Book Havens for Ethiopia project
In partnership with Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) Ethiopia
Final evaluation report
December 2018
1.0 Executive summary

The overall goal of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Book Havens project in Ethiopia brought about the anticipated changes in the provision of children’s library services in five libraries in rural Ethiopia. The main objective of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the project has met its objectives and identify key lessons and provide recommendations.

The project has without doubt contributed to improving the quality of children’s library services in the five libraries. Overall the evaluation found that the Book Havens project has produced positive results and has achieved its objectives. Findings from the evaluation show that the different project components have contributed to increased use of the libraries. More children are drawn to the libraries because of increased book stock, refurbishment of the children’s spaces and confident trained children librarians. Children are spending more time in the libraries. They enjoy using additional tablets provided in the project and the UK donated books. Children are more comfortable reading in the refurbished spaces.

Key lessons from this project show that a separate section for children is key to implementing children’s library services, trained librarians are more motivated to serve children, the local administration is more supportive when they see professionalism and vibrant services in the libraries, vibrant children library services helps children to improve in their school work and targeted school outreach programmes increase the use of library information materials in schools.

Some key challenges experienced in the course of implementation include delayed disbursement of funds for refurbishment from the local district offices, limited suppliers at local level to do the refurbishments, limited number of library staff, frequent transfers of staff from the parent office in the District or Municipal Office and language barriers in the training workshops. These challenges did not however hinder full implementation of the project. There is notable evidence of more children visiting the libraries.

The project was effective in meeting beneficiary needs, however, key recommendations include, a Trainer of Trainer (TOT) workshop for Canadian Organization for Development through Education Ethiopia (CODE Ethiopia)’s English speaking staff who will then train librarians in the local language, provision of more local books, more forums where librarians can meet and share experiences and the reconstitution of library management committees with more supportive members.

Librarians, teachers, parents, children, municipal officials and district officials have all experienced significant change in the libraries. Librarians are more conscious of their role to promote a reading culture by attracting children to the library.
2.0 Introduction

Book Aid International and CODE Ethiopia implemented the Book Havens for Ethiopia project to support the development of libraries that serve communities in slum and rural areas of Ethiopia. It aimed to do this by attracting more children to an environment conducive to develop the habit of reading and support learning in schools. The project targeted five community libraries located in Addis Alem (Ejere), Chefe Donsa, Holeta, Modjo and Sheno. The project ran from January to December 2018. A total of 8,000 UK donated books and 10 tablets (preloaded with local content) were provided. The children’s spaces were refurbished with colourful paint on the walls, new chairs, tables, mats and cushions. Ten librarians also underwent basic and advanced level training on library management skills and reading promotion with an emphasis on children’s library services.

The project aimed to transform five community libraries in Ethiopia into well-managed, vibrant spaces with a special focus on children and supporting children’s reading. The project’s objectives included:

- Refurbish the libraries and establish a safe, child-friendly area to promote reading for children.
- Train up to 12 librarians to establish and maintain a vibrant library to support community needs.
- Increase each library’s collection of English language children’s books (in print and digital format) to support English language learning in the library and increase each library’s collection of local language/local content books for children.

This evaluation was conducted on 27th and 28th November, 2018 by Caroline Kayoro, Book Aid International Projects Officer in conjunction with Alemu Abebe, Project Manager, CODE Ethiopia. The evaluation included key informant interviews and focus group discussions with key staff and children from three libraries in Ejere, Holeta and Chefe Donsa. Due to logistical problems and time constraints it was not possible to visit all the five libraries. A total of 26 people were interviewed. These include six library staff, 12 children and eight adults. Appropriate tools were developed to capture information on the outcomes.

3.0 Key findings

In general the project has made significant progress towards the achievement of the outcomes and objectives.

