. We also used to share the same dish during our feeding schedules. But, there was no medical service, and no practice of visiting the doctor when we got sick. Our feeding schedule was usually after our parents had had theirs. We used to serve our parents with a jug of water for washing their hands, and by holding for them a lighted torch during their evening meals. We, as children, were served last, and after our parents were done with their meals. In case of no stew service to go around, there were times when we would go to sleep after only eating dry food with only a piece of salt as a sweetener. We were brought up, sharing clothes with our brothers and sisters. As brothers and sisters, we were also brought up sharing food from one mesob, and showing love and care for one another. In contrast, today's children do not eat and sleep together with their sisters and brothers, let alone with children of their ages. With reference to education of good manners, we were brought up, sometimes receiving some slight knocks on our heads, /kurkum/, or beatings for wrongs we committed. But today's children resist such parental reprimands and would tell you that it is their right to have their ways. Schools teach about respecting mothers and fathers. But the children come home leaving the moral lessons there (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

**This adult-centered environment was also noted years latter:**

*During our childhood years, we were brought up holding a wooden lantern, shug, when our parents sat for their evening meals; it was also mandatory for us to collect the firewood and come home in the evening with the prepared shug or hang our heads down to communicate to our parents that we are guilty and deserve their reprimands; we were also obliged to wash the feet of guests who came to spend their nights with us. We used to get our foods regularly. But we got old clothes changed after every two or three years. Malaria was taken as a normal disease that would eventually clear off, and we had nowhere to go for treatment as there was no medical service during our childhood years. Food was plenty, plenty of milk, and butter. Hence we had no starvation (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

**Standing and serving parents during meals seemed to change gradually:**

*I would say, I had a good care from my parents. But the care type could not be compared with that of the present day parental practices. We were, for instance, forced into early marriage without our consent. This practice is no longer present today. During our childhood years we serve our parents by standing and holding out a Shug, a wooden torchlight, when they are at their supper table, and lastly, we eat their leftovers after they are through with their evening meals. My parents didn't provide me with the proper care. Our meals were seldom regular, and there were many days when we were without food and went hungry. But such things are no more today (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

**Although some differences were gradually noted in school attendance, the rest (child work and limited play) seemed to consistently occur across time<sup>i</sup>:**

*...went to school, and tended cattle... didn't mix with children of the neighborhood, as father didn't allow doing so... collecting materials that I could develop as dolls or imitative games... don't know any song or story .... father insists that the children focus on their education... didn't allow them ...spent time outside..... (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

*...Raised by grandmother, without schooling, and was heavily punished if go out of the house for fear negative influence of neighboring children (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

**Given these experiences and the current parent education programs communicated to parents and grandparents through ECCE centers seemed to make them develop more favorable attitude to present childcare practices rather than resorting to the expected nostalgia of the past<sup>ii</sup>:**

*Indeed, the past and the present childhood years are incomparable. In my childhood years, mothers used to be with such heavy workloads as grinding corns, fetching firewood and water, covering long distances to and from homes, etc. In the past, children were not kept as clean as children of today. We were also asked to bow down whenever we committed some mistakes. Kerosene lamp was not available in the past as it is today. We were then required to prepare a wooden lantern called shug while herding cattle in the fields, and hold it alight during parental meals in the evenings. Often times, our parents would put one or two morsels of food in our mouths as we stood with the alighted wood stick, and we used to have our main dishes, usually after them. In contrast, children of today are seen getting their meals before their mothers and fathers are served (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*We were brought up with oppression. As children of the former times, we were brought up with beatings, lynching and herding cattle. But nowadays, the government is training us through meetings and with all means. Our care for our children is good. Today, we are obliged to observe our children's rights and not to violate their rights. In our childhood years, we were often sick. There were several forms of childhood illnesses. We used to eat food and dirt altogether. We didn't use the latrines as we didn't know. We also didn't keep our cleanliness. With reference to balanced diet, we used to be served with milk. But no one cared whether it had*



*to be heated. We simply ate and drank whatever we found and in whatever form it was available to us. Nowadays, children get foods that are spiced and cooked. As usual, when we are done with our daily routine of herding cattle, we come home in the evening with Shig (a special type of dried wood collected to serve as a torch light) that we light up and hold for our parents when they have their evening meals. We used to stand with the lighted Shig until our parents' meal services, and then it was our turn to eat their leftovers. But today, children are served food at the same time with their parents. In olden times, there was no experience of children appearing for meals with their parents, and there wasn't much of parental care either (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

**Plays and games** were not reported to be commonly practiced during childhood. Play materials were of course their own makings, from the surrounding, for immediate use and almost everything in the surrounding can be deployed for play purposes. Hence, it could be difficult for them to remember. However, we probed further so that they would tell us about play life that they engage in even occasionally and materials used: Here are what they have to share with us: *used to play 'husband and wife', enjoy pretend-play of cutting leaves to make enjera, and enjoy braiding of our hairs in kuncho and gammey styles (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha); Gebeta, (the traditional chess); kicking, racing, and kuli games (58 years old, father, Selam Fire); catching, jumping over a rope, playing Gebeta with sand stones, sprinkling water over friends, holding hands and playing merry go dance, participating in competitive races, and wrestling, make-believe play with materials we find in our homes, and dolls we mold from mud into the shape of animals (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire); skipping games like "Monday-Tuesday", and dirchi-dirchi (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire); imitating our elders and grind sand stones and soil while they grind cereals, mix the soil and sand with water to make a dough seeing adults preparing a dough for enjera, cut out leaves and put the mud on the leaf to bake it like mothers who use Mitad to prepare Enjera and Wot (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha)...*

**Songs, dramas, music or dances** enjoyed in childhood were still reported to be forgotten (except only for one common school song even to this date, "Brother Jacob and sister Yeshe")<sup>iii</sup>

Participants were also asked to tell us about **riddles** being learned in childhood. Riddles are common fun-type intellectual puzzles that children play asking one another and turn by turn those challenging questions that require a lot of contemplation and critical thinking to coming up with a correct answer. Two participants have provided the riddles learned. However, it was felt that more riddles would have come if further probing was made because riddles are common traits in the Amhara culture of Ethiopia. Here are the responses of the two participants

*I ... remember playing the following riddles (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center):*

- *'What is it that has four legs but cannot cross a river? (expected answer: bed)'*
- *'What is it that you try to throw it away, but can't make it cross a river? (expected answer: a cotton ball)'*

*The riddles I enjoyed during my childhood include the following (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center):*

- ‘She claps her hands closing her door (answer: shiro an Ethiopian stew made of beans and peas)’
- ‘She kicks her mother upon coming out of her mother’s belly (answer; matchsticks)’
- ‘A small hut without a door (answer: an egg)’
- ‘She sits in the middle of a road and is busy peeling an onion (answer: a stumbling block, or an obstacle placed)’

They were asked to share with us **stories** heard or learned during childhood. Many of them either didn’t have any or forgotten them<sup>iv</sup> implying that these stories didn’t impact their **life**. Only three participants were able to share stories. The first was about ‘a fox and a lion’<sup>v</sup> and it teaches about the fact that cleverness is not a matter of physical virility and is more useful for winning. The second one was about wild animals (lion, rabbit, cat, wild goose and hyena); who collectively bought a donkey and owned it as a common property<sup>vi</sup> apparently teaching the need to watch out whom we are intending to associate with as friends and be daring to speak up our mind when problems arise; even if this may risk life. The third story was about ‘a goat and a leopard’<sup>vii</sup> and teaches how sharing problems with others would help solving one’s problems.

#### 4.1.2. Parental goals, values and wishes on child care and education

Asked about most important **memorable experiences learned during childhood**, guardians mentioned virtues that shaped not only their present character but also are still in their fresh memories: *respect and fear for my father (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center)*, *respecting older persons, respecting my future spouse, standing up when receiving guests, taking off a hat/cape when greeting people (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center)*, *value of maintaining good social relationship with people (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center)*, *value of living in peace with others...(45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire)*, *avoid picking up fights and be in love with people (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire)*, *cooking skills, and good manners(35 years old, mother, Chigwuha)*, *dependability, obedience, sense of accomplishing duties, and showing good manners(49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha)*, *modesty/ sincerity, and patience (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire)*, *moral education like no to stealing, rowdiness, quarrel, and living with fellow human beings amicably, and with mutual respect for one another...(58 years old, Grandfather, Chig wuha).*

#### Parents and grandparents were also asked about the qualities of a ‘good child’.

Their description<sup>viii</sup> was different from as well as similar to that of the children. Firstly, guardians didn’t use work-related qualities to define ‘good child’ mainly because they might have heard it is inappropriate in the parent education programs. Second, guardians sometimes used broader descriptions (good manners, good character, well behaved, does not commit offences,). Third, they gave more extended list than just mentioning one or two qualities. Hence, new items were added; learning related qualities (focuses on lessons, learn with diligence, continue learning the good things from *experienced adults, sits for an evening study of school lessons, appreciable school performance*), social behavior (not quarrelsome/ not violent, gets along with others), independent, responsible, and managing one’s daily routines (*keep cleanliness, proper dress and walk; wakes up in the morning, goes to and from school on time*). However, there is a similarity

when it comes to description of character: *respect for others, obey orders, and says, in the words of a mother, 'ok, ok', and ready to fulfill parental orders (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).* In fact, little differences were noted among guardians' description related to age and gender differences.

Young children defined the qualities of a 'good child' in terms concrete referents as this is what their intellectual ability permits. Descriptions are commonly saturated with two themes: character and work<sup>ix</sup>. The first major theme of description centers on 'character': *Respecting parents and obeying their demands, silent, non-evil doer, no stealing, non-grumpy and sulky...* The second major theme centers on work, a 'good child' is believed to *wash the dishes well, make sauce/ wat, boil coffee and fetch water, make enjera and wat, herd animals, look after the house, look after a baby, pound coffee beans, feed out in the farms, and accompany their parents to grain mills, sweeps the floor. Gender stereotyping still with a strong hold in rural Ethiopia, girls focused a little more on home chores (cooking enjera, wot) while boys focused on activities linked more to other assignments (look after a farm, a house, a baby) but shared lots of differences in many activities (fetching water, washing the dishes, boiling coffee) as it can be noted in the following responses:*

- *make sauce/ wat. take parental orders, keep quiet, behave well when told to be so. Bad children, on the other hand, are evil doers and steal things that their mother has kept away from their view (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*
- *Fetch water, look after the house, look after a baby, pound coffee beans, feed out in the farms, and accompany their parents to grain mills. Bad children are grumpy and sulky (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

Descriptions of the supervisor' contained, in addition to the above ones, some descriptions that are missing in the above two:

- *express themselves without fear or apprehension at any place (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*
- *knows himself, expresses self (Selam Fire "gudnt" Supervisor)...*
- *fulfills what s/he has been told to accomplish, internalizes the desirable and shuns the undesirable (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
- *assess the environment and develop understanding of the situation, and poses different questions (ECCE Project Coordinator, Klinto ECCE).*

Asked about their goals, and wishes they have for their child as an adult, some participants expressed specific preferences<sup>x</sup> (for a medical doctor, banker, civil servant, teacher, manager, pilot, and engineer), others indicated two choices were given (medical doctor, teacher), in another case, there is also a preference for change of place (want my child to land in US) on top of choice of a profession (i.e. pilot), and rest, particularly grandmothers, gave non-specific preferences (e.g. good job, dignified position, good employment, married wife)

There seems to be an influence of the urban life in their values. The major reason seems to be a desire to escape from the hardship of a rural life they witness themselves. For example, a father

who finds himself tolling day in and day out observes a teacher nearby without a hardship and rather with a maid taking care of even the chores at home has the following to say for preferring teaching for his child. In a similar vein, a doctor is preferred from becoming a teacher because he works in cities and a pilot has life in sharp contrast to what the participant is leading now:

- *because a teacher is a person who teaches everything and the one who: doesn't wash his clothes, doesn't keep self-clean, doesn't walk properly, and doesn't talk properly to wash his/her clothes, to keep himself/herself clean, to walk properly, and to talk properly (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*
- *a doctor is usually seen with work in the cities in contrast to these teachers who are bound to work in the rural areas and suffer the consequences (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
- *I think becoming a pilot would help him to enjoy a relaxed life, and a life that is in sharp contrast to the repressed life we currently lead (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

In one case, medical doctor was the parent's unfulfilled wish and now preferred for the child as a means to materialize one's dream:

- *What she chooses, however, depends on her competence. Yet, I wish if she could be a doctor. This is for the reasons that I love my child so much, I was also a good student, and I didn't attain the goal that I set for myself because of parental factors (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

Some explanations were given about the importance of the job preferred: *Because being a medical doctor she (child) helps his/her clans/relatives (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha), a doctor provides medical treatment for people who are ill, rescues human life from ailments (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire), because engineering is very important for the country's development (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

In fact, one grandfather said, he opts medicine for his child, *simply because of the fact that medicine is a hard earned profession (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

#### 4.1.3. Typical days of a child

**Typical days of a child-general descriptions:** Children's descriptions of their daily engagements<sup>xi</sup> focused mainly on movements they make (going to school, back to home), dines (eat breakfast, lunch), play activities mainly at school, some home chores, and play at home. In fact, children's own descriptions seem to show that they are into a number of diverse activities that enrich their development experience.

*My daily activities included going out of home in the morning, playing, lining up for the morning flag ceremony, going to class, responding to the facilitator's call of attendance, singing names of the week, learning language, eating lunch, playing outdoors, listening to stories, learning arithmetic, going home, fetching water with children of the village, and participating in games with children (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

Guardians' descriptions<sup>xii</sup> are rather more diverse as expected. Included here are school, play, lessons at home and some after school chores. But, home chores are not frequently mentioned possibly considering them as less important, or out of the belief that reporting them would mean

telling others that one is still practicing what is considered in appropriate in parent education programs. Rather, many parents mentioned school work/ lessons as a common activity at home while children didn't mention about this experience.

Children and guardians are expected to have time together for various activities so that they can share experiences one another: stories heard, songs sung, dances practiced, plays...Children also need to talk about their teachers', care and support received, and lessons learned. Parents, too, need to reflect on these experiences, express appreciations to what children do, and seize the opportunity to deepen, extend, and enrich children's learning further by relating their own stories, experiences etc. It is actually through this shared time that parents come in and extend advice, express love and affection, teach their own part, provide educational support, and assist the children in doing homework. However, no mentioning was made about such shared time by both children and guardians except for some situations in which young children may join guardians to provide support in home chores. In fact, parents may not support children in their lessons as many would hardly read and write but they need to encourage children to do their homework, arrange support for them from siblings, or peers in the neighborhood. But, school related tasks are understood as a school's business.

In fact, the following guardians seem to somehow have the shared time we are talking about:

*As a grandmother, I feed my granddaughter with foods of different types. I also change her clothes. I also ask her to tell me what she had learnt at the center when she comes home after her school hours. But I don't tell her stories (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*She gets up from bed and has her breakfast. Then she goes to the school half day classes on weekdays. She then comes back home. After having her lunch she engages herself in play activities. In matters related to learning an in addition to what she has acquired at school, I also try to teach her during the spare time I may have. In the evening, there is nothing of demands/ orders that she would be expected to undertake, except to eat here supper and go to bed (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

With regard to the place of the child in family life, I would say that most families do not give special focus/attention for this early period of development. There are of course some families who partly provide special focus for their children (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).

**Typical days of the child-Child work:** Guardians and children were asked about children's engagement in different kinds of work activities in the community. The responses were divided between children and guardians, and among guardians themselves, too.

