



Report on DID Helpdesk Query No. 31 – Mentoring to Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) Phase 2 programme in Ethiopia

Sue Coe, DID Helpdesk Senior Consultant, 25 June
2020

Background

“Light touch” review, November 2019

The Civil Society Support Programme II (CSSP2) is a civil society support programme funded by DFID Ethiopia. It aims to enable Civil Society Organisations to foster state accountability to its citizens based on trust, evidence and sustained engagement, resulting in better quality of basic public services and to ensure civic and political human rights for communities in the country, especially to women, men, youth, boys and girls, including hard to reach groups.

In November 2019 a “Light touch” review of the CSSP2 from a disability inclusion perspective was published by the DID Helpdesk¹. In summary it found some useful foundations in rights-based approaches and a changing national legislative framework could enable application of a “disability lens” across CSSP2’s portfolio of work, beyond the disability-specific activities that have been funded to-date. However, the review also identified a number of key gaps to address to strengthen CSSP2’s disability inclusion approach. One of the core recommendations was to provide a short mentoring programme for key CSSP2 staff to help accelerate disability inclusion in CSSP2’s programme and onward-support to CSSP2 grant recipients.

CSSP2 response to the “Light touch” review

CSSP2 requested the DID Helpdesk and DFID Ethiopia to provide mentoring support. Three days of my time was secured over three months (March – May 2020). A short extension of three weeks to 19 June was agreed due to delays Covid-19 and lockdown brought.

The Query was defined as:

Purpose:

To upskill key individuals in the CSSP II team on disability inclusion and support them to develop a disability action plan to strengthen the programme’s approach.

Scope:

Mentoring support to CSSP II Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lead and Disability Thematic Lead.

The mentoring will cover:

- Support the framing and delivery of the detailed disability audit conducted locally so this is as effective as possible.
- Following the audit support the development of action plan to improve disability inclusion in the programme. This may include fleshing out plans for training for the wider team to improve understanding and capacity on disability inclusion.
- Support and upskill the GESI and disability thematic lead to have confidence in implementing disability inclusion into the programme.

Output:

This is a mentoring query and therefore does not involve specific written outputs. Support will focus on real-time consulting via calls and emails. The expert will share a description of the mentoring activities completed after mentoring time frame (three days over three months) has elapsed.

¹ Coe, S., Clugston, N., and Lee, H. (2019) Light touch review of DFID Ethiopia’s CSSP2 programme, Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Research Report No. 21. London, UK: Disability Inclusion Helpdesk.

Limitations of mentoring Query

The global pandemic of Covid-19 put major constraints on the process. The CSSP2 office changed to remote working in March 2020. CSSP2 had (legitimate) requirements to refocus immediate efforts to Covid-19 responses which refocused staff time. It meant original ideas and plans needed revision. A new Disability Technical Lead identified at the start of the mentoring process, Wondifraw Workneh (Hub Manager for the Northern Region), participated in two calls, including a training session from his base in northern Ethiopia. Unfortunately, technical constraints prevented his further effective participation three way calls due to his location and technical/workload constraints.

Despite these limitations, and with a short extension (three weeks), most of the intended original scoping was achieved, plus some significant unexpected positive impacts.

An unexpected constraint emerged during the process which affected the direction mentoring work took, though it was turned into a positive opportunity. Some capacity-building needs in the selected disability organisation partner (ECDD) contracted to conduct CSSP2's disability audit and disability awareness training emerged. The work under this Query has been able to address and support these needs, which should bring benefits in disability inclusion work in Ethiopia beyond CSSP2 work.