Outcome 1: Increased use of the library by local children

i. Increased book stock

The libraries received the UK donated books in July, 2018. The books were a valuable addition to the libraries. Librarians in Ejere community reported that they only had 400 children books before the project. Below is a breakdown of distribution of the books:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Number of UK books donated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Chefe Donsa</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ejere</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Holeta</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Modjo</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sheno</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The books have been well displayed and arranged in the libraries. They are displayed on shelves, kinder boxes, tables and cupboards. The books are now more visible.

Librarians reported that the UK donated books are of good quality with colourful and interesting pictures. The children love looking at the pictures. The books also describe some practical issues that children can relate to e.g. different times of the day. Librarians have invited language teachers to use the books. Children also use the books for drawing and learning colours. This helps them to be more creative.

“I visit the library three times a week on Monday, Thursday and Friday. I read two to three books whenever I come to the library. I read English and Oromo books. I like the new English books. I have improved in English and I'm able to answer questions in school. My grade in English has improved from 6 out 10 to 8 out of 10.”

– Ebisa, grade 6, 13 years old, Holeta Library.

“I love reading the English books because I get knowledge and new things to tell my friends in school and at home.”

– Chela, grade 4, 11 years, Chefe Donsa Primary School.

“The books are very interesting. I wish I was a child. They are easy to read and understand which helps them to improve their language skills. I choose for the children the books to read. I encourage them to read widely.”

– Mitiku, Volunteer, Chefe Donsa Library.

Language was reported as a challenge in using the donated books. Most children are not motivated to read them because they cannot read English, however, they love to look at the pictures and illustrations. They use the books for drawing and learning colours.

“The books are good but the language barrier is a challenge. Afan Oromo is the medium of instruction in schools in Chefe Donsa. However we like the books because they give us options to choose from.”

– Asefa Hawaz, Librarian, Chefe Donsa Library.

The books are attractive but children are curious and sometimes pluck out the books with pop up features and wheels because they are curious about the contents. Librarians need to sensitize children on book handling skills.
Librarians reported that it was a challenge to record the big number of books donated because of the limited number of staff in the libraries. Librarians at Ejere Library stated that they have never received such a big number of children’s books at once. They had to work longer hours to record and stamp all the books. In Chefe Donsa and Holeta libraries all the books had not been recorded. In Chefe Donsa the books are only recorded when they are issued out to children. The library had only one staff member and was given an additional staff member in November 2018.

ii. Increased book borrowing

Librarians embarked on raising awareness about the new books after the training and during International Literacy Day celebrations. This led to an increase in the number of books borrowed in September and October 2018. More children also borrowed books in the beginning of school year in September.

Number of children’s books borrowed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2018</th>
<th>Chefe Donsa</th>
<th>Ejere</th>
<th>Modjo</th>
<th>Sheno</th>
<th>Holeta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of books borrowed by children at Holeta library from January to August could not be established. The children’s library service was not active and separate statistics for children was not maintained. Children had no space in the library and therefore stayed away. Before the project, children were using same space as the adult users. This could discourage them from using the library because in most cases they could not get a place to sit. Only about two to four children could visit the library on a daily basis. The new Book Haven in Holeta has only been in use for two months in September and October.

iii. Increased child visits

More children are reading in the libraries. Due to them limited number of schools, children attend school in two shifts; one group goes in the morning and the second group goes in the afternoon. The libraries are now busy throughout the day because children spend time in the library when not in school or when waiting for their shift. This was noted at Chefe Donsa and Holeta libraries. Children mostly visit the library individually rather than in school groups. At Ejere Library there are now more children visiting on their own after lessons.
in the afternoon.

“We have never seen this number of children coming to this library before.” – Tigist W/semayat, Librarian, Holeta Library. Children are happy to have their own separate space.

Child visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chefe Donsa</th>
<th>Modjo</th>
<th>Holeta</th>
<th>Sheno</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>1,435</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>1,053</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>1,856</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>2,402</td>
<td>2,562</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>1,912</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,911</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children’s service at Holeta Library became active in September 2018 so there are not figures available before this.