Some guardians were of the view that young children are indeed involved in different work-related activities:

*Children are working the types of simple tasks she is seen doing. Then all join in games that are their routine engagements (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*Children in the neighborhood are engaged in work (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).  
Neighborhood children are working. They sweep the floor, fetch water, and herd goats (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*My child's peers in the neighborhood are asked to get up early in the morning, and fetch water for the plants. In the dry season, they collect firewood and dried up cow dung for fuel, and herd cattle (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*They are working. For instance, they herd goats; they fetch water from a river, and they sweep the floor, and engage themselves in such similar tasks (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*There are some who are engaged in work. Most of their engagements are around pouring water, herding cattle, and looking after home safety when adults are not around (58 years old, grandfather, Chigwuha).*

*I don't see children of their ages, engaging in work that is heavy, as it is detrimental to their physical and mental wellbeing. With regard to my grandchildren, however, I insist that they somehow master the house chore skills that are expected of female children, later in their adulthood years (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

Other guardians were of the opinion that young children are not involved in different work-related activities:

*Her age mates of the area do not work (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

*Children of the surrounding are not engaged in work and work like activities (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*The children of the community are not engaged in work (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

*The children are not engaged in a type of work (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

*Their work is just play. What else would they do other than play? (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*There is no work that engages neighborhood children of her age, except perhaps running errands sometimes (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*Not at all! There is no work for them (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

But, when participants were asked if it is good for children to work, many of them surprisingly including those children are not working agreed that work that is calibrated to children's capacity is useful for their development, future life and career, and to have aim/ purpose and direction in life:

*Yes, work is very good. But it has to be according to her age level (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*I believe that work helps children's development, provided that they do it according to their developmental level of competence. Work would be harmful if it is not within their competence level (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*We think it is good if she is engaged in a work that is appropriate to her level of competence. It has no harm if it is done with a purpose (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*It would be good if children are appropriated to work that is within their developmental levels and if they are gradually introduced to work types of differing intensity as they grow into maturity. This will in turn help them to start work diligently and on their initiative. But it is generally bad and harmful if children are made to engage themselves in a heavy work that is not calibrated with their developmental levels (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*I do believe that work is important for children if calibrated to their age level. A heavy load is basically of great harm to children's development (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*The children of the surrounding area are usually not seen in any type of work. But, I believe they would benefit much if they engage themselves in work that is age appropriate. Age inappropriate work is generally harmful (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*I have no information regarding the participation of other children of the neighborhood in work. But I believe that simple and appropriated work is generally important for children's development. But that is heavy and inappropriate is harms their development (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*Of course, it is good. She helps me when she works. At the same time, she also learns how to manage the work gradually on her own. Work would be harmful, when it is beyond her ability to carry it out. Otherwise, she would happily engage in if work is within her level of competence (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*Assigning them to light assignments is good for their development (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*Yes, work is good. It saves children from state of aimlessness and no direction to growth of being orderly and well accomplished in tasks handled. But the child does not appreciate it and doesn't take the initiative mostly unless forced to do with severe order and control (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*Not harmful, but unless he is forced to wake up in the morning and made to move in a field covered with frost. When we assign children to some tasks of their liking, they readily take up the job without complaint, but refuse if the task is heavy for them to carryout (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*Work is generally good, but if not appropriated to the child's level, it is basically very harmful, and has a negative impact on their learning (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).  
Of course, work is good for children; it helps them in their preparation for their future (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*I support child work that is age appropriate as it is important for developing a child's initiative to learn helping parents. Work, if appropriate to their level, is generally good for their future life (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

*Work is generally useful for children, and not harmful if it is adjusted to their developmental level. The child takes the initiative during her engagement with most of the work activities. I strongly feel that the child would be successful in her future career if she participates in an activity that is based on her interest and on her own initiative (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

It was indicated that work is useful if it is in tune with the developmental level of the children, if it is based on the self-initiation (interest) of the children themselves, liking of the children, than being an imposition, if introduced gradually, if it is done with a purpose

One of the participants have indicated, however, that he would have loved if children are free from work and focus on their education but their involvement in work is a matter of necessity help parents:

*We force them to work, because of our state of poverty. Otherwise, it is our very wish if they wholeheartedly focus on their education. I can explain the rationale of engaging a child in a work as follows;- we have a calf. The calf has to be directed by someone from behind. If there is no one to herd the animal, it will be in a forbidden field of corn, whose owner demands its total safety from animals. The calf may also die if it is not directed to a meadow with green grass. To keep our calf safe from the property of others and still keep it alive for our wellbeing, we need our child to help us in the task of shepherding (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

The types of work that guardians think are appropriate for children's age were such simple or light activities as:

- *pouring water, herding cattle and looking after home safety (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*
- *pouring water, preparing coffee, and other similar tasks (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
- *drawing water with a cup, serving others with water when they wash their hands (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
- *washing cups, peeling and chopping onions, etc. (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*
- *run errands or engage their younger siblings with play (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*
- *herding cattle, sweeping the floor, handing over lunch bags and the like (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*
- *pouring water, herding cattle, looking after home safety (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

When young children were asked about activities they do at home<sup>xiii</sup>, almost all of them gave details of the various home chores that they excute. Only one child indicated non-involvement, “I do not participate in any house chores” (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).

#### **4.1.4.Care and support of the children: As a grandparent, what is your role in childcare**

Children seem to get care and support from different sources<sup>xiv</sup>: parents, grandparents, siblings, and peers, uncle/ aunt. The care and support received include advise and reprimand so that the child would grow up imbibing good manners, waking up and walking with the child to school, help in meeting physical needs, providing children with what they cherish most (candies, biscuits, play materials...). Little mention was made about meeting psychological needs: security



and protection needs, love needs. It is as if that if material and educational needs are met, these needs will take care of themselves, or else directly expressing love would be considered as being artificial and not genuine.

Children expressed the care and support they secured particularly from grandparents with greater appreciation and affectionate expressions:

*I have both grandparents. But they live in the village. I play with them when I go to visit them. There with them I wash my body in the river, look after the cows and oxen. I love my grandparents. Because, they roast the green grains of peas, beans and barleys for me to eat. They also feed me enjera. My grandmothers teach me different games, they tell me stories, and advise me to walk good in my life. My grandfather also tells me some stories. When I get sick, they prepare soup for me and care for me with food to eat (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I love my grandmother. Not only my grandmother, I love all. I love my grandparents, because they buy me shoes and clothes. My uncles also teach me several things. I don't do much with my grandfather (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*With my grandmother, we do many things: we fetch water together and pound coffee beans together. I love my grandmother. Because she gives us money when we fulfill her commands. She also gives me some prune and lemon fruits. But she doesn't tell me stories. We don't do much with my grandfather (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*I, however, meet with my grandmother. She gives me some birr when we meet. She also buys me play materials, bread and biscuits. But she doesn't tell me stories (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*

*I have grandfathers, and I enjoy most when they visit me with candies and biscuits. But they live in a rural region. My grandfathers' teach me the alphabets and participate in various play types with me when I visit them during my vacation (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*My grandmother buys me breads and gives me birr sometimes. He also attends to my cleanliness. I am happy when my brother washes my body, serves me with water, fetches soap and washes my clothes. My grandmother buys me breads and gives me birr sometimes He also attends to my cleanliness. My friends support me with writing. My mother is the one giving me more care (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*I spare some time to meet my grandmother in the countryside. I enjoy playing with my grandmother. My grandmother cares for me. My grandfather washes my face; takes me to the centre, and takes me back home after school" (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). My aunt also helps me a lot in keeping me clean (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

It is not only the material provisions that make children to say that they love their grandparents. Rather, grandparents appear more friendly to the children, they give space to the children: listening to, talking, playing, and even working with them. They also teach them, advise them, share stories...they are physical available for the children. Grandparents retain the different careers in one; i.e. they are like the facilitator teaching them stories, friends playing with them, a parents providing their physical needs.

#### 4.1.5.Children's health, nutrition

Regarding health and nutrition, administrative personnel indicated that there are no health and meal services in the centers. But they try to maintain environmental hygiene, check children's status, advise and teach guardians as to how to meet these needs through parent education programs:

*With matters related to health of the children, we immediately take the sick ones for treatment at a health station, and with support by Save the Children Norway for the medical expenses. In meetings and discussions with parents regarding the nutrition of their children, we advise them on how they should send their children to the center, providing them the proper diet they can financially afford (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

*With references to my experiences regarding child health, nutrition, education, children's rights and sustainable development, we provide the necessary care to see children keep their health, and to protect themselves against dirty and rusty materials. We also advise them and keep their environments clean. We take them to treatment centers when they get sick, and see to it that they get the proper medication on time. With reference to children's rights, we first teach the children that they have the following rights: the right to learn, the right to ask, the right to move about, and the right to play. In connection with these, and with matters related to their safety, we provide advice and support so that parents can teach this issue to their children (Selam Fire "Gudgnt" Supervisor).*

## 4.2.ECCE centers

### 4.2.1.Preschool environments

Preschool visits were made with and without observation checklist to check out preschool compounds, classrooms, and playgrounds, for incorporation of community setup and community features.

The Selam Fire preschool in Lai Armachio Woreda is attached to a government primary school with its own secluded compound. The Chig Wuha Center is located within the villages being an attached to a primary school. It is a kind of community ECCE.

The Klinto site was in a rented house; Plan International covering the expenses for the rent as well as salaries of the facilitators. Efforts made to secure a plot of land for construction of the preschool centers were not successful. In fact, the Gondar sites are within buildings that SCN constructed on a small plot of land secured from the local administration.

Some leniency is noted from the local administration both in Klinto and Gondar partly as a reflection of the fact that ECCE is not yet a priority of the Government. SCN and Plan International have still long way to go to bring about community and government ownership of the ECCE centers. In fact, there are lots of improvements in community awareness about the centers as we will see it later.

Our general impressions are such that the compounds are bumpy and rough, not smoothened, or not leveled off, particularly in Selam Fire. The spaces are small and all outdoor play materials are put in one place making the area overcrowded particularly during play because all the children are to come to play in one place; this obviously hinders children's movement. In fact, space was not supposed to be a limitation in a rural setting. In all the sites, there is lack of clean potable water as there is no tap water.

All the teaching resources and play materials are very attractive, rooms are decorated in a way to capture children's attention, chairs and tables are child-sized, and classrooms are organized to allow children's free movement and interaction among children as well as with the facilitator. Almost all the teaching and play resources were purchased and supplied by the two sponsoring organizations. In fact, the facilitators in the Gondar sites were given short-term training on how to develop local resources and, accordingly, reported that they made some efforts to prepare such materials themselves. In fact, facilitators have indicated that the quality of the preschools is comparable at the moment to the private preschools in the area. Details of the observation outcome are summarized in Table 1 in the appendix.

It would be of much interest to mention here the interviewers' outstanding comments of the observation as well as the interview:

1. parents and grandparents seem to have forgotten cultural stories, games, songs, proverbs and related others, and hence, these heritages were not transmitted to the children
2. All the resources are imported; classroom and outside resources are not made from locally available materials. Almost all the resources hardly reflect local situations; were routinely prepared to reflect Montessori approach.
3. Interviewees as well as facilitators were expecting service charges for participating in the interview. This has been a noticeable change of values in rural areas where people are normally ready to help outsiders, share their resources and time; rather than asking payment for little support rendered.
4. Dependency feelings were noted among people in the sense that they expect all the ECCE resources, materials, and other required input to be provided by NGOs and the Government
5. There are lesser community involvement in terms of caring for and protecting the ECCE resources, and
6. Grandparents involvement was extremely low; even parents involvement is limited only to attending meetings.

#### **4.2.2. Qualities of good ECCE center and facilitator**

This section presents data regarding participants' notions of a 'good facilitator' and a 'good ECCE center' and related issues.

Facilitators and supervisors were also asked to describe qualities of a ‘good facilitator’<sup>xv</sup>. Qualities mentioned were related to ‘self’ (take care of cloths, good manners, punctuality, performs well what is expected of her., competent, be self-clean), attitude for and communication with children (model, tolerant, caring, loving, understanding), teaching (*prepares teaching materials enticing the children, and goes with the tasks of teaching in a proper and comfortable way*), relationship with parents (*seize every opportunity to advise parents on children’s issues, alert parents to take the children*), respecting children’s rights. The following quotes enrich, extend and add remaining other descriptions:

- *provides equal treatment with no reprimand, has due respect of the children’s opinion, and teaching with play activities (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*
- *has at least attended a one year certificate training on ECCE...loves and caress children, has patience, encourages the child’s efforts, calibrates lessons with the competence of the child, serves as a model, speaks exemplary statements, well behaved and good mannered, produce teaching materials and aids using local resources (ECCE Project Coordinator, Klinto ECCE).*
- *As a facilitator, I know each individual child, what s/he wants, and in which developmental stage s/he is (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

Guardians, facilitators, and administrative personnel<sup>xvi</sup> were also asked to describe what it means for them a ‘good ECCE’ center. Here are the descriptions of the administrative personnel:

- *Sufficient play and teaching materials that would allow prompt learning without boredom (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*
- *cares, and shapes the children with knowledge, skills and perceptions, and prepares them for competent citizenship (Selam Fire “gudgnt” Supervisor).With good child classroom is comfortable, enticing or capturing the child’s senses, beautiful, eye catching and engaging; inclusive of children with physical disabilities, considerate of their needs, and suitable for their learning conditions, know the child’s background, consider training methods in the preparation of competent facilitators, children have things to see or things to hear in sufficient supply, good water supply (Selam Fire “gudgnt” Supervisor)*
- *provides adequate awareness for parents regularly, enables children know themselves and their surroundings. Its exterior has adequate water supply, sufficient play areas, materials and toilets. Its interior has sufficient classroom materials, feeding areas, and an area where children nap, has its own flagship, classrooms and materials that provide sleeping services, and sufficient classrooms as the surrounding is very hot, sufficient materials, and the facilitators that should be willing to properly teach the children, good water supply that it currently lacks (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
- *well equipped with outdoor play materials that can develop the fine and gross muscles of the children, toilet facility, potable water, fenced compound, greeneries, and children’s feeding room. Classroom has adequate light, and size for children to move freely, floor surface has to be smooth and leveled (ECCE Project Coordinator, Klinto ECCE).*

Facilitators appear to focus their descriptions more on the classroom situations and related requirements:

- *a clean room, a room that is spacious to allow free movements, sufficient play materials prepared from the locality, has all the required learning materials and conditions (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*
- *adequate light, circulation of fresh air, a wide and clean room, children's drawings on the wall, outdoor play materials and a place where children can dine out (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
- *Sufficient learning materials, rooms with (leveled and comfortable) floors, light, chairs, different pictures posted on the walls (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
- *has attractive pictures that draw the attention of the children, materials that can be cut and assembled, good water supply, play materials that can be put to good use, good security, and a sufficient number of care givers (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

Guardians' description is so lengthy that we only present themes and some illustrative quotes. To begin with some interesting mentioning, a good ECCE is *a center that avails sufficient condition for repair of broken play materials... has trees and shades for children to play under a cool place... with teachers who treat children with full acknowledgement of their individual selves...* The responses generally showed that a good ECCE has adequate **financial**, **human** (good and caring facilitators; good administrators), **material** (sufficient numbers of chairs and tables, outdoor and indoor play materials, toys; sufficient classroom materials and books; and service for children, potable water), and **physical** resources (smooth and leveled, spacious and clean compound, playground latrine and learning classroom; dining room for children, child recreation area, tea room; green, clean, and insect-free compound, good fence, and keep away older children from entry-free environment).

Below are some illustrative direct quotes from participants:

- *well-organized center with chairs, blackboard, outdoor play materials, snap room, toilets potable water, clean compound and competent teachers, a cleanly kept center; a plot of land, toilets, potable water, electric light, telephone, teaching materials, outdoor play materials, a fence, some inputs for teachers and school uniform for the children (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
- *building's adequate structure in both its internal and external edifices, proper care of the facilitators, cleanliness and outdoor play materials, teaching materials (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*
- *adequate light, circulation of fresh air, a wide and clean room, children's drawings on the wall, outdoor play materials and a place where children can dine out (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

Asked about what it takes to build a good ECCE center, participants mentioned those which they indicated above as qualities needed for a good ECCE center. A little different additional requirements mentioned were financial, plot of land, and reorganization of the ECCE system:

- *Financial power is central to build a good child center. For instance you have to have sufficient financial resources to build a spacious classroom, to keep children in classes according to their age levels, to have places to rest for male and female children, toilets for male and female children, and to install pipe water supply at the center (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*
- *good and well cleared plot of land (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
- *sufficient materials and competent facilitators; But I would also suggest the institution of 'KG1', 'KG 2' & 'KG3' and offer ECCE in three levels, instead of conceiving children of 4 to 6 years of age as one group. This suggestion will definitely solve the current problem of offering education to children who are lumped into one group. This suggestion is based on our experiences with the children where children of about 4 years of age are usually seen needing more play activities in contrast to those children of 6 years of age who are more inclined for education. Furthermore, the consideration of more number of facilitators would help in balancing out the facilitator-child ratio (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*

Guardians<sup>xvii</sup> were asked to describe their expectation from the ECCE center as well as from their children. Descriptions were basically similar to the one they already gave to qualities of a 'good child'. Some additional expectations were raised and as summarized here under.

- *learning to keep the self- clean, learn good manners, learning get along well with people, learning table manners (feeding rites), identify the good and the bad, learning to differentiate the good and the bad (for instance, learning about HIV transmissions), observe the role models that s/he would emulate, learn not to be rowdy, learn appropriate feeding, and cleanliness routines*
- *attends education properly, get good knowledge, learn academic subjects, alphabets, count numbers, master speaking our language, learn writing, tell a story, sing a song, learn drawing*
- *engage in such activities as putting household materials in their proper order and places".*
- *know his/her environment in the first place, know self, and keep self-health ( i.e. avoid playing in a dirty play, avoid touching dirty things, and avoid touching sharp and rusty things) (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*

The expectation of a grandfather can be mentioned as a case in point:

- *obey their facilitators' instructions on ECCE assignment, keep their school uniform as cleanly as possible, and learn properly, and to directly come home after school (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

Some participants expressed their expectations center not in terms of what it should do to children by directly as:

- *Captivating, and enticing, independent institution of specified ownership, instead of seeing it as an appendage (Selam Fire “gudgnt” Supervisor).*
- *a learning and play site that is sufficiently equipped with the essential materials (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

### 4.3. Indigenization of ECCE

- Indigenous learning, care (health, stimulation and nutrition) and development
- incorporation of desirable community values, child rearing goals, methods, and techniques in the ECCE goals
- Use of indigenous ECCCE curricula, syllabi, and books among the ECCE programs
- Use of an indigenous language familiar to the enrolled young children as the principal medium of communication and instruction within the programs
- Use of locally made aids, materials, and resources in caring for and educating the children
- Use of local proverbs and songs in educating the children
- Use of indigenous cultural games familiar to local adult family members/caregivers as educational resources within the programs for the promotion of young children’s cognitive, emotional and social development

#### 4.3.1. Incorporation of locally produced materials

Administrative personnel seem to understand the importance of locally produced materials<sup>xviii</sup> but have concerns that this is not practiced:

*With reference to how well the teaching materials that SCN distributes are locally produced, and how well they reflect the norms, values, and culture of the surrounding, it could be stated that there is a limitation on this (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

*I cannot say that the teaching materials we have been using so far are locally made/homegrown (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

*We, even, have seen being dependent on teaching materials brought by SCN. We are focused only on these materials. But during our sessions with the facilitators, we provide them with training on how to make use of local materials of the surrounding areas in order to greatly reduce problems related to meaningful teaching conditions. Whether teaching materials or play materials, we cannot say that these are produced locally as almost all are materials provided by SCN (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

The center has incorporated the values of the surrounding in its curriculum. For instance, the songs of the children are reflections of the community values. Likewise, the stories they are told

are stories collected from the elderly and availed with publication. We also use riddles in this manner (*ECCE Project Coordinator, Klinto ECCE*).