Tasks completed under the mentoring query

The GESI Lead in CSSP2 has recently changed, from Bethel Terefe (who left the organisation) to Lealem Mersha. I agreed all tasks with Lealem. I broke the three days into smaller time units and kept a timesheet, to maximise the available time to the benefit of CSSP2. A summary of tasks completed is listed below:

1. **Three-hour training workshop call with two CSSP2 staff** - Lealem (GESI lead) and Wonde (Disability Technical Lead): to provide CRPD-aligned rights-based **disability awareness training** on key concepts and approaches
2. **Three rounds of review of the ECDD disability audit and training inception report.** On each round Lealem and I independently reviewed the documents and then compared our reviews. We decided on this approach to build Lealem's capacity to review documents with a "disability inclusion" lens, rather than delegating the task to me alone (which would have made the query more a technical advice approach).
3. **Review of five tools** ECDD proposed to use for the disability audit process. and associated tools proposed by ECDD to use for the process, **suggesting changes to four of the five tools.** Preparing Lealem to give appropriate feedback to ECDD in meetings and over e-mail.
4. **Subsequent re-scoping and detailed work on two of the tools** to be appropriate for the audit, both tools critical to achieving positive and appropriate results for the whole audit:
 - All-staff **attitudinal/practice survey (questionnaire)**
 - Key Informant Interview (**KII**) **survey (question list)** - for use with all departments to identify specific barriers to address
5. **Sharing of 10 relevant disability inclusion resources/tools in** response to discussions and requests during five mentoring phone calls on the following topics:
 - Disability awareness training resource suitable for mainstream staff
 - CRPD information
 - Washington group data
 - Disability inclusion in humanitarian work

- Barrier analysis tool for disability-inclusive programming work
 - Covid-19
 - Sign up details to a new e-mail bulletin which is a “go to” place for current information (Disability Debrief)
6. **Discussing and agreeing appropriate approaches** to use for the disability audit and staff training process, **to maximise CSSP2 staff engagement and organisational impact/learning** from the whole process, using methods to build Lealem’s capacity to self- review and assess in future. This included reflecting on the very useful building audit ECDD conducted using their proven and effective tool during the mentoring period.
 7. **Debrief on a Disability Inclusion Scorecard Assessment workshop** Lealem facilitated with colleagues using an ECDD-proposed tool – drawing out key learnings from the process and how it can be taken forward/repeated in future
 8. **Some technical input and advice on the all-staff disability training that is still to take place** - Covid-19 practical and logistical issues prevented this taking place during this mentoring contract. This is a significant area that a second phase mentoring query could usefully focus on. **Effective, practical disability awareness training of the CSSP2 staff will be critical to achieving efficient progress in disability inclusion in CSSP2’s work²³.**
 9. **Series of e-mails throughout with Lealem** agreeing key deadlines, calls, need to shift plans according to CSSP2 deadlines elsewhere due to Covid-19 pressures

Outcomes achieved and successes

1. **CSSP2 Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lead – capacity and confidence strengthened.** Much of the focus of the query has needed to focus primarily on building Lealem Mersha’s technical capacity and confidence on disability inclusion. Lealem has been requested to provide some feedback on her experiences and assessment of its effectiveness. From mine, Lealem is now increasingly making connections with her pre-existing gender inclusion skills and experiences to build capacity and confidence in rights-based disability inclusion.
2. **CSSP2 Disability Technical Lead – disability training and provision of relevant resources enhanced his knowledge on rights-based approaches.** The newly identified Disability Inclusion Lead, Wondifraw Workneh (Hub Manager for the Northern Region) attended a training session and follow up mentoring call. Due to technical and workload constraints it was difficult in this period for further engagement.
3. **Two qualitative tools substantially revised for the CSSP2 disability audit process.** Unanticipated substantive work was invested by Lealem and I reworking two critical tools for the disability audit process that ECDD submitted in their inception report – the staff survey on attitudes and practices, and KII question list. We realised through reviewing their proposed tools that ECDD had a capacity building need in this area we could usefully

² Coe S and Wapling (2010) *Practical lessons from four projects on practical disability-inclusive programming*, Development in Practice, Volume 20, Number 7, p.881-882
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09614524.2010.508109#aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGFuZGZvbmxpbnUuY29tL2RvaS9wZGYvMTAuMTA4MC8wOTYxNDUyNC4yMDEwLjUwODEwOT9uZWVkbWVjZXNzPXRydWVvAQEAw>