Outcome 2: Increased use of digital devices and increased reading by children

The tablet programme was first introduced in 2016 in collaboration with IREX in which each library received four tablets. The Book Havens project provided a further two per library. Librarians were happy to receive additional tablets because of the high demand among children. The additional tablets have attracted more children to the libraries. The content on the tablets is popular. Some parents download some stories from the tablets onto their phone to read to their children at home. The tablets contain suitable applications in local Afan Oromo and Amharic languages. Librarians have also downloaded some simple English children’s apps.

“The local language applications – Yente and Hawi are common terms in the community. Even though the Tablets make us very busy the content is very good for the kids.” – Asefa Hawaz, Librarian, Chefe Donsa Library.

The apps are suitable for the local needs of children because they are prepared by the community members and teachers. CODE Ethiopia engaged professional editors to edit the stories. E.g. The Story of the Elephant and the Ant was prepared by the community, Ejere Library staff and local teachers. Librarians drew the illustrations then CODE scanned and digitized the stories. Children love the local content. The tablets are more interactive and interesting. Children who cannot read or struggle to read enjoy watching the videos and learn simple words. Librarians also noted that children prefer
to play the educational games on the tablets than read the content.

Libraries have programmes for e-reading activities on different days and in some libraries this is done daily. At Chefe Donsa e-reading activities are conducted on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Children are allowed to borrow the tablets on Fridays to read at home over the weekend. At Ejere Library e-reading is one of the activities children engage in when they visit the library daily. Children are encouraged read print books first then later they are given the tablets. This is one way of promoting reading of the print books. Left to make a choice the children will prefer to use the tablets only. At Holeta library the librarians have formed tablet reading groups. The children meet together and use the tablets in groups. This allows all the children who visit library have a chance to use the tablets.

Librarians reported that the devices are delicate and prone to breakage and recommended provision of tablet casing. The few available tablets are in very high demand. Librarians have to closely monitor and supervise the usage of the tablets due to their delicate nature. There is a need for more user education on how to use the tablets. Children sometimes end up accidentally deleting some applications.

**Outcome 3: Attractive, welcoming and inviting environment for children to visit and engage with reading or other library activities.**

All five libraries received child friendly colourful plastic chairs, tables, shelves, reading mats and cushions. The libraries have also been painted using bright colours. The new internal and external library signage has created awareness about the libraries and more children are visiting the libraries.

All five libraries received similar mats, plastic chairs, tables and cushions which were acquired centrally by CODE Ethiopia. Holeta Library received double the amount that the other libraries received as its Book Haven was situated in a far larger space, comprising the whole top floor of the library building.

At Chefe Donsa Community Library there was no space to set up a Book Haven so an extension was constructed from iron sheets. The library received additional iron sheets, bags of cement and a shelf from the Municipal council to construct the children extension.

Ejere Library converted two former stores into beautiful children’s spaces.
“The Library is more attractive and colourful. Children are attracted to the colours. More parents are bringing their children to the library. The District Culture and Tourism Office have noted the changes and are more involved in library activities.” – Fikre Dugo, Librarian, Ejere Community Library.

The improved and new Books Havens have drawn more children to the libraries. Children are free to read in their own space. The number of children visiting has increased as a result.

“At this trend we will not be able to contain them they will be too many.” – Gudisa, former Holeta Library staff now working at the District Office.

“I visit the library three times a week. I like to spend time in the library because there are many new books and nice mats and cushions to sit on. I am happy that now I don’t have to wander outside but instead I spend time in the library.” – Robel, grade 5, 11 years, Chefe Donsa Primary School.

Outcome 4: Librarians have a better understanding of and are able to offer a range of services and activities for children

Librarians stated that all the topics in both the basic and advanced level were useful. Asefa Hawaz, Librarian at Chefe Donsa Library stated that all the topics were key learning. He further explained that the training has helped him to love children more. He is encouraged to provide a better service. Librarians gained valuable knowledge from both the basic and advanced training workshops.