Facilitators share this understanding but rather indicate that they are trying to use locally produced materials counting on some specific examples where this has been happening:

*We mainly use songs in order to orient them to different thoughts. For instance, we use songs when we want them to learn about the national flag. During this time, we teach the children about the green, yellow and red colors, with their symbolic designation for national pride with bodily movements. In addition, children are encouraged to tell stories and to play in riddles. These are very crucial to teach children in a relaxed manner. This strategy also helps the children to retain what they have learnt for a long time (Supervisor of the 10 child Centers, SCN).*

*The learning experiences that the children get at the center reflect the mores and culture of the surrounding area. I also try my best to incorporate more of these resources as I have already taken training in this regard. The children's books and the teaching materials we use are also local and reflect the norms and culture of the surrounding area. We tell them stories we ourselves heard as children and ask them to tell the stories back to us. But we also use story books that are being availed at the center. The play activities and materials of the children are also home grown. For instance, games of 'who saw my handkerchief', peek-aboo (hide and seek) or Segno-Maxegno (or a female child game of skipping lines drawn with names of the week Monday-Tuesday), and Gebeta (or the traditional game of chess) are all local and home grown (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

*The curriculum, the learning and play materials of the center are made from raw materials collected from the surrounding. The materials have made from papers, rugs, and hard cartons. Outdoor play materials have been prepared locally from floor tiles, and wood. The children in the games in a child to child approach (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*The curriculum of the center has been developed on the basis of the concrete reality of the surrounding" From the perspective of language, the center has published children's books that contained collected stories told by elders. The outdoor play materials are also made from local sources. There are such children's games as Abarosh (a game of chasing) and Segno-Maksegno (a game of referring Monday and Tuesday for the hoping actions of the children on series of drawn up lines) that are endemic to the area (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*It is difficult for me to say that the curriculum reflects the conditions, norms, and culture of the surrounding area. I feel that it is outside than these. Up until now, we don't have books that are specifically prepared for children. We teach them by arranging the alphabets. The Montessori teaching materials are not home grown materials. They are not materials that reflect the norms and culture of the surrounding area. We, therefore, side by side, see to it that children are encouraged not to forget then norms and culture of their surrounding by bringing materials made of different shapes using such local sources as mud, and other similar things. In addition, we ask them to form Amharic letters by arranging sandstones. We also encourage them to make different kinds of balls out of used clothes (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*



Asked if they encourage traditional early year's education (Priest and koranic) schools, administrative personnel interestingly believe that they were supposed to do this but didn't do it:

*I believe that priest and koranic schools are crucial and should be encouraged to play their roles in early child care and education. They are important because children are compliant to the instructions or directions these centers help them identify. I would say that these traditional centers are our allies in early childcare and education (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

*Furthermore, with reference to the issue of encouraging use of such traditional learning centers as the Koran or the priest school, I can say that we haven't done much along this line. But we generally feel that we have made great efforts to talk to the priestly so that children could pursue their religious education side by side with such ECCE subjects as science, and math. We also did the same with the Koran school by meeting the clergy and telling them of integrating both the religious and the secular subjects in ECCE (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*

*We honestly haven't worked much to communicate with the priest or Koran schools and discuss issues of ECCE. I feel that this is an opportunity that we haven't worked out so far. Evidently, we note that a student of early priest or Koran education performs better in the formal school. But we regret that we haven't had any relations with these traditional schools, either by way of helping or encouraging their activities (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*

Guardians were also asked if community values, norms, child rearing practices, and goals are incorporated into the goals and programs of the center<sup>xix</sup>:

*What then can we say that they have learnt something in the center unless these community resources you have mentioned are not incorporated? I think the community's values, norms, & child rearing practices have been incorporated. I also believe that they are teaching the children with these community resources. In addition, the children learn such very important values as reciprocity, cooperation, showing mutual concerns, loving one another, dining and drinking together, showing sympathy for one another, and playing and sharing the materials with peers. We readily observe the internalization of these values expressed in the children's behaviors (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*Yes ! I think children are learning the community's norms, cultural values and beliefs from the center. When they come back home, we ask our children what the facilitators have taught them during their day in the center. The children tell us that the facilitators have taught them " to eat together, to play together, and to work in group and in unison, and show love and affection for one another". On this issue, there is something that I concretely observe on the children and attest that they are really learning something important (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

While one grandmother hesitated that this is happening, a grandfather says that he doesn't have information:

*The norms and cultures of the past olden times are no more observed. They are destroyed. Nowadays, a new and important one has come to the fore. Yet, norms and values of the past olden times are better when the learning of good manners is the required child rearing agenda. Children of today are mostly defiant, refusing not to be obedient to parental demands. Undeniably, children are seen learning values of mutual help, cooperation, and mutual concern in their play activities. But things are not as in the past, and today children and their parents are seen interacting on the basis of equality (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*I don't know much regarding the incorporation of the needed community values in the center's curriculum, and their subsequent demonstration by the center, as I do not frequently visit the place. But the center can provide information if parents or grandparents wish so (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

#### 4.3.2.Plays, games

Children's plays<sup>xx</sup> are quite diverse in nature. Some are cultural ('who has seen my handkerchief', hide-and-peek (*imangeya*), Eka-Eka, *kolkole* with stones; *denbush*, Monday-Tuesday', hoping,) others are center-based and are unlikely to occur elsewhere (slides, seesaw, swings, merry-go-round/ *tinbualele* and *Gech Gech*), and the rest are basically teaching oriented "read books, count numbers, assemble objects, love playing while reading the alphabets, A B C D (6 years old, boy child, *Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center*). There are some gender differences such that boys tended to mention a little more physical plays 'playing with car toys, chasing, hide-and-peek' while girls tended to mention "Eka-Eka, dolls, baking enjera and wot".

A five years girl child and boy child can be quoted to show this in more specific terms:

*ball games, driving games, doll play, picture assembly, pick a boo (or hide and seek). I play with dolls, toy cars, and pictures. I myself make the play materials. I have different play mates in both school and in the village. I and my playmates engage ourselves in different outdoor games. I enjoy playing with them games as chasing, competitive running, and such imitative plays as baking enjera, preparing wot, and building a hut". (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

*Playing ball, car, and chasing around" (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

In as much as there are play materials that children were provided with from the center, there were also many of them which children prepare by themselves as also indicated by the above 5 years girl. Others also mention this issue:

*At the center, I collect pieces of paper I see on my way and chuck them in a bin. I also play and learn at the center (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*My play materials are those that we make and play with children of my ages (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

*I also have such play materials as a toy car, and toy airplane, etc,. Some are made by me, and others are offered by a female child of my neighborhood. I play different games with my brother*

Earlier we used to play swings. This game is still played. We also used slides and this game is still alive. We also used to play games of sitting on a car tyr, and the like (*Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire*).

It is difficult to say that there are current play materials reflecting the play materials of the past. We can say that current play materials are those that have replaced the past. The current play materials have replaced the past not because of limitation of the past materials, but because of the availability of the current play materials in improved and better forms (*Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire*).

In sum, even if the center can provide play materials of different forms for the children, I don't think that running solely with this is not the proper way. In fact, children should be helped not to forget the norms and culture of their surroundings through production of teaching and play materials from local resources (*Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire*).

#### 4.3.3. Stories, songs, and riddles

Young children were asked to share the stories with us. Only three of them were able to narrate stories in full. Although many of them didn't narrate stories in full, they had made it clear that they know a story of one kind or another to share. Children mention facilitators as sources rather than parents and this seems true because parents and grandparents themselves were found unable to recall stories. According to one facilitator, they tell children the stories collected from different sources:

*We tell them stories we get from different books, or heard from our parents and grandparents. The stories I tell the children are also those we heard from the different mass media. But most are those we get from story books. As an assignment, we also tell the children to collect stories from their parents or grandparents at times. Most of the children come to class with their collected stories. But some parents shun their children' request to tell them any story (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*

The titles of these stories seemed to center mainly on animals, “**ox and the ape**”, “**hyena**”, and “**ape**”.

- I can tell a story of the **ox and the ape**. I heard it on a TV program (*6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center*).
- My favorite story is about the **hyena**- or *Aba Jiba Jibe*. I was taught by the facilitator (*6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center*).
- I know some stories that I learned at the center. I can start, but I can't finish all down the line (*7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center*).
- The story I would like to tell is about the **ape and aba jubie**. I learned the story from the facilitator (*6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center*).

- We learn stories at the center. I can tell you a story of ‘**husband and wife**’, I heard from my facilitator. But I don’t have any person to teach me stories at home (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).
- My favorite story is ‘the **ape/ Totit and Aba Jiba Jibie**. I was taught this story by my facilitator (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).

The stories that were fully narrated<sup>xxi</sup> were also focused on animals, “ape”, “hyena”, and “Lion”. Although such stories may lack diversity, they are highly relevant for rural children. They are also educative in many ways. For example, the story about the ‘ape’ teaches good manners: e.g. asking for permission, controlling oneself-hunger, not to revenge. The story about the hyena and two boys has again many lessons for children; that animals can’t be smarter than humans, it is good to be smart than being foolish, that smart boys are smart because they are able to help others who are in problems. The story about the lion sends a very clear message to the children about the importance of expressing gratitude for services rendered to us.

As regards songs, children seem to have more songs<sup>xxii</sup> than stories either because of rehearsal effect minimizing forgetting of the learned ones or because of more acquaintance to songs than stories. Alike stories, the sources were all reported to be the center and the facilitators. They still appear more diverse in content than stories. The songs were “Small child, Bye, Bye” teaching to care for younger siblings and others; “three dolls sleeping on the bed” common in almost all preschools and used to teach to take cares during playing, “*endich endich yalech chewata*” (*such and such kind of play*), “school days in a week”, “my little school bag”, “science”, “Amharic alphabets”, and “the thief man”.

Riddles are basically intellectual and conversational play activities preferably fitting grown up children. Only one boy made mentioning of two riddles as follows:

*Something that you move on but never ends. (Answer: place points you pass through)  
(6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*She paints her eyes black, and appears in a market sack (answer: bean seed). I was taught these riddles by the center facilitators (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

#### 4.3.4. Child-to-child

Young children’s relationship with their siblings is satisfying; are in good terms with one another except for some occasional conflicts particularly young boy having with siblings<sup>xxiii</sup>. This relationship is in many cases are so intimate that sidings are one of the multiple attachments that young children will develop with:

*She is fond of her brother. They sleep together. She enquires a lot and worries too much if he stays away for long hours. She doesn’t go to sleep if he is still away. She and her brother discuss school assignments and help each other in working out problems. They also sing together (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

Because of this positive relationship, children usually help one another:

*My children (i.e. the grandchildren) have good relationships among themselves. They help one another (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*She also has good relationship with her uncle and sometimes engages herself readying different materials for her elder sister's home chores (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

Siblings are many things in one: playing with them as partners, training them how to play, providing protection, supporting and enabling them in them to play, and teaching them alphabets:

*I play different games with my brother (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*I play imangeya with my brothers, and also the game, 'who saw my handkerchief' with them when we wanted to. My brothers come to my help when I get into fight with other children. They also teach me games of Eka-ka, and the letters, A, B, C, D (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I play with my sisters and brother. We eat together. I love them, because they teach me the alphabets by writing them on the walls. They also help me wash my hands and face (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*Our daughter tells us what she has been taught at the center during the day. Her brother helps her when she fails to fully narrate the details of the story or the song she learned at the center. The facilitator's demonstrated love, attention, and care are the terms that our daughter uses in describing the positive side of the center (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

Age mates and friends in the center and neighborhood are as equally important for children as siblings; play with and learn from each other, share materials, support one another, and study lessons together:

*I also play such games as slides, swings, and seesaw. My age mates taught me these games. I also have such play materials as a toy car, and toy aeroplane, etc.,. Some are made by me, and others are offered by a female child of my neighborhood. I play different games with my brother (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*Alongside the story time, I also enjoy playing ball, car, and chasing around". I learned the games from my neighboring age mates (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). I spend my time learning the alphabet with my friends (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

*I also play with my friends. We help one another. I love my friends because they give me money, they play with me and they also help me with my learning of the Amharic alphabet 'ha hu' (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*I play with my friends and with children of the neighborhood. We play Eka-ka. I love my friends when they play Eka-ka with me. They all are younger than me. I am the one taking the lead/ the teaching role during our play (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*I enjoy such games, as kolkele; denbush, who saw my handkerchief, slides, hide-and-peek. I was taught all these by my facilitator and age mates (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*

Siblings and friends alike are still the sources of care and support to the children. Elder siblings take their younger brothers/ sisters to and from the center, and this is an added opportunity for interacting with one another:

*The children get care and support from their elder brothers and sisters. Their elder brothers or sisters take them to the center in the morning, and they take them back home after school hours (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*The older siblings take the children to the center, and take them back home after school (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*The children would have several things from their elder sisters and brothers as they walk them to and from the center. For instance, they learn punctuality, orderliness, and the like (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*

*When they go back home after school, children tell their siblings what they have learned at the center. The elder siblings listen to the young child's story of daily learning with delight (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

Siblings are also involved in routine care of younger one as well as in teaching them stories and reading/ writing:

*At home, my sister takes care of me most of the time. She also teaches me songs, plays, and stories (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*My sisters and brother also wash my clothes and help me wash my face (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*I am happy when my brother washes my body, serves me with water, fetches soap and washes my clothes (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*My sisters help me in learning how to read. I love them. They also love me (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*My sisters and brothers help me when I take a bath, and teach me some stories and songs (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

Friends are to an equal extent sources of protection, learning and support:

*I have friends I play with. Together, we herd the cows, and bathe ourselves in a river. I love my friends because they come to the help when I go into a fight with other children. They also help me in the learning of the A B C D (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I have two female friends. We play together. We sit on the same bench and write together. We also do other things together. I love my friends, because they let me have play materials when I wanted to. In addition, they teach me 'ha hu, le lu' (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*

*I have two friends who are my age mates. We play together, we play 'handkerchief' with my friends. I love my friends, because they let me play with them. They take me to their homes and let me watch films. We also study together (6 years old, boy child, full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

*My friends support me with writing. My mother is the one giving me more care (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

#### **4.4. Parent, Community-center relationship**

Community-center relationship exists<sup>xxiv</sup> in many forms: exchange of views through discussions and meetings about childcare, of parents make financial contributions:

parents have readily handed over to us a collected sum of Birr 162.00, when we brought to their attention of our intention to cover the cold cement floor with a canvas carpet in order to protect the children's bare feet from the freezing temperature (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).

parents and community members exchange views and opinions that have created conditions for correction of mistakes by the facilitators. Parents would, for instance, ask our whereabouts when they feel that we have disappeared from their view. There are also parents who follow up our activities and report when we are late or absent from our duties (Supervisor of the 10 childcenters, SCN).

The parents of the children participate in the center's activities. They produce teaching aids for the children. They come up with their monthly share for their Ekub, their traditional saving association. They clean the ECCE compound; they bring in water (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).

Parents and grandparents come to the center and participate in cleaning the compound, and supporting the center in the preparation of story books (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).

We meet with the parents of the children two or three times a month. In our discussions we talk about the child's behavior/manners, clothes, cleanliness and punctuality. The parents are quick to respond to these issues, and to subsequently have their focus on the mutual understandings we finally arrive at (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).

Of course, we discuss with the facilitators on a limited time basis. We tell them that we send our children to the center with the hope to see them acquire knowledge, and that they should not simply keep them, but see to it that children have their time well spent with the acquisition of some knowledge and skills from the center. We try to address some of the problems that may crop up during our discussions with the facilitators. We also discuss issues of theft at the center and decide on how to keep it safe from being looted (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).

The kebele administrators do not give attention for the centers. The kebele administrators are in the main bored people. These centers are, however, are mainly run under the leadership of the supervisors and the directors. It is only thanks to the facilitators we see the centers being managed well. The kebele administrators do not provide the needed support, reasoning that the facilitators themselves, as adults and educated, could provide direction for the centers (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).

The joint activities done with members of the community, the parents and the kebele administration, include, cleaning the surrounding areas of the centers. We also meet with mothers in particular. We were told to meet twenty mothers every Sunday for fifty weeks and discuss what should be done on the proper care and education of the young children, and what should be availed in terms of child nutrition, child rights and duties. We request the kebele administration to mobilize the people for discussion on these aforementioned issues of childcare. We provide the kebeles with report of some centers that are sometimes looted. But the kebele administrators and others in leadership do not give us the necessary attention as they consider our ECCE engagements as secondary duties (Head, ECCE, Gondar).

In realizing ECCE activities, we carry out discussion and training with the community members. We in particular focus on mothers in discussing issues of child care and education. Every two weeks, we have a tea-coffee program, where we bring up issues of child upbringing, care and education and discuss with the mothers; in addition, we carry out an annual meeting for awareness creation on child rights, through the children's rights committee formed at Woreda level. We also carry out the subsequent follow up of /parental community outcomes in this regard (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative). In addition, the facilitators provide sensitization activities in church congregations (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative). The kebele administration also supports us. You first meet with the kebele administration when you think of setting up an institution in a kebele. It is the kebele administration that could allow us get the plot of land we need for the ECCE. When SCN came to the Woreda, it was also the kebele administrators that saw to it that the facilitators had to first be employed. Hence the kebele administration has a big role in overseeing the center, and in closely following up the educational delivery, and in coordinating the parents. We meet every three months to discuss with the Kebele officials, as the administration is one of the stakeholders in matters related to ECCE (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).

Many families of the community have scanty knowledge about children's age and competence. As a result, many wonder whether a 4- 5 year old child can really learn, and consequently refuse not to send their younger children to the center. When asked why the child is not taken to the center, their usual answer is, 's/he is not yet ready' .They think that a child of this age level is not ready to learn. However, as a result of improvement in the level of societal consciousness, a habit of sending 4-5 year olds to the center is now emerging, even if it is not sufficient. Hence, I



hope many more would attend their ECCE in the years to come (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).