³ Wapling L (2016) *Ex-post evaluation of the Programme Partnership Arrangement (PPA) funding for disability inclusion - A case study review of WV India’s progress towards mainstreaming disability*, World Vision UK, p.5-6 from https://assets.worldvision.org.uk/files/8714/9571/8299/World_Vision_UK_ex-post_evaluation_of_the_Programme_Partnership_Arrangement_PPA_funding_for_disability_inclusion.pdf

support. It was also important to ensure the staff survey and KII survey would appropriately and effectively yield useful data for CSSP2's disability audit process

I feel these two revised tools could be effectively used in other mainstream organisational audit processes, as long as appropriately skilled facilitators implement them.

4. **Disability organisation ECDD capacity in disability audit processes built.** ECDD are a (probably the) leading disability organisation in Ethiopia. An unexpected aspect of this work, and unintended outcome, was that it would offer indirect capacity building support to ECDD. In many ways this should not be a surprise as in reality many DPOs and disability organisations have not had enough effective programming-based mainstream inclusion experience to anchor support to mainstream organisations programming work upon.

I feel this aspect has been a very positive outcome of the Query – it broadens out the impact of a modestly scoped mentoring support Query to broader impact beyond CSSP2 and into the broader Ethiopian development community. Lealem reported that ECDD welcomed the changes to the tools and indicated they could use them in other disability audit processes they conduct. They also accepted and welcomed other suggestions made to the suggested disability audit process for CSSP2 in response to their inception report. So this process should yield greater strength and capacity in ECDD to conduct similar processes in other mainstreaming organisations – a important methodology to achieving meaningful disability inclusion in the work of Ethiopia mainstream organisations.

5. **Building accessibility audit conducted.** ECDD conducted an accessibility audit on ECDD's office and facilities. Lealem expressed this process was useful and effective, despite the challenges and issues the Covid-19 lockdown brought.

Remaining Gaps

Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training Course for CSSP2 staff

An application has been made by CSSP2 for a further short mentoring query. A key identified issue is setting up the two day training course for CSSP2 staff on disability awareness and practical programming inclusion, due to be delivered by ECDD - including reviewing content to ensure it yields maximum impact and effectiveness to CSSP2 staff. I would be happy to support this, based on extensive experience gained over 15 years of delivering similar training to mainstream organisations.

Action Plan from Disability Audit report

The query originally included supporting the development of an action plan to improve disability inclusion in the programme, from the results of the disability audit. This was not possible due to the time and practical delays caused by the impact of Covid-19. There remains a useful mentoring support need on it to ensure the results of the disability audit and training are embedded into the CSSP2.

Feedback on the mentoring experience from Lealem Mersha, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lead, CSSP2:

It gives me pleasure to write this reflection on the disability inclusion mentorship exercise CSSP2 has been a part of through its GESI lead and northern hub manager. The mentorship has made significant positive contributions to strengthening commitments and efforts to integrate disability within the program's operational modality, and the services (grant making, capacity building and citizen-state engagement) it renders to the civil society and governance sector in Ethiopia. The mentorship began against the backdrop of CSSP2's request for support on disability inclusion, and the light touch review conducted by the DfiD disability inclusion help desk on disability inclusion within CSSP2.

The start of the mentorship programme coincided with CSSP2's embark on a programme wide disability inclusion audit (programmatic, physical and communication audit) conducted by a local organization of persons with disability. The close collaboration and mentoring provided by the help desk- through Sue Coe- played a critical role in ensuring that the program developed the required competency to identify its areas of interest, provide technical inputs and reviews on the inception reports and audit tools developed by the consulting organization. These significantly added nuance, enhanced contextualization of the audit to the programme's needs, and strengthened the human rights focus of the audit and thereby facilitate the process with the required sensitivity to manage diverse interests. As such, the mentoring has been an integral element of a significant outcome- leading a disability inclusion audit that meets the required standard, and laying foundation for an institutionalized and sustainable disability inclusion within the programme.