“Before the workshop I thought the library was just a reading space, I did not know that a library should have different activities and that librarians need to engage with the children and the community. I now know how to mobilize resources. We successfully wrote a proposal to the church and received money to buy 150 local books. I am also more confident. It is a totally radical change for me.”

– Yomiyo Bekele, Librarian, Ejere Library.
“Previously I used to think that I should wait for the children but now I understand that I have to go to the schools and talk to parents and teachers. I feel I’m empowered to invite parents to come to the library. I try many different activities and involve the community. I now pay more attention to children’s activities such as drawing.”

– Fikre Dugo, Librarian, Ejere Library.

Librarians are better equipped to reach out to people with special needs and are using videos in the tablets to serve children with hearing and visual impairments. Asefa Hawaz at Chefa Donsa Library explained that a group of people with physical disabilities approached him about books on bee keeping, livestock rearing and poultry which he was happy to provide.

Librarians further stated that it was only after the training that they started offering proper service to children. The libraries have attracted volunteers because of the new changes.

“When I was a child I used to read in a library so now I know the value of reading for children and enjoy serving the children in the improved children space.”

– Mitiku, Volunteer at Chefe Donsa Library.
Six librarians were asked to rate their overall knowledge, skills and confidence after the training on a scale of 1 to 10. All the six librarians rated themselves above 7/10 after the training. The graph below demonstrates an increase in knowledge levels:

![Knowledge and confidence levels graph]

**Outcome 5: Libraries have regular programmes of activities for children**

Librarians reported that they now conduct reading activities which include reading aloud, singing, poetry and drawing. Librarians are more aware of the children’s information needs and comfort in the library. They have also become innovative and use the library compound to conduct children activities when the children cannot fit inside the library.

**Reading activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Reading activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No. of children per session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Chefe Donsa</td>
<td>Reading aloud, singing</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>15 to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ejere</td>
<td>Reading aloud, poetry, drawing, essay writing and singing</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>6 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Holeta</td>
<td>Silent reading, helping children with school assignments, tablet groups.</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Modjo</td>
<td>Reading aloud, poetry, drawing, essay writing and singing</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>15 to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sheno</td>
<td>Reading aloud, poetry, drawing, essay writing and singing</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>10 to 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarians stated that the main challenge in conducting reading activities was limited space in the library. Libraries with compounds such as Ejere and Holeta are utilizing the space in the grounds to engage children in reading activities.
Outcome 6: Local schools are better aware of library services and have access to books and information to improve learning

All the librarians visited schools in their regions to sensitize them on the library services. Chefe Donsa librarians have visited four schools and Ejere library has visited three schools. Librarians are able to serve approximately 50 to 150 children per visit.

The directors of schools and teachers promote the use of the libraries. The School Director at Chefe Donsa Primary School is a member of the library committee and was in the basic training. He has been instrumental in encouraging use of the library. Other teachers have noted the changes in the libraries and are sending their classes to the libraries.

“I have observed that there is a big change in the library. I give my class assignments and send them to get the information from the new books in the library. I also volunteer and help the librarians in the library whenever I am free.” – Bayisa, Teacher, Ijere Primary School.

Each library is working with one to two primary schools and kindergartens that have borrowed books in bulk as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Primary school</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Loan period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ejere</td>
<td>60 books</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Modjo</td>
<td>201 books</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Chefe Donsa</td>
<td>100 books</td>
<td>50 books</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sheno</td>
<td>230 books</td>
<td>160 books</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Holeta</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the books, teachers also borrow the tablets for about 3 days on weekends. Due to limited number of staff in the libraries, librarians are unable to visit schools frequently. The libraries are manned by two staff only. Holeta Library has selected and packed books for 3 schools and plans are underway for the schools to collect the books.

Outcome 7: Stronger networks of library staff working with children.