So far we have close relationships with the parents. When we meet, we discuss at length issues of feeding children, children's learning, keeping children clean, and the like. The parents also consider these issues and put them in practice. We, therefore, encourage parents to participate in the concerns of their children (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).

## 4.5. Inclusion of children with special needs

### 4.5.1. Children of olden times and present children

Different parents and grandparents explained that present children in their community are lucky compared to those of their times<sup>xxv</sup> in many ways: have learning opportunities at the right age and comfortably, get play materials bought for them, have access to technology and media access and information that widens their knowledge, are not forced into early marriage, their basic material needs are fulfilled (regularly fed, clothed, bathed..). However, there is also something they miss:

*I can simply say that children of today are very lucky. But there is one merit the children of our times had, when compared to children of the present. Parents of our generation used to tell us different stories and riddles, but parents of the current generation of children do not strive that much to tell their children stories or riddles (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire). Differences are noted among children in the same section age wise and facilitators seem to face challenges attending to such differences.*

Present children are, however, a diverse group in themselves and can't be treated alike in terms of having access to ECCE centers: town-rural divide, children with special needs, and related other differences are examples.

### 4.5.2. Rural-town divide

The rural-town divide is one such difference noted even in remote woerdas like Lie Armachiho. It is said that there are differences between the centers in terms of ECCE program practices, employment and training of facilitators, and in terms of SCN's support (Head, ECCE, Gondar; Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative):

*Out of these ten centers, 2 ECCE's are too far away to be personally followed by me, though I know that I should do the follow up as a supervisor (Head, ECCE, Gondar; (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative). SCN's support is for all the centers. But some are too far to be provided with the materials. The Woreda administration has not taken the responsibility of reaching these distant centers with the needed materials. As a result, there are centers with insufficient teaching materials and aids. Many of these materials are sent to the Woreda, and stay without being distributed to the centers. The problem squarely rests on the Woreda administration and is definitely not the problem of SCN (Head, ECCE, Gondar).*

There are also differences between the rural and the town centers in the buildings and practice (application) of the ECCE's programs and education (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative). A number of other differences were mentioned by the administrative personnel:

*The town centers have enrolled many children; their educational materials are more or less sufficiently availed; facilitators happily do their duties of teaching. On the other hand, rural centers do not enroll the expected number of children as parents do not send their children, fearing that they will be bitten by snakes or dogs on their ways. As a result, the facilitators are not happily carrying out their duties of teaching at these centers. Facilitators are also loathing to teach, as they do not expect any one coming to supervise their teaching activities. There are also some limited differences between rural and town centers on matters related to facilitators' training and employment. All town and rural facilitators are given some ECCE training on a short-term basis, but provision of long-term training to effectively equip all on ECCE delivery could not be possible for us ( (Head, ECCE, Gondar).*

*There were also differences among the centers in terms of the number of enrolled children. For instance, the Musevamb child center is better than others in both the number of the children and facilitators. On the other hand, Tiguwuha has a few number of children; the place is not comfortable for children either, and hence, we don't think it would deliver better education and care. Even so, we think that the material distribution among all these ten centers is about equal. As a result of these differences among the centers, we cannot expect equal performances among the centers. For instance, ECCE centers of the town areas provide a strong educational delivery. The facilitators of the town centers have also better knowledge and skills in child care than those in the rural areas (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

*But the assigned facilitators to Selam Fire and other two similar centers are, as a result of the regional government's decision to realize preschools within the premises of primary schools, those transferred from the formal school...???? The teachers "are certified". Hence, they provide better education and care for the children. These three centers provide the quality of education and care that is not inferior to those private preschools of the Woreda (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

*I feel that we, schools of the town areas, have been instrumental in addressing the care and education needs of children of 4-6 years of age. I would therefore wish if children of the rural areas are also helped with all means. In our case, we have sufficient materials in the town centers. What we may need could be further training (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

Now, coming more specifically to town ECCE centers themselves, there are some children who are at a disadvantage more than others. A case in point is children with special needs.

#### **4.5.3.Children of special needs in the center**

Being in town ECCE centers is not a guarantee for ECCE attendance among children with special needs. Unfortunately, we can't say anything about children with special needs, as there aren't any in the centers (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN). According to the Director of Selam Fire center, there were children with special needs enrolled in the center earlier. But, they were transferred to another school with the intent of providing them with the needed support in

one accommodating center (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School). The facilitator in this same center shares her experiences as follows:

*In my teaching experience, I haven't met children with visual or hearing impairments so far. But, there are two children who are slow to understand. These children are our focus of attention. We care for these children and help these children. With reference to inclusive education, we have no specific criteria we set for the purpose. But we help these children who are slow to understand with repeated talks, and with repeatedly observed closeness and explanations. There are, therefore, no special benefits that children with special needs get from the center. I also do not believe that children with special needs would benefit from the center. The reason is that parents would not be willing to accept if we begin providing special support, care or assistance, fearing that their children would be stigmatized and isolated from the community. In general, the care and support for children with special needs, especially at a level of a center, was very limited. Children with special needs have also been unable to benefit from the center. In the future, we may strengthen our services toward this end (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*

The Selam Fire Supervisor seems, on the other hand, to indicate not what is happening in the Center; but possibly what it can be done to support the children:

*When we talk about children with special needs, we can, according to our plan, see this issue in two ways: The first group of children with special needs is those that are gifted. They are very fast and know at a much faster rate than the rest. Hence, we adjust their learning needs and do earlier planning of assigning them to tasks that are. The others are those children with hearing, visual, and motor disabilities and those that are of mental retardation. Though not established with medical facts, we intuitively understand them and try to work toward addressing their needs. For instance, if the child is with low vision, we place him/her in the front seat, and if hard of hearing we advise him to follow the leap movement of the facilitator, and identify what she is talking about, and to repeat the teaching if the child is with mental retardation. In my experience as a school supervisor, what I can witness is that children with special needs do not show that much interest to work with other normal children. In the first place, parents are not willing to send them to the center. But after convincing parents, and bringing them to school, the children are placed in a class of inclusive education, and helped to learn with other normal children (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*

In Chig Wuha, the facilitator says:

*We don't have children of special needs in the center. As far as I know, three children of special needs living around the center, but not included in our center. We didn't include children with hearing impairments, as these learners need a specially trained facilitator who can cater to their needs. For instance, a child with hearing impairments had to go back home after her registration at our center, as we don't have a facilitator trained in the handling of the deaf (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

In Klinto, the coordinator indicated that the Project is operating with the main goal and focus of ensuring accessibility for children of low income families and children with special needs. For instance, the center has done its best in identifying children with special needs by moving into the village and attends to their education particularly by including those children with hearing and visual difficulties. It was not possible to include other children with disabilities as we didn't find any. The center has also built a ramp to facilitate the movement of children with physical disabilities in case there would be some in the future. An attempt is made to provide them with

medical support by contacting the concerned bodies. There are two facilitators of the center who have also got training on children with special needs and the philosophy and practice of inclusion. Their main job is how to give care for all and teach all. According to the facilitators:

*Enrolment at the center is open for children of special needs. There is no inclusion criterion that was done to ensure enrolment for them. The inclusion of children with special needs has potentiated their motivation to learn. I have worked as a facilitator for one year and seven months. There are no preschool-age-children who are left at home, as enrolment at the center was done with due registration of each child by moving from house to house (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*There is a visually challenged female child at the center. We have communicated to her parent of her needs to get a special support. There is no one child who has been left out as a result of special needs. Any child with special needs is welcome in our center". We believe that by coming to the center, children with special needs will have accelerated growth and development (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

In general, children with special needs may encounter problems of attendance, participation, and inclusion in the ECCE centers. Evidences still indicate, however, that even other children seem to have problems of attendance.

#### **4.5.4. Child absenteeism**

A noticeably observed decrease in the number of children after registration at the center (*Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN*). There are times when children make themselves absent from the center for various reasons.

*This happens when the children are required to engage their younger siblings with play, or when they are required to assist their parents or when the parents generally require the children's labor (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire). In fact, when it happens, it is accompanied by early parental request for permission (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child, Klinto).*

*This is attributed to parental state of transfer from one area to another, or to parental worries and concerns that the child might be exposed to harmful conditions if sent to the center (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*

*The children are ready to learn; ready to sing, to tell stories, read the letters of the alphabet and to count numbers. I can witness the gradual improvement in the children's motivation to learn. However, we do a house to house visit in order to bring the children back to the center when we sense conditions of child absenteeism, apparently as a result the heavy workloads they have to commit themselves to (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

*Children's absenteeism could be related to the intense heat of this low land area that the children are bound to face, and to the possible snake bites and harmful insects that they may encounter on their ways to the center. Apart from these reasons, some families, particularly those in the far away locations, find it difficult to bring their children to the center on time (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

*The children's homes are located far from the center. As a result, they don't come regularly to the center. Here is a condition where a child would be absent, at least once in a week. A child who is here today, may not come tomorrow (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha). But the children have a positive appraisal for the center.*

*Most parents provide the children the appropriate love and care and also assign them to light work activities. There are also those who assign heavy workload to their children, reprimand and punish them. Most parents also know the exact age of their children, and can tell you including the months. But, when they are told that the children are ready to learn at the center, they refuse to admit the fact, saying that they are too young for learning. We, therefore, do our best to have more children registered by convincing the parents with house to house visits. Yet, parents understate the age of the child just to keep him/her away from the center (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

Children may generally be absent for various reasons (heavy work load, parental worries and concerns, weather, distance, misconceptions about child's status...). And, this poses a problem for facilitators to try to address the needs of these children who miss lessons. It also raises the extra burden of paying a home visit to discuss with parents and bring the children back to the center.

#### **4.5.5. Other groups of children**

Differences can also be noted in terms of the child's socio-economic background. If we take even those children of the same group, we can see that there are differences between children of the farming and the educated families. For instance, children coming from the farming families appear to be fearful and timid to express their opinions correctly. They do not take the initiative when engaged with tasks (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire). As the low income families usually leave their children behind and go remote areas in search of job, In addition, the location of the center far from the home locations of these families aggravates the problem of early childhood enrolment, further giving cause for parental justification that the children's safety on their way would be endangered. As a result of these justifiable parental fears, there are children who do not participate in the center (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).

### **4.6. Contributions of the ECCE centers**

#### **4.6.1. Contributions for children**

The mere fact that children are contained in a place to spend their time playing with their age mates is one glaring advantage of having such a center (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center). In fact, children are also benefited to learn from good facilitators (caring and loving)<sup>xxvi</sup> and in a setting that promote care and learning as it is equipped materially<sup>xxvii</sup> and because of its physical proximity<sup>xxviii</sup> to children's home.

One of the positive changes the center has brought about is that it has made preschool age children not to stay at home (*Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3*

*persons with one girl child) and vegetate in their home (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center), stay away from undesirable places (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha), keeping the children away from daily engagements in dirty places to a center where they can learn to be competent citizens (Selam Fire “gudgnt” Supervisor), spared children from the task of herding calves and goats (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire), get the right balance of diet (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire), and reduced children’s aimlessness, instilling in them the development of purpose and discipline, beginning from their early childhood years (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*It has created conducive conditions for children to begin their education on time (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child), learning without being exposed to heat (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha), or exposure to scorching sun in the dry season and to rain on their way to centers that are at a distance, their safety as the center being ensured (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire). They get education with play like activities (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child), with all the freedom and support from others (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child), and all these services without fees paying (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center):*

- *One appreciable quality I can state about the center is the sufficient time it allows the children to first play after their arrival at the center in the morning and before they go to classes (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
- *Education is offered with play materials, and children learn their lessons being very relaxed. We have the Montessori play materials, and that the children are happy with. They are also eager to stay prepared wide awake for the next task when I bring to their attention about what we did today, and what are we are going to do tomorrow (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*
- *After class, the center encourages the children to play balls, to try make-believe toy cars, try make-believe driving, and develop their different body parts. I think ,the children can develop these skills, rovided that they have a play area the community can avail (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

Children’s participation and feelings can obviously be satisfying:

- *The children are happy for being at the center. They show a sense of satisfaction. They are willing to stay the whole day at the center. While in the center, their eagerness and effort to know new things are high. They try their best to practice what they see (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
- *As a result of great love for her education, my child tries hard not to miss classes, even during some of her occasional ailments (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

Impacts on children:<sup>xxix</sup> Guardians and facilitators have noted that children’s participation in ECCE centers have brought a number of visible contributions in their development.

- *I am delighted and highly spirited in noting some of the positive changes that are showing up in my grandchild (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

- *She has acquired knowledge and skills, and I can note this mostly from her talks with me regarding what she learned from the center during the day (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*
- *developed writing and drawing skills (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child), able to read the alphabets (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center), mastered counting numbers and identifying letters (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center), and no more illiterates as we are now (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*
- *Begun telling us stories learnt (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha), speaks the language proper, and learnt listening to what she has heard (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire); developed socially and easily mixes (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center) or get along with persons (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center),).*
- *Learned orderly movements to and from school, group play, turn taking behavior and mutual concern and respect (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center), good manners, orderliness and respect for the elders; speaking properly (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center), improved feeding habits of varying types (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha), keep their hygiene (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center), distinguish between the good and the bad (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
- *Child, before she went to the center, my child didn't know how to properly sit at table when dining, how to properly dress, walk, speak, show respect for mother, father, etc. After her enrolment and learning at the center, however, the center has helped her the proper table manner, proper way of dressing herself up, proper way of walking around, talking and proper way of showing respect for parents(58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*
- *Some of the skills children are seen mastering are tying shoelaces, opening water pipe, running errands, and washing dishes and utensils. Children's skills that children are seen with out of the center include developing literacy through formation of reading & drawing clubs in the village, and attending to stories told by parents(Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
- *The children's performance had been so impressive that they had, at times, been able to "teach" those children who went to the grade school without having any preschool experience (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire), she knows many things that I don't know (58 years old, father, Selam Fire). she is so inquisitive to know that she even asks questions that I cannot answer (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

A grandfather noted, however, that the children has merely come a TV-generation:

- *What is left after these days of TV? The current child is very much for TV; s/he she spends time watching TV; they won't even listen if asked to lower TV volume; when would they ok?; they won't engage themselves with work as children of the earlier generation did; they spend their time in play; they won't listen if you ask them to read and study; they do not obey commands; they are defiant (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

Participants talk passionately about the importance ECCE experiences in their locality in preparing the children for formal schooling. This understanding has been the case without exception. Nearly all believe that going through ECCE helps in clearing the ground for success in later years.

This success is particularly evident when ECCE children are compared to those who join grade one directly from home. Participants believe that such children are better because they empowered academically, socially, and psychologically:

*Two positive achievements that all the centers have demonstrated are: 1. Children have been helped by the centers to know their environments, to learn good manners and particularly to*

*learn respecting persons, and 2. Children have been helped by the centers to acquire basic knowledge for enrolment of grade one education. As a result, the center has enabled children to be very good in their grade one performances (Head, ECCE, Gondar). Achievements registered as a result of children's ECCE experiences include high performance of the ECCE children in their formal schools. ECCE has helped these children to acquire supportive knowledge and skills for their formal schooling. The other advantage was the relief children got from being engaged in heavy workload at home. The ECCE has also been instrumental in enabling the children to have time for play activities with other children and subsequently enrich their social skills (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

*The center has also eased the performance of the children at the formal school. This contribution is highly observed. There is a great difference between the formal educational performance of those who have joined the grade school with and without a preschool education. Those who have joined the formal school after first having their preschool education are expected to be well behaved. Above all, they join the formal school with reading and writing skills already acquired at a preschool level. They also find lessons of grade one to be easy as they have already gone through these during their preschool education. Hence, those children with preschool education have better knowledge and skills than those children who have joined the grade school directly and without preschool education (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*

*The center has influenced children's development of knowledge, skills and perceptions. These are the essential requisites for a child to begin his/her formal school (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*

*Children become better in the formal school as a result of their early experiences in the center; they become quick learners when they join the formal school after learning the alphabets, and numbers in the center; the center helps them improve their knowledge and skills. A child who has been through the center is often a quick learner and better in his performance at a grade school when compared with a child who went directly to it without a preschool experience (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*those who stand in the first to third ranks are the ones who had first got their basic knowledge and skills at the centers. I would therefore say that preschool experiences have helped the children in their formal schools (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*What I want to say again and again is it helps the child in her formal school. It helps children to improve their thinking skills and interactional competence (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*Earlier, a child who did not attend ECCE was dull and shy to look straight at a person when directly admitted to a grade school. Because, the grade school was his/her first experience outside home. But today, children first go to the ECCE center, play, get training, and learn to interact with people before they go to the formal school. Upon entry into the formal school, they can immediately and within a month begin to read a book. Children who go first to the ECCE centers are quick to grasp what they learn. In general, the ECCE center has played a*



*big role in enriching the children's thinking and relational ability with others (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*A child from this center will not fail in any subject upon his transition to the formal school. S/he even excels others in performance. Children of the center are often seen with changes that are observable when they particularly go to the grade school. They never fail in their grade school performances. They are in effect seen excelling others (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

A grandfather used an interesting analogy to express how ECCE experiences are generally useful to the children compared as follows:

*How two people walking in different lanes, one rugged, the other straight, smooth and even, derive equal pleasure from their travels? Definitely, as the one who walks on a smooth and even plane would not worry of thorns sticking into his bare feet, so also would a child who first goes to the center, not worry, as his educational plane is shown to him early, and in a well-planned manner (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

#### **4.6.2. Contributions for parents**

We can also note that the establishment of ECCE centers has positive impacts on parents and communities. For example, a limited number of parents have begun giving more attention and support for their children than previously (*Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child*), and also that the current conception of the community about age of child's first schooling has improved. Consequently, parents are seen sending their children, observing the appropriate age for school (*Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child*).