The in-depth discussions, reading resources and feedbacks provided by the mentor on written products of the GESI lead have also steered the programme's disability inclusion undertakings in the right direction. The mentoring sessions were useful to critically deliberate on local contexts and challenges to disability inclusion, develop soft and hard skills to facilitate change within organizational practices and behaviours, design interventions that strengthen rights based disability inclusion in programmes- including that of the 132 CSOs that CSSP2 works with- and identify mechanisms to dispel myths, misconceptions, and attitudinal barriers towards disability inclusion. Sue's professional expertise and experience in working with diverse disability inclusion programmes across various countries were also useful in providing comparative lessons that the program benefits from. Her commitment to supporting the mentee identify professional goals as a GESI lead and CSSP2 senior programme management team, develop strategies to accelerate and strengthen the process of disability inclusion, and support regular follow up on their achievements were invaluable.

More specifically, the mentorship exercise has been instrumental in building the GESI lead's confidence, competence, and commitment to identify programmatic and operational areas where CSSP2 exhibits gaps in terms of disability inclusion, and strive towards enhanced integration. Since the mentorship, the programme consistently strives to ensure that partners' project designs, implementation and monitoring mechanisms, including learning products integrate disability both as a standalone and intersectional element. Internally, the

knowledge and skills garnered through the mentoring have also been useful to facilitate workshops. For instance, during the self-administered disability inclusion score card the senior management of the programme conducted as part of the disability inclusion audit, the GESI lead was able to share the knowledge and skill garnered through the mentorship. The knowledge strengthened through the mentorship was useful to critically reflect on the models of disability inclusion which sub-consciously influence the approaches individuals may take towards disability inclusion (eg. charity model tendencies), identify how they reflect on CSSP2's programming and operation, and strive for stronger rights based inclusion. The knowledge and skills gained through the mentorship will further be shared with the programme team through internal training on disability inclusion for colleagues, and coaching. These and the aforementioned learnings gained through the mentorship are some of the lessons the programme will take forward.

The mentorship had also the unintended but extremely valuable contribution of strengthening CSSP2's partner capacity on disability inclusion. The local consulting organization conducting the audit has reported that the inputs, revisions, and deliberations made during the inception process were extremely beneficial in strengthening their own internal capacities on conducting accessibility audits. For instance, the revisions the GESI lead and the mentor collaboratively made on a self-administered survey tool and KII tool developed by the organization were reported as providing transferable knowledge and skills which are valuable to strengthen the OPD's approach to KAP assessments on disability inclusion. This experience also demonstrates the need to continue CSSP2's pre-existing collaborative and co-creative working modality with its CSO partners. Moreover, it also has an essential value to scale up efforts made towards disability inclusion.

As mentioned above, this mentoring process began against a backdrop of the programme's internal recognition and commitment to strengthen disability inclusion, and the findings of the light touch review which signalled the need to build internal capacities on disability inclusion. As such, whilst the mentorship has been useful in steering the process in the right direction, the 24 hours allotted to the exercise were found to be relatively short vis-à-vis the start phase of the disability inclusion efforts, the wide scope (geographic, thematic, and operational) of the programme, and the programme's current focus on rolling out a Covid-19 response which addresses hard to reach groups. The programme would have benefitted greatly if the mentorship continued at least until the end of the disability audit process and the inclusion action plan development- whose successful completion invariably have significant correlation with institutionalized disability inclusion in the programme. Furthermore, if mechanisms can be identified for the mentorship programme to integrate short orientations for the larger programme staff or at least senior management of programmes of which the mentee is a part of, it will create fertile grounds to solidify institutional commitments towards disability inclusion, as it creates a common understanding of what disability inclusion entails.

In sum, the mentorship has been an invaluable aspect of CSSP2's effort to strengthen disability inclusion within its programme and its partners' programme management. Whilst the above is my personal brief reflection on the process and outcomes of the mentorship, please note that I will be happy to respond to any questions or requests for clarifications.

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