Librarians reported that they have shared the information on working with children with teachers, school directors, municipal staff, community elders and community based
organizations. Asefa Hawaz, Librarian at Chefe Donsa Library has also shared the information with health officials and police officers in the municipality. He has also had opportunity to share the knowledge with the community of elders (referred to as Abaggas) who hold their meetings in the library.

One of the librarians from Ejere Library has sensitized staff from District Culture and Tourism Office on child safeguarding and developing a library collection development policy.

Librarians at Holeta Library have shared their new knowledge and books with Lemigari Community Library which was established by an NGO in the neighbouring town. Holeta Library also donated 150 Book Aid International books to the library.

Librarians are sharing news of the activities they undertake in the library through WhatsApp and Telegram groups of CODE’s community librarians.

Four libraries officially launched their Book Havens on various dates as follows:

i. Ejere Community Library – 13th September, 2018
ii. Chefe Donsa Community Library - 2nd January, 2019
iii. Modjo Community Library – 4th January, 2019
iv. Sheno Community Library – 11th January, 2019

Key officials in the local administration, local elders and schools participated in the launches. Ejere Community Library launched its new Book Haven as part of its International Literacy Day celebrations on 13th September 2018. Key officials from the local authority including the Mayor, District Culture and Tourism Office staff, local businessmen, elders in the community, CODE Ethiopia staff, pupils, teachers and directors of schools attended the event. The event helped to raise the profile of the library as a key player in supporting education and lifelong learning. The guests emphasized the importance of reading and children participated in various reading competitions.

At Modjo Community Library about 30 people attended the function. Children, parents, teachers and officials from the municipal council participated in the event. The Christmas season in the Ethiopian calendar is from January 7th and 8th therefore the event was not well attended.

At Chefe Donsa Community Library approximately 200 people attended the function. Pupils, teachers, the library management committee, officials from the district admiration, the Municipal and Culture and Tourism Offices and the Abas Gadas community (community elders) participated in the event. According to the librarian the event was very successful. They have never before held a function in the library involving such a large number of people. The officials from the Municipal and Culture and Tourism offices promised to offer more support to the community library in future.

Sheno reported that they delayed launching the Book Haven because of the change in officials in the Culture and Tourism Office. Holeta Community Library had challenges with staffing and officials from the local administration and are still in the process of planning the launch at time of writing.
Various reading activities were conducted as part of the launches. These included reading competitions, poetry and singing. Prominent officials spoke on the importance of reading and the future of community libraries.

### 4.0 Key lessons

There are a number of lessons that were learned from project implementation as outlined below:

i. **A separate section for children is key to implementing children’s activities.**
   The younger children now have space for their activities.

   “I am happy that we now have a separate section for the younger children because I can implement what I learnt from the training. I was worried on how to serve kids before, but now I have the space.” — Asefa Hawaz, Librarian, Chefe Donsa Community Library.

   The separate room for children has encouraged them to visit the library in large numbers. Before the project, children were using same space as the adult. This often discouraged them from using the library because in most cases they could not get seats. Only about two to four children could visit the library on a daily basis. Now children have their space and they are happy.

   “We used to serve some younger children outside in the compound because we had no space for them in the library before the project.” — Getu Tofu, Librarian, Holeta Library.

ii. **Capacity building training for librarians has led to a more positive staff attitude.**
    The staff are friendlier and interact with children. They are more motivated to work.

   “Staff are working well and are more motivated. They have motivated us to assist them in library matters.” — Heran, Deputy Head of District Culture and Tourism Office.

iii. **Improved spaces for children has led to recognition and support from the local administration.**

    “The library was functioning but a bit neglected. I have seen a lot of changes in children’s services. Before there was shortage of books and there was no service at all for children. We are happy that the children’s service is now vibrant.” — Gelane, Language Coordinator, District Culture and Tourism Office.