*I would also say that the center has a great role and has helped parents to realize the importance of the center. Earlier, parents didn't send their children to a preschool. Now, they have realized the facilitative role a preschool plays, and little or no difficulty their children show when they are enrolled in the formal school. In addition, the establishment of the center, close to the homes of the children and free of charge for all, has particularly helped poor parents who lack the financial means in the care and education of their preschool children (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

The setup of the ECCE center close to our homes and the placement of the child in the center has helped us to be relieved of the needed care and has greatly enabled us to freely go to and come back from our daily work (*a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center*), has greatly reduced my "pain of care" for my grandchild (*a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center*), helping us to follow our routine work with little interferences (*a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center*), relieved parents of their obligations, and focus on their routine jobs (*a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center*), has substantially reduced the transportation costs in ferrying our children to and from the center (*a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center*), parents have also benefitted much as the center offers its services free of charge (*a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center*). The mothers, in particular, have been helped, as they are relieved from their daily engagements in childcare and freely deal with their routine jobs. Parents are also spared from being worried about the whereabouts of their children and the possible harmful conditions they could encounter

daily. The community has also been led to realize the contribution of the center, and its importance for the children. I also believe that the center has helped the children in forging good relations with the community (Supervisor of the 10 child Centers, SCN).

Directly asked how far the change they see in their child now further contributed to changes they see in themselves and their family in terms of beliefs, values, child rearing practices, and in terms of your family and social relational behaviors, guardians share the spillover effect as follows:

*Our child has benefited not only for herself, but also shares with us upon coming home from the center; she tells us the several things she has from the center and “teaches” us (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*The placement of the child in the center has strengthened my social life and has helped me to maintain my health (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

*This change in child, has contributed to changes in the family’s child care, child feeding, and child cleanliness behaviors (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*I think it has in particular provided me with good knowledge in the teaching of ethical behaviors. For instance, showing respect for the mother, the father, the community and for the teacher (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*The children go to the center and come home in a well behaved manner; they greet their family members showing all proper manners; they kiss their parents, and after lunch, go back to their assigned activities happily. They are also showing improved manners. All these were not seen on the children earlier before their ECCE experiences, and these observations have in turn helped us to improve our conditions of child care (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*The one who had been at the center readily speaks his name when asked. He/she also tries to speak in English. On the other hand, a child who hasn’t been to a center begins to shy away and hang his head down when asked his name. In addition, those who had been at the center are also seen giving respect and behaving better than those who directly joined the grade school (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*There is change in me and my family in terms of the feeding and cleanliness aspect that we should observe (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*I think it has helped me in reflecting on my beliefs, and in values of respect for parents, and cooperation with others (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

Participants were also asked about the concerns in the surrounding that, they think, offer challenges to the developmental needs of 3-5 year old children, or other observable and serious problems in the area that threaten the child’s development. Many guardians are of the view that there are no concerns except for lack of clean potable water and in some cases difficulties nourishing a child a balanced diet because of poverty:

*Supply of adequate diet for 3-5 year-old children of the surrounding area is not closely availed, (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

*Lack of balanced diet (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*Lack of balanced diet is one of the main developmental concerns for 3-5 year old children of the vicinity (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

An exception could be the case of two guardians who feels that the ECCE center misses some essentials:

*This center has several missing elements to fulfill when compared with other centers of the area. It was simply the first to be established in this area. This center is still in its beginning stage, and not attended to by the essentials. It has several loop holes. For instance, the surface area has not been flattened and smoothened. It has no shaded play area. Hence, when compared with other centers in the big towns, lacks several required things (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*Currently, one problem of concern for young children (3-5 years of age) of the area is related to cleanliness (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

Another guardian feels that some parents still entertain a misunderstanding that children of ages 4 to 5 can't learn:

*Parents who are at a distance from the center still that their children are not ready for learning even if the children are within the expected age level for early childhood care and education. Some parents are not willing to send their 4 to 5 year children to the center, and are heard saying "I doubt if a child of this age would learn anything after all"? But most 4 to 5 year old children are now seen telling and enjoying stories. People have also refrained themselves from hiding their exact ages (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

Facilitators and administrative personnel, on the contrary, raise a number of concerns including lack of young children's absenteeism and work load at home: *Absenteeism is one of the challenging problems in the center (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child, Klinto), there are times when children make themselves absent from the center because they have to attend competing assignments at home (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire), the main ECCE challenge in the area is a noticeably observed decrease in the number of children after registration at the center (Supervisor of the 10 childcenters, SCN).*

Facilitators and administrative personnel also raise such concerns as difficulty of finding a flat and suitable site for ECCE buildings, difficulty of convincing the community in securing a building site, as people are worried of being evicted from their land, difficulty of getting water supply, and religion based perception and suspiciousness of the community (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative), reluctance of faraway rural parents to send their children, fearing that they would be bitten by dogs or snakes, is still a challenge. Otherwise, we don't have any other problem (*Supervisor of the 10 childcenters, SCN*). Unequal treatment seen between the

facilitators of the centers and those teachers of the primary schools in terms of, for example, fringe benefits seem to affect the motivations of the facilitators for their work (*Head, ECCE, Gondar*).

Parental misconceptions, harmful practices, reluctance of some parents to send children to the center, lack of plot of land for expansion and related concerns are still voiced. According to one facilitator, Parents take early childhood education a place where children stay and play. They don't think that it is a place also where children can acquire knowledge and skills. Parents send their children with the main goal of keeping them away so that they won't be disturbed or given a hard time looking after them. They don't have the inkling of the knowledge and skills that will be acquired from experiences in ECCE. Leaving other things aside, parents don't even believe that the children have written themselves when they inspect their exercise books. They even deny this fact, saying it is not you that wrote these, it is your facilitator. When we ask the children to show their parents what they have written during the day, parents of course would have a look at their exercise books. But, they don't believe them that they themselves have done the writing. They would instead retort saying, 'it is your facilitator who wrote this for you, no you'! When I consequently call parents for talks, they really marvel at the children's performances as these are beyond their expectations. They would say, 'I sent the child simply because there was no one who would help me in her care. It was only when I couldn't find anybody who would look after my child, that I put her in this center, expecting only care with play, not expecting at all that she would acquire such knowledge and skills' (*Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire*).

A supervisor expresses that the challenge they have is the work that they have to undergo in order to persuade parents to bring their children to the center. There is also the challenge of calling parents to meet with the school personnel, discuss issues, and eventually develop a feeling of ownership in matters related to the center. These challenges are expected as, we after all, are working to change perceptions. Still the other challenges are the practices of cutting off the child's uvula and taking sick children to unauthorized treatment centers. These practices have to be avoided as they are stumbling blocks to the child's enrolment and learning at the center. Furthermore, these harmful traditional practices have their negative influences on the feeding and health conditions of the children and have to be seriously attended to. In relation to this, the steps that the teachers, directors, and supervisors currently take in curbing the effect of harmful traditional practices are appreciable activities that have to be encouraged. We also have to pool our efforts and strengthen our activities to jointly avoid these harmful traditional practices (*Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor*).

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## Annexes

### • CCE through the Years- Some Statistical Figures

One can see from the figures given in the table below that the general trend in the number of children aged 4-6 who were enrolled in kindergartens in Ethiopia as well as the number of kindergartens available were increasing though at a very slow rate. Despite the general trend which is increasing, the General Enrollment Rate (GER) is still very low. It is disappointing to observe that only less than three percent of children aged 4-6 are served in the kindergartens.

Whereas the data presented in the table above pertains to the country as a whole, examination of the education statistics annual abstracts published by the Ministry of Education every year shows that participation of children in kindergartens is characterized by regional disparities (e.g., In 2003/04, the GER for Addis Ababa was 31.6 whereas for Afar and Somali it was only 0.6). There is also evidence to support that participation of children in kindergartens is characterized by urban-rural disparity (in favor of urban areas) and gender disparity (in favor of male children). The figures presented in the annual abstracts generally suggest that although effort has been made to improve access every year, the increase is a very minute one given the size of the population of children aged 4-6 years. The implication is very clear. In general, much remains to be done with regard to increasing participation of children in kindergartens. This in turn requires to increase the number of kindergartens available in the country significantly as well as to train kindergarten teachers. So it is not only the number of children and kindergartens that we should attempt to increase but also the number of kindergarten teachers as well as the number of kindergarten teacher training institutes.

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	"O" class																1,03 1,13 1	1,24 2,40 6
	Child -to- child																193, 750	291, 831
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Teac hers	KG							3,7 16	4,3 46	4,5 84	7,2 71	8,0 17	4,7 94	13, 763	9,6 47	13, 963	12,4 80	12,6 39
Scho ols	KG	77	56 1	912	83 4	964	118 9	1,0 67	1,2 44	1,4 97	1,7 94	2,3 13	2,7 40	3,8 65	3,3 18	3,4 18	3,58 0	3,68 8
GER	KG			2.1%	1.8 %	2.0 %	2.1 %	2.0 %	2.2 %	2.3 %	2.7 %	3.1 %	3.9 %	4.2 %	4.8 %	5.3 %	5.3%	6.2%
	"O" class																13.7 %	16.1 %
	Child -to- child																2.6%	3.8%
	Prepr imar y																	26.1 %

- **Interviewees and profiles**

#### **Interview with ECCE Project Coordinator**

1. (ECCE Project Coordinator since January, 2009, Klinto ECCE).

#### **Gondar ECCE Head and Woreda SCN Focal persons**

2. Head, ECCE, Gondar

3. (Focal Person), SCN Woreda Deputy Representative

#### **Interview with the Directors, Supervisors and SCN Staff**

4. Director of full cycle Selam Fire School, 8 years teaching experience, Selam Fire School

5. Supervisor from Selam Fire, 10 years work experience, Woreda Education Office.

6. Supervisor for 10 Unaffiliated Child Centers, 10 years of experience ( began work in 1997 E.C), Save the Children Norway (SCN)

#### **Interview with Children of the ECCE**

7. *The child stated that she has four brothers and three sisters, but has none of these according to information from parents (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*
8. *The child states that he has four sisters and one brother. But information obtained from his parents reveals that he has only one brother (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*
9. *The child has a sister and one brother (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*
10. *Living with his mother, this child has two brothers and two sisters (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*
11. *A 6 years old, girl child, lives both parents and have two sisters but no brother (Selam Fire).*
12. *A 6 years old, boy child, lives with both parents, and also with brothers. Have two elder brothers. The first is 12, and the second is 9. Both are at school (Selam Fire).*
13. *A 7 years old, girl child, live in a family with 6 members, 2 grandparents and 3 uncles (Chig Wuha).*
14. *A 6 years old, boy child with both parents, three sisters and brother, a family Size of 7 persons (Chig Wuha).*
15. *A 6 years old, girl child, half orphan (no father), lives with my mother and brother (Selam Fire). I don't have a sister, but I have one brother. He is at school. He has completed his grade 10 education.*
16. *A 6 years old, boy child, full orphan, lives with my carer/ refers to her as' mother', has one sister, she lives somewhere else. I don't know how old she is. I also do not know whether she is at school either. But I don't have a brother (Selam Fire).*

### **Interview with facilitators**

17. *I have served as a facilitator for 3years and 3 months (Klinto, Facilitator One, Female, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
18. *I have worked as a facilitator for one year and seven months. I have sufficient information and evidence regarding the children (Klinto, Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
19. *A 30 years old, facilitator, female, married, two children, family size of 4 persons, 14 years of teaching experience, 4 years in this center, Selam Fire.*
20. *35 years old, facilitator, female, single, no child, 10 years of teaching experience, Chigu Wuha*
21. *A 30 years old, facilitator, female, married, two children, family size of 4 persons, 14 years of teaching experience, 4 years in this center, Selam Fire.*
22. *A 35 years old, facilitator, female, single, no child, 10 years of teaching experience, Chigu Wuha*

### **Interview with Parents and grandparents**

23. *Twenty nine years old mother, in marriage and with a family size of five members (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*
24. *Twenty five years old mother, in marriage, a mother of three children (i.e. two female and one male), and with a family size of five members (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

25. *Twenty eight years old mother with a family size of 5 persons; two boys and one girl (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*
26. *Forty five years old Father with a family size of 5 persons (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
27. *Twenty eight years old Father, with a family size of 4 persons (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
28. *Fifty years old grandmother living with two children (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
29. *A 50 years old Grandmother with a family size of 7 persons including 3 grandchildren (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
30. *Fifty years old Grandmother with a family size of 8 persons (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*
31. *Forty eight year old Grandfather with a Family Size of 12 persons (2 granddaughters, 8 children, and the male and female spouses)*
32. *Seventy years old Grandfather family Size is 12 out of whom one is a grandchild (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
33. *Fifty eight years old, father, in marriage and living with spouse and children, 6 persons, Selam Fire.*
34. *Thirty six years old, Father, Lives with a wife and children, family size of 6 persons.*
35. *Twenty seven years old, Mother, lives with a husband and child, 3 persons, Selam Fire.*
36. *Thirty five years old, mother, married and living with the spouse and children, family size is 7 persons (Chigwuha).*
37. *Seventy years old, grandfather, lives with wife and children, family size of 7 persons, Selam Fire.*
38. *Forty five years old, grandmother, lives with husband and children, family size of 8 persons, Selam Fire.*
39. *58 years old, grandfather, lives with wife and children family size is 5 persons, Chig wuha*
40. *Forty nine years old, grandmother, lives with grandchildren, family size of 3 persons, Chig Wuha*

- **Endnotes**

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**<sup>i</sup> Although some differences were gradually noted in school attendance, the rest (child work and limited play) seemed to consistently occur across time<sup>i</sup>:**

*Life we used to lead in the past was far inferior to life the present day childcare offers. .. Herding cattle and helping in work as of fifth year. By seven, started school..., overburdened with several family duties (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*Raised by grandmother, who used to wash, comb and oil my unkempt hair'... buy clothes, and shoes... also persuaded for an early marriage which I did. As I was still a child, I used to play 'suzi, and other games, bearing my first pregnancy. My grandmother used to advise me on several issues... attended a priest school ... enjoyed games very much, for instance, "Segno-maxegno (or Monday-Tuesday), volley ball...had many types of toys personally prepared from rugs collected from different places. As the play materials were too many, I kept them in a special box I prepared (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*



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*life of school and helping parents in the farm, restricted play time, making toys out of shreds of old clothes (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*...used to play football and enjoy music...played “chasing” and “hide and seek”, can’t remember story, riddle or song... My childhood years were years of freedom without restraint (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*used to go to school with a small bag of perched grain (kollo), to stave off my need for food until after the lessons were over...had to look after the sheep...games as aa-ku-ku-lu (literally translated as ‘search & catch the culprit’) (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*Was mainly an age of work, don’t remember childhood playtime, didn’t have parental will to listen to stories, sing a songs, family didn’t provide me with the necessary care”...children were forced into labor that was not calibrated to their age (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*No school, nor did enjoy play much, as I had to shoulder early responsibility, play time with imitative games of mud, play toys made from shreds of clothes, hair, and wood. Didn’t remember stories and songs (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*Didn’t go to school, play painting walls with mud, arranging stones, playing with leaves, and making dolls...herded cattle, fetched water and prepared food for family, control of my family...could not be allowed to stay late in the evening or else face being flogged if I violated the rule. (56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*I was an active child; ready to understand things. I asked my father to let me join school. But he didn’t. Because my parents were poor, I used to engage myself in mat craft that I sold in the market and got some coins out of the sales (58 years old father, Selam Fire).*

*No school, herding cattle; and playing traditional Ethiopian hockey in the fields (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*Briefly attended a priest school, spent mostly in work than play, didn’t have toys. Parents did not pay much attention to the necessary childcare I should have, looking after cattle as of seven, play such activities as counting numbers with sands, and chickpeas (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

## **<sup>ii</sup> Participants views about past and present childcare practices:**

*...today’s children would say, ‘it is my right’, and would subsequently not heed your concerns about their behavior. Even so, the current child upbringing is better than the one we experienced in our childhood years. Earlier, we used to hold a lighted kerosene lamp, serve with a water jug for hands, and receive some morsels of food during parental meals, and observe good manners in our upbringing. Today, you can’t find these values any more (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*Children of today are seen playing together with their family members, right from their early years. Throughout the days, they are seen with their parents; they work together, and dine together. Nowadays, children are not obliged to undertake heavy workloads, except those that are appropriated to their age levels. In general, children of today have good relationships with their parents (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

## **<sup>iii</sup> I remember my favorite school song:**

*‘Brother Jacob, Brother Jacob,*

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Are you sleeping?  
Are you sleeping?  
Morning bells are ringing,  
Morning bells are ringing  
Ding, Dang , Dong  
Ding, Dang, Dong’.

‘My sister Yeshi,  
My sister Yeshi,  
Are you sleeping?  
Are you sleeping?  
Morning bells are ringing?  
Morning bells are ringing?  
Ding, Dang, Dong  
Ding, Dang, Dong’ (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).

**Many other participants indicated, however, that they don’t remember:**

*I don’t know any child song ...that I can relate now(a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center)..*

*I ... can’t remember any song of my childhood years as we have to attend to other concerning life/home issues (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*There were songs that we used to sing when we as children fetched water, and herded cattle. But I can’t remember them now (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*I have played eskesta, or shoulder dance, very well. I still can play it. But I don’t participate in much of the songs, stories, or the music of the time (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*As I was brought up in a rural area, there were traditional songs and dances. For instance, I knew the lines of a song I used to sing. But I can only remember the stanza not the whole lines of the song (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*There were stories that I heard, and played, but couldn’t remember now (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*I can’t remember them right now. There were also songs and dances that I may remember partially (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*I have forgotten the stories. But I remember the Inka Selanteya, or the ‘guess-what’ game of posing questions and expecting answers from children. I can’t also remember the songs, dances, music pieces dances, or dramas of my childhood years (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*I can’t remember any of the songs now (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*I had some stories that I heard and enjoyed during my childhood years. But I can’t remember them now (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*I don’t remember the childhood song that comes to my attention (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*I don’t know children’s song as I haven’t had the chance to sing any during my childhood (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

**<sup>iv</sup> Like games and songs, stories, too, occurred minimally:**

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*I have forgotten the stories (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*I don't know any child ... story that I can relate now (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center)..*

*I had some stories that I heard and enjoyed during my childhood years. But I can't remember them now (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*We had stories told by our grandparents. But I can't remember any of them right now (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*Yes, we really "did play" some stories. But I have now forgotten all, I should confess. I don't remember my childhood songs, music or dances either (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*There are stories I heard as a child. But I can't remember them right now (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*There was no one to tell me a story as the old generation was not that much educated. Even so, I used to hear some from my friends (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*I could not remember any story or song I heard during my childhood as there was nobody to tell me (Mother of a girl child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

<sup>v</sup> *I remember a story I used to enjoy. It is about a fox and a lion. 'Once upon a time there were a fox and a lion who lived in a forest. The fox had some sheep, and the lion had an ox. The fox and the lion agreed to invite each other in their respective homes. In the first day, it was the fox's turn to invite the lion. But the lion could not appear at the table prepared by fox. The fox asked the lion why he was absent, and he replied that he could not observe the invitation as he had to attend to his ox that is giving birth to a calf. In another date of appointment, the lion went to meet the fox at his house, but found out the fox was not there. The lion angrily asked why didn't observe the appointment. The fox answered stating that he has been busy stitching up shreds of earth with a needle. Being amazed at the answer, Mr. Lion asked the fox: How come that shreds of earth could be stitched up by a needle and by you? The fox answered, with a similar tone; 'How come that an ox delivers a calf'? Being angry at this daring answer, the lion threatened the fox that he would eat up all his sheep. In response, the fox quickly stated his pledge to invite him at an appointed time he suggested. The lion was calmed down by the response. On the day of the invitation, the fox collected heaps of sharp stones and bones and cooked all in a big jar. As the lion arrived, the fox invited him to draw near and warm himself with the fire. As the meal was ready, and while the lion was helping himself, the fox busied himself by stitching up the lion's tail with the tail of a dead hyena lying nearby. As the stones in the jar began to explode, the lion was so scared that he had to run out of the house, dragging the dead hyena with his tail along the way, but ending up in a ditch finally. From that day on, the fox had no enemy that could threaten him as Mr. Lion is already dead' (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

<sup>vi</sup> *One story that I remember refers to those wild animals who had bought a donkey. Once upon a time, a lion, a rabbit, a cat, a wild goose and a hyena, five friends in good friendship, who bought a donkey and kept as their common property. To take care of the donkey a schedule worked out where each would act as per the assignment. Consequently, the hyena was the first to herd the donkey, which he gladly took up the task. But on that herding day of the hyena, the donkey disappeared and the report soon reached the other owners soon. The news shocked the four owners (i.e. the lion, the cat, the wild goose and the rabbit) to the core. After deliberations among themselves, the meeting chaired by the lion decided that three of the animals, (the wild goose, the cat and the rabbit) try their best to track down the whereabouts of the donkey. The first owner to track down the donkey was the wild goose, who on her way and in the direction the hyena hinted, spotted a sign in the forest and shrieked saying, "gee-ki-ki", gee-ki-ki, gee-ki-ki", " I have got a clue, the hyena has devoured our donkey"! The cat in turn also reported that she had spotted something, and began shrieking, "ur,ur, ur,ur", I have spotted a sign, the donkey had been eaten here"! The third was the rabbit who immediately raised her big ears and looked toward the direction the hyena hinted and pointed at the hyena, saying, "He is the culprit who devoured our donkey". After saying this, she ran away as fast as she could and saved herself from the jaws of the hyena' (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

<sup>vii</sup> *Once upon a time, there lived a goat who used to make shrills of high pitch and disturb the neighbors. This angered a leopard who caught and asked him the reason of his loud noise. The goat answered saying that he*

shrilled loudly because he couldn't bear the needs of his many children who gave him a hard time of care. The leopard asked him how many children the goat had, and also expressed his wish to see them all. The goat answered stating that he had two children. Upon hearing this answer, the leopard took the goat to his house and showed that he has five children, and doesn't worry about the number of his children, and doesn't make a loud noise as a result. The goat then expressed his guilt and vowed not to cry any more, and peacefully went back to care for his two children. As of that day, the goat reduced the volume of his bleat and began to emit a tone of low scale when dealing with his children' (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).

<sup>viii</sup> **Guardians (parents and grandparents) described the qualities of a good child as follows:**

- can tell what he has learnt, is not quarrelsome, and focuses on his lessons (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).
- keep her cleanliness; show proper dress and proper movement when she walks around; show respect for mother, father, teachers; learn lessons with diligence (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).
- good manners and patience (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).
- wakes up in the morning, goes for breakfast, goes to school after breakfast, and fulfills/obeys the demands of parents after school (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).
- regularly goes to school, & comes home on time (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).
- non-violent, listens carefully, learns diligently and obeys adults (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).
- receives his mother with a smile, and doesn't disturb (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).
- gets along with friends, and good character (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).
- respects and greets people with a smile and obedient (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).
- respects parental command, does not disturb, or does not commit offences (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).
- goes to and returns from school on time; obeys and fulfills demands after school, and sits for an evening study of school lessons (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).
- works wholeheartedly, and satisfies your wishes, and doesn't complain, says 'ok, ok', and ready to fulfill parental orders (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).
- obeys demands and works quickly (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).
- wise, respectful, well behaved, and keeps self- clean... (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).
- obedient, playful, and gets along with others (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).
- listens to what I say, accepts the good as good, and refrains from the bad things when told to do so; continue learning the good things from experienced adults (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).
- demonstrates appreciable school performance, and obeys parental demands (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).

<sup>ix</sup> **Children's description of the qualities of a 'good child' included the following list:**

- Reads, writes and studies; washes the dishes well; respects mother and father...(6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).
- Respect parental demands (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).
- make sauce/ wat, take parental orders, keep quiet, behave well when told to be so. Bad children, on the other hand, are evil doers and steal things that their mother has kept away from their view (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).
- wash dishes, boil coffee and fetch water (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).
- make enjera and wat, and who herd animals (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto center).
- wash dishes, boil coffee and fetch water (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).
- Fetch water, look after the house, look after a baby, pound coffee beans, feed out in the farms, and accompany their parents to grain mills. Bad children are grumpy and sulky (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).

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- *sweeps the floor, and obey parents' orders (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*
  - *Respect parents, help them with chores, and provide assistance when they seek from them. Bad ones are defiant, do not listen to what their mothers have to say, are rowdy (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*
  - *fetch water, clean utensils and clean the floor, bad ones disobey and use bad words (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

<sup>x</sup> Below are the list of **wishes, goals, and values of parents and grandparents** for their young children:

- *I like my child to be a teacher after completion of her education. I like my child to be a teacher, because a teacher is a person who teaches everything and the one who: doesn't wash his clothes, doesn't keep self-clean, doesn't walk properly, and doesn't talk properly to wash his/her clothes, to keep himself/herself clean, to walk properly, and to talk properly (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*
- *I would be happy if my child enters a medical profession and becomes a doctor. Because a doctor provides medical treatment for people who are ill. In addition, a doctor is usually seen with work in the cities in contrast to these teachers who are bound to work in the rural areas and suffer the consequences (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire). I want my child to be a boss in an organization (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
- *Actually it all depends on the will of God. Even so, I will try to meet her educational needs. I want her to pursue her university education. What she chooses, however, depends on her competence. Yet, I wish if she could be a doctor. This is for the reasons that I love my child so much, I was also a good student, and I didn't attain the goal that I set for myself because of parental factors (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*
- *I wish my female child to successfully complete her education, get good job, and good social standing in life (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*
- *I wish a healthy growth for my child, and I would be happy if she gets employment in a bank (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*
- *I want all children to get education and a good place when they grow up so that they can help both themselves and their country. But I wish if my child could become a bank manager with the attainment of good knowledge in mathematics (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
- *I want my child to get along well with children and the facilitators, to learn the alphabet and to identify numbers. I also want him to physically develop with outdoor play materials (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
- *I wish my child completes her education and become an engineer. I wish this profession for my child, because engineering is very important for the country's development (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
- *I wish that my grandchild grows into womanhood with good education and assume a dignified place in her future life (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
- *I wish if my grandchildren grow well and get work as civil employees in their adulthood years (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
- *I wish that my grandchild grow into adulthood and become a medical doctor, simply because of the fact that medicine is a hard earned profession (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*
- *I wish that my grandchildren get good education and good employment thereafter (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

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- *I wish that my grandson get good employment as a civil servant in a government organization (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
  - *After my child has completed her education and is mature enough, I want her to be a medical doctor. Otherwise, and as a second choice, I wish her to be a high school teacher (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*
  - *I wish my grandchild to be in a medical profession after completion of her education. The reason is that a medical doctor rescues human life from ailments (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
  - *Above all, I my usual wish for my granddaughter to lead a married life. I haven't thought of such other life choices as types of employment she should take up (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
  - *I want my child to land in America (i.e. the US) after the completion of his education. I then wish him to be a pilot. I think becoming a pilot would help him to enjoy a relaxed life, and a life that is in sharp contrast to the repressed life we currently lead (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*
  - *What I wish for my child, is a profession of teaching just like you, although I fear that it may not be available. I also wish her to be a medical doctor, and help her clans/relatives (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

<sup>xi</sup> **Children's descriptions of their daily engagements**

- *My daily activities include play in the morning. Out of home, I go to class, eating lunch at noon time, play and go back home (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). No chores, no lessons*
- *I manage my cleanliness by regularly washing my body and hair (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*
- *I didn't go to school today to show you my daily activities. But when I go to school, I learn stories and reading and writing (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*
- *Today, I played merry-go-round, slides, and shew-shew. I then went back to class and learned lessons offered. After school, I was served with lunch immediately; I also ate eshet/green beans. But I didn't do anything other things than these today (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*
- *With regard to the activities of my day, I had no ball point pen to write my assignment in class. But a child next to me offered me his pen. I then wrote my classroom assignment. Then I went out for play with my age mates. Upon returning home from school, I arranged the household wares, washed my clothes, and the glass cups. I learned these chores watching my carer/ aunt and my nephew with the activities at home (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

<sup>xii</sup> **Parents' and grandparents' descriptions of the daily activities of the children:**

*In the morning, he washes his face after he gets up from his bed. He then eats his breakfast and goes to **school**. After school, he comes back home in the evening; he eats his supper; **reads from** his little exercise book; and goes to bed (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*She gets up early in the morning, washes her face and eats her breakfast. She then engages herself in play activities. After her play time, she begins reading the alphabet board that hangs from the wall. She then resumes her play until lunch time. After lunch, she takes a nap. Upon waking up, I give her something to eat. She then goes out to her play activities. When she comes back home in the evening, she begins learning the alphabets, where I also give my helping hand in her effort to master the letters. At the center, she is a regular attendant of the classes. She arrives at the center on time. Lessons are delivered with songs. The children are allowed to go out and play when they feel tired (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

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*She gets up early in the morning and washes herself. She then sits for breakfast and goes to school. After school, she changes her clothes, and eats her lunch. She then engages herself in play and takes part in running errands, cleaning the floor and serving us with water (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*She gets up early in the morning, washes her face, breakfasts, and then goes to the center. After school, she has her hours of play. She doesn't have that much activities outside this (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*She gets up from her bed in the morning, arranges things in order, breakfasts, and goes to the school. After school, she eats, and then goes out for play. She then washes her hands and prepares herself for her evening meal. After her meal, she goes to her bed (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire). Who teaches these tasks? I myself (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*He wakes up early in the morning; plays; goes to school; spends his day in the school; eats his meal (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*She gets up from her bed in the morning and sweeps the floor; she washes her face and breakfasts; she then plays; eats her lunch; plays and goes to sleep after her evening meal (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*After school, my child plays with children of the neighborhood, helps me in keeping household utensils in order, serves invited guests with coffee, washes utensils even though she couldn't thoroughly clean them, and sweeps the floors partially in trying to help me with the house chores (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

*The daily activities of my child include walking from bed early in the morning, washing her face and sitting for breakfast. After breakfast, she goes to the center, and attends her morning learning session. At noon, she eats her lunch and begins her play activities. As the evening draws near, she takes some baths, meal, then to her bed. She cleans the floor if water is spilt; she sweeps the dirt of the floor; she washes utensils, watching her mother do them. She plays with her brother; he helps her with her school subjects and she also does the same; generally they help each other (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

*My female child wakes up from her bed in the morning, goes to the lavatory, washes her hands and face, wears the center's uniform, sits at breakfast table, moves out to the center with a lunch box I prepared for her. After school, she eats her lunch, plays with other kids of the neighborhood. Then she washes her hands for her evening meal and then goes to sleep there after (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

*With reference to my child's daily activities, he wakes early in the morning, washes himself, sits at breakfast, dresses himself up with school uniform, goes to the center, learns subjects, and plays with his age mates. After school, he comes back home, washes himself, eats his supper and goes to sleep". At home, he plays with nails and metal sheets. In addition, he washes himself, and runs errands. He learns these chores, observing his elder sisters (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*She gets up early in the morning, washes here hands and face using soap, eats her breakfast, and goes to school( i.e. the center). After school, (that apparently is over by noon), she eats her lunch and takes a nap. At about four, she wakes up and plays. She first washes herself, before she goes to bed in the evening. My child also participates in such simple house chores as arranging dishes for meal, watching and following what her family members do (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*Daily, my grandchild gets early from her bed in the morning, washes her face and applies some cream on her face and hair, eats her breakfast and goes to the center to learn the alphabet. After school, she changes her clothes, and goes out of home for play. She also participates in such simple house chores, as washing the dishes, and flashing out the dirt, watching me doing it (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*As their daily routine, my grandchildren get from their beds early in the morning, wash their hands and faces, have their breakfast and go to school. At home, after school, they change their clothes and engage themselves in play activities (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

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*As her daily routine my grandchild, wakes up from her bed in morning, washes her hands and face, sits at breakfast, dresses herself up and goes to the center. In the afternoon, she eats her lunch and plays with children of the neighborhood. At home, she participates in such simple house chores as running errands, washing dishes, fetching water, cleaning the floor, usually upon the demand of the family members and also on her own initiative (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*The daily routine of my grandchild is as follows: In the morning, she gets up from her bed, and goes to the toilet. She then washes her hands and face, and sits at her breakfast. I then take her to the ECCE center. After school, she lays down her school bag, washes her body and sits at lunch. Then she watches TV programs. She has to also prepare herself for the assignments that have to be done and be submitted to the facilitators the next day. In addition, she plays with her age mates of the neighborhood. She then sits for evening meal, changes her clothes to a night gown and goes to sleep. She also engages herself with such light chores as washing socks, handkerchief, dishes and availing a jug of water for guests' hands, before and after meal services. She does all these chores on her own initiative (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*My grandchild's daily activities show the following schedule: walking up from his sleep, getting his breakfast, and going to the center, coming back home after school, and engaging himself with the school homework, and trying to engage himself in house chores on weekends. He doesn't do much of the house chores (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

<sup>xiii</sup> **Children's area of engagement in home chores:**

- *cooking wot with my grandmother, and fetching water, look after the house when they go to collect firewood, and boil coffee upon their return from the fields, sweep the floor, and am also learning to prepare enjera, fetching water, boil coffee. Today, for instance, I fetched water, swept the floor, and picked a lemon fruit from our backyard for sale. My aunt taught me how to pick the fruit from a tree (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*
- *sweep the floor, and sometimes, peel and chop onions and make sauce/wat (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*
- *prepare enjera and wat and boil coffee in play like fashion (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*
- *washing clothes, washing utensils (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*
- *cleaning the flower base, sweeping the floor and washing dishes (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*
- *look after a baby, fetch water and also look after the house when my parents are away (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*
- *roast green beans, peas or barleys, help my mother in carrying things, sweep the floor and throw away the dirt (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*
- *fetching water, washing clothes and cleaning the floor (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

<sup>xiv</sup> Additional evidences of **Care and support provided to the children:**

*In addition to what her father and mother have to say, I advise her to grow up imbibing good manners. I reprimand her strongly when she violates some our expectations. There is no physical punishment today, whether beatings or floggings (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*I help my female child to wake up, wash her face, eat her breakfast and go to the center with a lunch box (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

*I also look after the cleanliness of my grandchild (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*



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*As a grandmother, I take care of my grandchildren's school lunch (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*As a grandfather, I care for my grandchildren, washing their clothes, and helping them wash their bodies (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*In my role as a grandfather, I do a regular follow up and provide the necessary support for my grandchild (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*At home, my mother and father take care of me mostly. They feed me enjera. They teach me stories, games, and songs (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I have an uncle who mostly takes care of me. He teaches me songs, games, and stories. He quit school as he was not able to make it (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*At home, my mother takes care of me (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*

*At home, it is my aunt/career. I call her 'mother'. She is the one who takes care of me mostly (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

*My grandmother is dead. I have a grandfather who is alive, but we do not meet as he is not in good terms with my career and as he is also far away from us (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

#### **<sup>xv</sup> Facilitators and supervisors descriptions of the qualities of a 'good facilitator'.**

- *Model for children (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
- *patient to bear children's natural tendency to be easily bored, and understanding of the children's emotions correctly (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*
- *takes care of her clothes and manners in the first place, prepares teaching materials enticing the children, and goes with the tasks of teaching in a proper and comfortable way (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*
- *show good care when the children come to the centers, and alert parents to take the children back home when the school hours are over. show special love and proper care for the children. can seize every opportunity to advise parents on children's issues (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
- *observes punctuality, who understands children's emotions and respects their rights, performs well what is expected of her (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
- *competent in the first place. show motherly love, not a person who scares the children. loves, cares and shows closeness to the children (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*
- *provides equal treatment with no reprimand. has due respect of the children's opinion, and teaching with play activities (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*
- *well mannered, poses herself as a model, starting from the way she dresses herself up, help and care for the children (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
- *shows love for children, keeps self-clean, and who maintains close relationship with the children and forms mutual understanding with the parents (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
- *has at least attended a one year certificate training on ECCE...loves and caress children, has patience, encourages the child's efforts, calibrates lessons with the competence of the child, serves as a model, speaks exemplary statements, well behaved and good mannered, produce teaching materials and aids using local resources (ECCE Project Coordinator, Klinto ECCE).*
- *As a facilitator, I know each individual child, what s/he wants, and in which developmental stage s/he is (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

#### **<sup>xvi</sup> Quality ECCE, good ECCE, required inputs**

- 
- *avail the required books, children observe time of going into and out of the center, and teacher treat children with full acknowledgement of their individual selves (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
  - *has a clean and spacious room, outdoor play area, a tea club, and a child recreation area (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*
  - *Spacious rooms, sufficient numbers of chairs and tables (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
  - *latrines, sufficient and complete play materials, and a center that avails sufficient condition for repair of broken play materials. trees and shades for children to play under a cool place, dining room for children and does not allow entry to older children (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*
  - *serves the children with tea. meets the play needs of the children with balls and other similar play materials. good and caring facilitators, and helps children develop with knowledge and skills (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
  - *play materials and offers good education (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*
  - *well administered, and has a clean learning room, learning conditions with the appropriate follow up (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
  - *sufficient learning and outdoor play materials (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*
  - *fulfills the basic outdoor play and classroom materials (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*
  - *potable water, toilets and a clean environment for the children (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*
  - *Play materials, clean toilets in good condition (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*
  - *well-organized center with chairs, blackboard, outdoor play materials, snap room, toilets potable water, clean compound and competent teachers, a cleanly kept center; a plot of land, toilets, potable water, electric light, telephone, teaching materials, outdoor play materials, a fence, some inputs for teachers and school uniform for the children (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
  - *outdoor play materials, clean and green compound, and sufficient toys (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
  - *outdoor play materials sufficiently (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
  - *sufficiently equipped with dolls and play materials, and several materials (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
  - *building's adequate structure in both its internal and external edifices, proper care of the facilitators, cleanliness and outdoor play materials, teaching materials (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*
  - *a good preschool is an establishment that offers sport activities, songs, play materials, a clean compound, potable water, and a healthy and insect-free environment (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
  - *necessary learning materials (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
  - *rooms, play areas, potable water, toilets, good fence, and adequate financial sources, cleanliness of the compound (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
  - *Sufficient learning materials, rooms with (leveled and comfortable) floors, light, chairs, different pictures posted on the walls (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*
  - *well equipped with outdoor play materials that can develop the fine and gross muscles of the children, toilet facility, potable water, fenced compound, greeneries, and children's feeding room. Classroom has adequate light, and size for children to move freely, floor surface has to be smooth and leveled (ECCE Project Coordinator, Klinto ECCE).*
  - *children have things to see or things to hear in sufficient supply (Selam Fire "gudgnt" Supervisor).*
  - *good water supply that it currently lacks (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
  - *materials sufficiently (books, preschool materials), and sufficient play space and play materials (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

<sup>xvii</sup> **Expectations from the center, the child:**

- 
- *clearly hears and listens to what s/he has been told and subsequently runs errands correctly; comes back home after accomplishing mission of running errands, never steals from neighbors and who never lies; studies lessons (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
  - *obedient to my demands, takes orders with 'yes' response, and works; a child accepts parental advice (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
  - *attends education properly, good manners, and get along well with people (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*
  - *clearly hears and listens to what s/he has been told and subsequently runs errands correctly; comes back home after accomplishing mission of running errands, never steals from neighbors and who never lies; studies lessons (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
  - *obedient to my demands, takes orders with 'yes' response, and works; a child accepts parental advice (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
  - *attends education properly, good manners, and get along well with people (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*
  - *The center has a big role in the transition of the child to a grade school, i.e. to identify the letters of the alphabet, to write and read (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*
  - *count numbers, identify letters of the alphabet, tell a story, and sing a song (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*
  - *learning to keep the self- clean (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
  - *learn the alphabets, to count numbers and to master speaking our language (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*
  - *obey their facilitators' instructions on ECCE assignment, to keep their school uniform as cleanly as possible, show respect for their facilitators, and learn properly, and to directly come home after school (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
  - *learn writing, engage in such activities as putting household materials in their proper order and places”.*
  - *get good knowledge, identify the good and the bad (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*
  - *learn the different academic subjects and good manners (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
  - *know his/her environment in the first place, know self, and keep self-healthy ( i.e. avoid playing in a dirty play, avoid touching dirty things, and avoid touching sharp and rusty things) (Selam Fire “gudgnt” Supervisor).*
  - *learn good manners: respect for mothers, fathers as well as for teachers; observe the role models that s/he would emulate (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*
  - *learning good manners; learning table manners (feeding rites), learning subjects, word building and sentence construction, learning to differentiate the good and the bad ( for instance, learning about HIV transmissions) (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*
  - *learn telling stories, drawing and identifying numbers, etc(35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

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- *learn manners and not to be rowdy, acquire knowledge with good discipline (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
  - *acquiring knowledge ( i.e. reading and writing) and learning manners (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
  - *a learning and play site that is sufficiently equipped with the essential materials (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*
  - *acquire knowledge, learn the alphabets and counting numbers (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*
  - *identify the letters of the alphabet, learn the appropriate feeding, and cleanliness routines, acquire good manners (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*
  - *gain some knowledge (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

<sup>xviii</sup> **Administrative personnel believe that incorporation of community resources in ECCE program is important:**

*With reference to the role of songs, games and stories of the surrounding areas in the curriculum/program of the center, I would say that the inclusion of these resources is important in the facilitation of children’s learning. Evidently, children want to learn things through songs, games and stories. Children would not get bored if the delivery of care and educational services is based on these values of the surrounding areas (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

*These community songs, and games have a big role to play in the ECCE program. Children are easily bored if we keep on teaching them the alphabets for long. But it is possible to see to it that children are not bored by simply teaching them several things through songs, games, poetry, and jokes (Selam Fire “gudgnt” Supervisor).*

*I believe that the incorporation of the cultural values, knowledge, beliefs and perceptions into the center’s program is important as this would help the children to acquire the basics of their culture. In addition, this move will help the children in the further extension and continuation of their values (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

*Concerning the incorporation of the community’s values, norms, and beliefs into the center’s program, I believe that this must be done. On the other hand, those harmful community values should be avoided (Supervisor of the 10 childcenters, SCN).*

*Songs, games, and stories of the area have great role in our ECCE program. We, for instance, use songs in the ECCE activities (Supervisor of the 10 child Centers, SCN).*

*We believe that children’s use of such local materials as mud, and plant stems are essential in helping children make shapes of the alphabets or in helping them count numbers using sandstones, even though we have teaching materials that are the products of technology. Hence, I can say that it is important and necessary to combine both the local and the technologically produced teaching materials in the enhancement of children’s creative potentials and thinking. In addition, I would say that the local sources would not simply be replaced by the technologically produced teaching materials. This is because of the fact that the imported teaching materials we have at the center are mainly used during our class hours with the children. But we can’t avoid children’s use of such local sources as mud and sandstones in their plays or other things when they move out to their homesteads after school (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

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*When we teach the children, we use local sources for our teaching materials. In addition, there are the teaching materials that the SCN has provided us. Even so, we believe that the use of local sources for teaching materials is much desired. The use of local materials, would, I believe, help the children to learn by looking, and to develop their creative potentials (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

<sup>xix</sup> **Guardians believe that community values are incorporated in the ECCE program of their locality:**

*I can say that my child has been able to be what I wanted her to be: I had wanted her to be responsive, and they have taught her to be so; earlier, she used to speak little when she goes out of her home; but now she can respond to any question people ask her without showing any sign of fear; she doesn't pick a fight with others; she gives respects people; she respects her mother and father. She performs values of cooperation, reciprocity and love for one another very well. She does these well, and even to the extent of giving calls for her friends (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*I think they are incorporated. I think the children are learning how to maintain the culture, show good manners, and sing and keep the songs (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*I think, yes. For instance, the children learn such important values as cooperation, mutual respect, mutual concerns, sharing, showing love for one another, and the like (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*I think they are incorporated. For instance, I think the center offers learning of such values as cooperation, mutual respect, mutual help, love of one another, etc., for the children (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*The center has incorporated and reflected the expected values of the community in its curriculum, for instance, they play in groups, and they go to the center and are back to their homes in groups (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*Initiating a community based child rearing approach is important in enhancing more awareness among carers (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*I think these are incorporated in the center's goals and programs. For instance, it has incorporated women's rights. I generally think that the children are being taught about community's values, culture and thinking (58 years old, grandfather, Chigwuha).*

*The center has incorporated the needed values of the community in its curriculum. For instance, children walk around hugging each other, and are seen in groups when they are back from school (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*I also believe that the ECCE center has incorporated such needed community values as group play, and a value of concern for others in its curriculum (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center). I believe it is important to call a meeting for a community based awareness raising approach on child care and parenting (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*The center has also incorporated the basic values of the community as reflected in the curriculum. For instance, children are walking to the center by holding hands; they show cooperative games and plays (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*The center reflects the values of the community. For instance, respect, observing rules of games, observing turn taking and showing consideration for others, are some of the examples that are clearly incorporated in the curriculum (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

*The center maintains the required values of the community in its curriculum. For instance, go to class maintaining order; they play together; and learn sharing what they have (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

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*The expected community values like playing and lifting up things in groups are reflected in the ECCE's curriculum (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

**xx Children's plays and games included the following:**

*I enjoy such games as 'who has seen my handkerchief'? I heard it in a TV program (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I have some play materials my father bought for me (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I play imangeya with my brothers, and also the game, 'who saw my handkerchief' with them when we wanted to. My brothers come to my help when I get into fight with other children. They also teach me games of kaka, and the letters, A, B, C, D (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I like playing slides, swings, merry-go-round, running, and talking by simply sitting down. I also play a called imangeya, a hide- and- seek game that goes to the extreme episode of 'killing play (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center). My play materials include some balls. I get them during play with my friends (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*At the center, I collect pieces of paper I see on my way and chuck them in a bin. I also play and learn at the center (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I play with my friends and with children of the neighborhood. We play ka-ka. I love my friends when they play ka-ka with me. They all are younger than me. I am the one taking the lead/ the teaching role during our play (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center). I enjoy such games, as kolkele; denbush, who saw my handkerchief, slides, hide-and- seek. I was taught all these by my facilitator and age mates (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center). I play with such materials as pebbles that are taken for money notes, and also play kolkole with stand stones (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*At the center, I get play materials, cars and other similar things. I also read books, play, count numbers, and assemble objects. After school, I go back to my home, get my food and obey my parents (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*I also love playing while reading the alphabet, A B C D. In addition, I love playing slides, merry-go- round, car driving, swings, and a hide-and- seek game, 'who saw my handkerchief'. I was taught all these by the facilitator (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*We have play materials like cars, and banks, that we make from cardboards, rugs to play handkerchief game, and balls. I play with my sisters and brother. We eat together. I love them, because they teach me the alphabets by writing them on the walls. They also help me wash my hands and face (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center). I also play with my friends. We help one another. We fetch water together. I love my friends because they give me money, they play with me and they also help me with my learning of the Amharic alphabet 'ha hu' (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*My favorite games are 'Monday-Tuesday', hoping, slides, a hide- and- seek game/ a ' handkerchief' game, and the like. We play the 'handkerchief' game in groups and using the jacket or the T-shirt of one of us. We also play merry-go-round, rides, and slides using the outdoor materials that the center has set for us (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*

*My favorite games are swings, slides, merry-go-round/ tinbualele and Gech Gech. At home, with children of the neighborhood, I play hide-and- seek, and 'my handkerchief' games (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

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*My play materials are those that we make and play with children of my ages (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

*I play ball games, driving games, doll play, picture assembly, pick a boo (or hide and seek). I play with dolls, toy cars, and pictures. I myself make the play materials. I have different play mates in both school and in the village. I and my playmates engage ourselves in different outdoor games. I enjoy playing with them (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*I also play such games as slides, swings, and seesaw. My age mates taught me these games (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center). I also have such play materials as a toy car, and toy aeroplane, etc.,. Some are made by me, and others are offered by a female child of my neighborhood. I play different games with my brother (6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*I participate in such games as chasing, competitive running, and such imitative plays as baking enjera, preparing wot, and building a hut". We usually play in groups with my peers (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). At home, I have some play materials. I also have the alphabets on the wall of my house (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). I enjoy such imitative games as preparing wat with her peers(5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

*Alongside the story time, I also enjoy playing ball, car, and chasing around". I learned the games from my neighboring age mates (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). At home, I play with toys, and also play swings with my sisters and brothers (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).I enjoy playing hide and seek (a peekaboo) game with my age mates(5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).I spend my time learning the alphabet with my friends (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

<sup>xxi</sup> **Here are the three stories that children narrated:**

*My favorite story is about an ape. 'One day, the ape was in search of food before she met a man on her way. The man asks her where she is going and the ape tells him that she is looking for food. The man took the ape to his house. As the ape was very hungry, she immediately began eating food without the permission of the man. This angered the man and forced him to chase the ape out of his house. After some time, and from the top branch, the ape notices a man sitting underneath the tree and looking for help. The ape immediately descends from the tree, draws nearer, and recognizes that this was the man who took her to the house where she fed herself without the permission of the host. Even though she knew that the man had chased her out of his house, she didn't go for revenge as she has also committed a mistake of eating food without his permission. Instead, she took the man to her house and gave all she had. This helped him to recover soon. After recovery, the man thanked the ape and went back to his house (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*The story I can relate refers to the hyena and the boys. 'In olden times, there were two boys , one smart and one foolish, who lived together. One day, while walking through a street of a village, they met a hyena. The hyena took the foolish boy to his den. The hyena, then put the foolish boy in a big oven, and went out to the forest to fetch firewood for cooking. As the hyena went to the forest, the smart boy pulled his foolish friend out of the oven, and placed the oven in its rightful place, but by filling it with stones. The hyena lit the firewood under the oven and began eagerly waiting for the cooked flesh of the foolish boy with his friends all around the fire place. After a few minutes, the hyenas heard series of explosions in the oven, and began amusing themselves stating that the explosions heard were those of the foolish boy's heart, and kidneys. After a few moments, they opened the lid of the oven, and were very angry when they found out a pile of stones"! My mother told this story (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

*My favorite story is about a hungry lion. One day a hungry lion appeared in a village. In the village was a cat preparing wot. The lion followed the scent of the wot, and upon arrival at the spot, was ready to eat the stew. The cat told the lion not to dare to eat before getting her permission and began serving him with the wot. The lion ate the*

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wot, and after having his fill of the food, began walking out towards the door. But the cat felt that she should teach him a lesson again, this time saying, “Mr Lion, we usually say ‘thank you’ after meal service”! The child stated that the center facilitators had taught him this story of meal etiquette (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).

<sup>xxii</sup> **Children’s songs were the following:**

*I can sing a song that I was taught by my facilitator. But I can’t sing all. I forgot some of the lines (6 years old, girl child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I can sing such a song as endich endich yalech chewata. But I can sing all to the end. I forgot all. I learned the song at the center (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Selam Fire Center).*

*I can sing such song as from my favorite banana, or such a song as (7 years old, girl child, Lives with grandparents, Chig Wuha Center).*

*‘Small child, bye, bye  
I’ll be back  
With biscuits for you’.*

*We sing songs at the center. I was taught this song by my facilitator. I can sing the song about the small child as follows (6 years old, boy child, Lives with both parents, Chig Wuha Center); see above.*

*We sing songs at the center. We were taught the songs by the facilitator. For instance, a song starting with such line, ‘three dolls sleeping on the bed’ is one of my favorites (6 years old, girl child, Lives with mother and brother).*

*We sometimes sing at the center. We are taught songs by the facilitator (6 years old, boy child, Full orphan, Lives with mother and brother).*

*The following is our center’s songs referring to names of the school days in a week (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center):*

*‘Children, Children  
Let’s know names of the school days in a week  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
Thursday and Friday  
We learn five days in a week!’ “I was taught this  
song by our facilitator (5 years old girl child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*A six years old boy child has also the following two songs to sing; first one is about science and the second is about one’s school bag:*

*I enjoy science, science  
Science is my medicine dance  
Before breakfast I wash my hands  
I dreamt science and saw science  
At night time during my sleep hours’.  
(6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*‘My little bag, my little school bag  
I love my little school bag  
I carry her all day not as a rug  
I care for her and cry when somebody mends  
And passes strings of needles through her damaged parts*



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*Don't cry my bag, and don't shed your tears  
You will be in rest when the school closes  
Throughout the rainy kiremt days'!!  
"I learned these songs from the facilitators of the center.  
(6 years old boy child, Living with both parents, Klinto Center).*

*I also enjoyed such a song referring to science (see above) at night time during my sleep hours (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center). Another song I sing is refers to the Amharic alphabet:*

*'How beautiful are the Amharic alphabets,  
"Ha Hu Hi Ha Hey He Ho"  
How beautiful are they?  
Learn them well, Learn them well  
To later be saved and on time of recall.  
With the alphabets, we love our school  
We love our country and people"! I was taught the above songs by the facilitators of the centre (5 years old girl child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

*I can also sing out the names of the week for you (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center), see above. My other song refers to a thief:*

*'The thief stole a whistle  
The police followed, caught him red handed  
The thief showed the place he picked  
He was beaten and flogged  
And was put in a prison to serve a ten year period.  
Better to stay away from stealing  
Than to worry of the consequential bad thing'  
I heard the song from my age mates (5 years old boy child, Living with Mother, Klinto Center).*

### **xxiii Children's relationship with siblings; how well they get along with siblings:**

- *My grandchildren are in good terms with other children of their ages (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*
- *She gets along very well with her sisters and brothers either in living and playing together. She is well mannered. She doesn't cry and she doesn't pick fights with others (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*
- *Most of the time, the siblings are in good terms with one another. There are, however, times, when they make small noises as children. We parents reprimand or advise the siblings to be on good terms with one another (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
- *She gets along well with all her siblings most of the time, even though there are times when there are conflicts (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*
- *She somehow gets along well with them and to some extent (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*
- *The child lives in peace with others (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
- *She has no problem of interaction and getting along well with others. She lives in peace with them (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*
- *The child has good relationships with her sisters and brother. However, as children, there are times of disagreements and conflicts (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

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- *He doesn't whine unless he feels some missing things. He mostly gets along well with his siblings (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*
  - *His relationship with his sisters is good. But he sometimes strikes them when he gets angry (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center). His sisters help him with learning and writing of the alphabets (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
  - *As a child, he tries to get along with other children of his age; but he sometimes fights (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

#### **xxiv Community-center relationships:**

*We hold consultative meetings. But in addition to our efforts, I feel that other persons should take up the additional task of advising and supporting parents and community members (Supervisor of the 10 child centers, SCN).*

*We meet with the children's parents, with the mothers in particular, and discuss issues related to the child. In 2014, we had at least 3 meetings in a month (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

*Parental participation should continue for its reinforcing our activities (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*We hold discussions if problems arise and find solutions jointly (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).*

*Parental expectations, center visit: The parents have great expectations for children of the center. They come and enquire about the status of the children. They ask the center for the missing elements and in as much as possible to try to provide their support. There are some signs of improvement regarding parental/ perception of preschool enrolment age" over the years. Nowadays, children join their parents and eat together at tables (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child)*

*Generally, I would consider the center as a foundation for ECCE. It is playing a role in solving the quality issue in education. Two years ago, there was a sensational parental talk over a grade 2 child who was allegedly unable to read. Today, this problem is no longer felt. Today, a 6 year old child in a preschool can read and write. It would be good if this practice is extended to other schools. If we follow this way, I think we can build a better generation in the future (Director, 35 years old, female, Selam Fire School).*

*I very often meet the female facilitators as I live close to the center. We closely talk about my child, about her condition of learning, and what we should do in order to fulfill the needed materials or activities (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*We have contacts with the facilitator of our grandson. We meet and discuss issues. We point to what is missing in our discussion and suggest ways of improving things at the center (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*I spend most of my days in the center, and most of my time with the child in the center, except for a busy business schedule I have in September and in June. I closely observe the facilitator during her engagement with the children. I am captivated by her activities and envy her, wishing if I could also be a facilitator. I would therefore say that I almost spend my time talking with the facilitator (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*We had very frequent contacts and meetings, particularly this (2006 E.C.) year. The facilitator also tells me about my child when we meet on other occasions. She tells me about my child's behavior, in both her indoor and outdoor activities. She is also willing to provide me with information (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*I haven't met any of them, and haven't discussed any issue with them (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

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*Yes, we do meet every two weeks and discuss about the educational conditions of the children in general (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

***Do you believe that the center provides adequate information for parents/ grandparents willing?***

*Definitely, yes. The information refers to the current status of the center, and how it should improve. It also refers to the general behavioral problems in the center and how they should improve. The staffs of the center are generally willing to provide us with information (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*The facilitator lives close to us. As a result, we meet and discuss issues related to child feeding (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*Yes, indeed. They provide us any information willingly. The center provides us with information on what we should do, what we should fulfill for our children, and what the center lacks in trying to meet its objectives (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*They do provide parents with information sometimes. However this is not sufficient (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire). Of course they do! I would say that there is a close interaction between the parents and the center (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*I think so. Some teachers give us information, advising us and pointing to us also about what we should do for our grandchildren (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire). Yes, it does. They are also willing to provide us with information whenever we feel the need to have it (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire). Yes, they do provide us with information, and willingly enough (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*I usually go to the center with my child; we sing and play together; in a meeting with the facilitators, I discuss things concerning my child; the personnel and facilitators of the center provide us sufficient information (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

*At times, I talk with the facilitators on matters pertaining to child development and change, and I communicate the knowledge gleaned to other parents (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

*Even though quite infrequently, I discuss with the facilitators on issues related to my child (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

*When I take my child to the center I often discuss with the facilitators both in my role as both a parent and a parent committee member (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*I often discuss about my child with the facilitators (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*Except for casual greetings, I usually do not hold discussions with the facilitators of the center on matters relating to my grandchild's changes (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*I occasionally discuss about my children with the facilitators of the center, and share my views with them, and the facilitators are willing to divulge the needed information if I wanted to (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*I discuss with the facilitators on matters related to child care and development, and sufficient answer when I ask needed information (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*I also hold discussion with the facilitators when necessary, where either myself or their grandmother (referring to his wife) decide to air out our views regarding our grandchildren's concerns. We do this on a regular basis. We also get the required information from the center (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

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*I go to the center when I am called for a meeting by the facilitators. When my grandchild is absent from the center, I seek an explanation through discussion. I provide him with the necessary school materials. I usually talk with my wife if I needed some discussion about our grandson (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*I believe that the center is providing a community-centered education. Without being labeled as a positively biased interviewee for the center, I can say a few things: first, there is a community-center meeting discussing what each party has to do: what children are expected to do at and get from the center, how children should get along with their peers and live together, and how children should observe the proper ways of walking and crossing streets. I feel that these appreciable practices of the center should continue (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*

*The community and the parents, except some, have generally positive attitudes and perceptions. Most understand us well, and their attitudes and perceptions are good; their support is also good; they know the ECCE provisions are important (Head, ECCE, Gondar). But as I mentioned earlier, the kebele administration does not support us much. It can generally be said that there are attitudinal and perceptual problems (Head, ECCE, Gondar).*

*As we cannot always continue being dependent always on NGO. We have to think of making use of the resources of the surrounding (i.e. materials, grandparents stories, music, play, etc)! Consequently, we are currently collecting stories from older adults we find around the schools. We are also preparing ourselves to publish the collected stories. However, the use of local materials in teaching would be more realizable in the formal school than in the ECCE centers that require the meeting of an unfulfilled need. We are working hard on it (Focal Person, SCN Woreda Deputy Representative).*

***Need for community orientation/ Why, how, community-based approach:***

*In the first place, the center and the community have to discuss and work in unison. Parents/ community members have to observe and materialize what the school orders. Parents have to also closely participate in the activities of the center. If this is followed, it is possible to provide a community-centered child care and education services (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).*

*I think it is possible to deliver such an education if the community and the center try to come together and discuss how to realize it. Furthermore, I think it is good if adult education is also delivered in a more strengthened form (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*

*It is possible to increase public awareness if a community based child rearing practice is realized, considering training that ensures parental participation (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*I feel that it is possible to hold continuous discussion with parents, and to develop parental awareness about child rearing, using a community based approach (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*It is possible to initiate a community based approach of awareness creation on better child care by calling parents to the center (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*

*It is possible to communicate issues of child care and parenting through community based approach (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*It is important to call a meeting of parents if a community based awareness creation workshop on child care and development is needed (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*It is necessary to provide a community based awareness training on child care and education (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).*

*It is possible to form a community based awareness creation child care center, involving parents (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).*

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*I feel the importance of conducting community-based awareness training sessions for exchange of views with parents every fortnight (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

***How can community-center relationship be realized?*** *This would be realized when the community participates provide ideas and support (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*

*Today's children are difficult to communicate, unless God helps us. Even so, it is good if centers allow parents and grandparents to participate in our discussions referring to this approach (70 years old, grandfather, Selam Fire).*

*I think, a community-centered child care and education can be realizable through meetings and discussions of the stakeholders with the center (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*

*This could be realized by including the community in meetings and discussions that are commonly shared, and in working out solutions that could be taken up in common, and by involving the government in the fulfillment of the missing materials. Generally, holding meetings and discussions with the community is very essential in realizing a community-centered child care and education approach (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*I think this can be realized if the center has the willingness to show closeness in the attempt to meet and discuss with the community members. I think forming a close working relationship will help, and this step should first be observed for the further improvement of the community-centered approach (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

**<sup>xxv</sup> Children of olden times were described as luck and fortunate than the olden times:**

*When I was a child, there wasn't such an opportunity for learning. I went to my first school, a priest school, when I was seven. The priest school ran under tree shades, and I learned the alphabet in an open air so to say, and not in a room of the current type. But today, the classrooms, the learning materials and the facilitators help the children to comfortably attend their preschool education. Therefore, when I compare my early years of childhood with that of the present day, I can simply say that children of today are very lucky. But there is one merit the children of our times had, when compared to children of the present. Parents of our generation used to tell us different stories and riddles, but parents of the current generation of children do not strive that much to tell their children stories or riddles (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*

*There is no linking thread between children of today and those of the past time. A child of earlier days would usually go to school after the tenth year of childhood time. But a child of current time goes to school beginning from his/her fourth birthday. Consequently, children of today are quick to grasp learned tasks. Children of earlier times are even expected to go into arranged marriages while being too young and being carried on their mothers' backs. The practice of early marriage in childhood years was rampant during those days. But there is no such practice of early marriage today; children of today are also in a better position in terms of care. As a result of these observations, I would say that there is no similarity to be drawn between children of today and those of the earlier days(Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

*Today, the children have exposure to technological amenities, and have the opportunity to use them. Parents of today also buy play materials for their children, opportunities that I didn't have during my childhood years (Facilitator, 30 years old, female, Selam Fire).*

*These children have no ties with the rest of the world except their families. As the place is rural, they don't hear radio broad casts or watch TV programs. After school, the female child would help her mother with home chores, while the boy would go with his father (Facilitator, 35 years old, female, Chigu Wuha).*

*We live in a time that could be referred as conducive and very good for children (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

*Nowadays, children's education and health concerns are being resolved (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

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*Today's position are in a very good state, because they begin attending school at the expected age (a 50 years old Grandmother II, Klinto Center).*

*The current situation has generally created more favorable conditions for children to learn (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*

*The present day conditions are conducive for the children's growth and development (a 48 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*The time we are now in is conducive and (temerach aderegotal") ("recommendable") for children (a 70 years old Grandfather, Klinto Center).*

*What an unfortunate thing that we can't relive our early childhood years. We had no education that is comparable with the current state. Even so, we used to enjoy our childhood years by participating in such make-believe games as grinding sand stones, and playing with cut out tree leaves. In addition, we also spent our early years hearing parental orders of 'Bring home the calves', and 'Look after the goats'! In contrast, today's childhood years are years of 'Buy me exercise books'. Indeed, there was good childcare in the olden times. But it cannot be comparable with the current state. In the older times, there was no talk of regular feeding, clothing, and cleaning of the child; no talk of regular change of child clothes, and no thought of sending a child to learn the alphabet (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*

*I have little to say on this. But generally I am happy with the current enrolment of a child in a school right from age 4. I like this scenario with the farm activities where we have to attend to the growth of the seedlings if we have to expect a big harvest. In order to attain our objectives of big harvest, we know we have to regularly weed out the foreign plants. The present day childhood years are therefore good as they are likened with early care of the seedlings for big harvest later, with regular attendance to the interfering growth factors. A present day child enrolled in the center can acquire experiences being equipped with discipline. A child who has his early time directed in this way can also be an asset for his country (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).*

*I believe that present day children are smarter when compared with the older generation". They begin their education at the right age, and could have access to learning centers as they are close by (Facilitator One, male, 20 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child, klinto).*

*When compared with children of the older generation, children of today have got a better opportunity on issues around education. When seen in terms of difference, stories were told by elders to children of the older generation, but today, storytelling is not that much as it used to be so in the past (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child, klinto).*

*The current scenario of ECCE is a scenario of learning activities that are accompanied by songs and music. In addition, the learning activities are carried out, using different materials, and story books. The ECCE is led by the facilitators where children are seen taking up more of the assigned tasks or trial activities. Before the advent of story books at the center, we used to come up with stories by asking their parents. In this way, the children were encouraged to relate their stories to children of the center. In this way, we were able to collect stories from the children's parents.*

*The current state of childhood is very good; in the past there was no school for children; there was no parental concern for child's food, clothes or cleanliness. In our days, and after our daily life of herding cattle, we go back home with Shig, to light up the evening hours of parental meals. We light up the wooden torch and stand holding it for our mothers and fathers so that they could have their evening meals with illumination. We could sometimes keep on holding the wooden torch and we stood in a state of drowsiness, and waited for our parents to end up their meal time. We used to eat the leftovers of our parents for our evening meals. But today, things have improved. Children of today have clothes to change and food types to choose. Children of today do not eat the same meals evening meals that they were already served for their breakfast. Today, children's foods are carefully prepared. In the past, there was no situation of child play with parents or no condition of talking with parents. But children of today are seen spending their evening time playing with us, exchanging stories with us, and singing with us. There was no such*

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thing in the past. In the past a child would be punished if he looks at adults directly and squarely on their faces, let alone to engage in stories, songs or games with adults. A child would also be reprimanded by adults if he dares to directly look at an adult, who would readily respond by these remarks “You dare not look high up at the adult and to talk to big people as rude children do”? But today’s child can freely crack a joke and play with his parents or grandparents (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).

After school, I observe my child, reciting songs and ‘A B C D’ and asking 2-3 year olds children of the neighborhood, to repeat them after her. In addition, children love watching the Saturday TV programs casting dolls. My child also loves going to school, with the memory of the game types and game materials she saw on the TV programs. Hence, I can say that children of today have play materials at their disposal. These conditions help them quick to grasp learned materials. I would therefore say that the learning condition that a preschooler acquires is superior to the quality of learning that a former student of grade four would acquire in the formal school. I would further say that current children have the further care and support at home, in addition to the opportunity they would be having in the center and acquire knowledge and skills through plays, games, and dramas(27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).

**xxvi Facilitators were viewed positively:**

- One appreciable quality of the ECCE center is the proper caring style the facilitators show in their care for the children”, and I want the children to listen to what the facilitators say and follow their advice in their subsequent practices (a 50 years old Grandmother, Klinto Center).
- The facilitator is very beautiful; she is lovely. She advises us on how we should keep our children clean, and feed them properly. The center is also good; the play materials, in particular, are good (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).
- The facilitator is a very good person. She cares for the children. The play materials are also good. But because of lack of proper management, many of these play materials have some of their elements missing (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).
- Children get their education free of charge, good facilitators available (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).

**xxvii The ECCE centers are materially in good form:**

- Spacious room, sufficient learning materials, floor carpets, toilets, water supply, and materials maintained with regular repair works (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).
- I appreciate the outdoor play materials, and the teaching aids (Mother of a Female Child, 29 years old, Klinto center).
- One of the advantages that the children got from the center is the availability of different learning materials and aids in sufficient number and in one place (Facilitator Two, female, 42 years old, married, family size of 3 persons with one girl child).
- [I know that the center has been built close to the homes of the community’s children. This is appreciable]. I also appreciate the play materials that are meant for the children (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).

**xxviii Proximity of the center to children’s home is an important change noted**

- Attend their early education close to their homes, and What I appreciate is the establishment of such a child center in this area in general (58 years old, grandfather, Chig wuha).
- We have benefitted a lot in having the center here close to us; the fence built around the building has provided safety for surrounding area; the children have been able to attend their education in close proximity to their homes; and they have been able to acquire good knowledge (58 years old, father, Selam Fire).
- The establishment of the center close to the children’s homes has helped our children to get their education without suffering from exposure to heat, cold weather, muddy roads, or from risking their lives in flooded river banks (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).
- The availability of the center within the vicinity of the children’s homes has enabled many to get their education within a reasonable distance. I am happy with the changes I notice in my child (a 28 years old Mother, Klinto Center).

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- *The setup of the center close to the homes of the children has provided a learning opportunity to many of the children in the vicinity (a 45 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
  - *One appreciable fact about the center is its proximity to the children's homes, significantly helping parents in taking their children to and from the center (a 28 years old Father, Klinto Center).*
  - *I am very happy to see a child center close to us. Because our children are no more suffering from exposure to scorching sun in the dry season and to rain on their way to centers that are at a distance. Furthermore, we don't worry about our children's safety as the center is just next door. Hence, I am very pleased to have the center built close to us. I also appreciate the current state of the center and its play materials (36 years old, Father, Selam Fire).*
  - *The establishment of the center close to homes has created a good opportunity by relieving us from the job of care, thus enabling us to concentrate on our routine work (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
  - *The closeness of the center to all the houses in the vicinity, and the offering of the services free of charge have helped me to now concentrate on my job. The learning experiences they get from the center also help them to be prepared with the basic conditions for formal schooling (a 25 years old mother, Klinto Center).*

<sup>xxix</sup> **Impacts on children**

- *properly learn the alphabet and count number (a 56 year old Grandmother, Klinto Center).*
- *I observe the child identifying the letters of the alphabet, and also telling us what she has acquired from the center (49 years old, grandmother, Chig wuha).*
- *The child has acquired such values as behaving well, and learning good manners by simply being in the center (45 years old, grandmother, Selam Fire).*
- *When I took her to the center and have her mix with the children, she began to show behavioral differences in play. In her verbal interaction she also showed talks that were education related (27 years old, mother, Selam Fire).*
- *Upon coming home, our child tells us many things about what she has learnt at the center (35 years old, mother, Chigwuha).*