    “If we discontinue our service the community will ask questions and complain. We will mobilise resources from other providers to ensure the service remains vibrant.” — Hailu, District Culture and Tourism Office.
iv. When children are happy they are key to marketing the library services. “We have not even gone out to market the service ourselves. The children themselves are marketing the library in the community.” – Tigist W/semayat, Librarian, Holeta Library.

v. Good children’s library services help children to improve in their school work. Children reported that the books, content on the tablets and support from librarians have helped them improve in their studies “I visit the library daily in the afternoon. I read about three books daily. I have improved in all my subjects since I started visiting the library. I used to get 4 to 5 out of 10 but now I get 8 to 9 out of 10 in all the subjects. I love spending time in the library, it is more comfortable and the librarians help me with my assignments.” – Naol, grade 3, 10 years old, Holeta Community Library.

vi. Planned and targeted school outreach programmes promote the use of libraries’ resources. Through targeted school visits, librarians have developed relationships with teachers and pupils. The schools have also been able to borrow books in bulk from the library for two to three months.

vii. Library signage creates awareness about the library in the community. More people are aware of the library services in the community.

5.0 Unintended outcomes and emerging issues

• The libraries are either under the Municipal Council or the District Culture and Tourism Office. CODE Ethiopia sent the funds for refurbishment through these offices since the money not could be sent directly to librarians. Bureaucratic procedures meant the funds were not released to the librarians within the planned timelines. This led to delays in painting the libraries and putting up the library signage. Holeta Library had not put up the signage by the time this evaluation was conducted. There is need to sensitize the officials on importance of the project timelines.

• Librarians reported that there was limited time to implement the project. They stated that they needed more time due to the bureaucracy involved in the procurement process. They experienced challenges in getting suitable suppliers to provide quotations for painting and library signage at the local level. Librarians are required to get at least three different quotations. This proved to be difficult because of the limited number of suppliers at the local level. They had to visit the neighboring towns to get additional quotations for the works.

• The Librarian at Chefe Donsa Library reported that a local businessman opposed the idea of the signage at the road. The librarian had to call for a meeting with community elders to explain the importance of having the signage at the road. The businessman finally understood the need to put the signage on the road.

In addition, the librarian managed to organize talks in the library where he invited the local police to talk about the security in the town and the health officials to discuss health matters. More parents in the Holeta area are visiting the library.
community are therefore drawn to the library.

- The libraries have limited staff which affects the day to day operations of the libraries. The libraries have only two to three staff each and librarians are therefore unable to visit schools frequently and were unable to complete processing of the new books. They were also overwhelmed with the increased number of children visiting the libraries. To handle these issues, the librarians are working longer hours and engaging volunteers where possible. Frequent transfers of staff in the libraries and District Offices affects the smooth running of the libraries. Two librarians at Holeta Library were transferred to the District Office. Other staff from Chefe Donsa Library have also been transferred. Librarians reported that some new officials do not understand the value of the libraries and have to sensitise incoming officials about the library services.

- There was inconsistency in record keeping. It was not possible to get clear statistics of child visits and books borrowed. Some transferred staff at Chefe Donsa and Holeta libraries had not handed over the reports to the librarians.

- The children’s extension built of iron sheets at Chefe Donsa Library may not be suitable during the cold season. The librarian is sourcing for funds from stakeholders to construct a more permanent structure using stone.

- It was not possible to implement the school outreach and book lending programme immediately after the basic training in May, 2018. This is because schools are closed in June and July.

- Professionalism in running the library and confident staff attracts attention of the district offices. Three libraries received additional support from their local District Culture & Tourism and Municipal offices. At Ejere Library the District Office staff assist in the day to day running of the library including cleaning the library.

- Two libraries received additional support through resource mobilization efforts. The librarians from Ejere Community Library reported that they managed to successfully write a proposal to St. Mary’s Church and were given money which they used to acquire 150 local books. The librarian at Chefe Donsa Library received iron sheets and cement to build the children’s library extension.

6.0 Recommendations

- The process of translating into the local language during the training workshop is time consuming. In future, a Trainer of Trainer (TOT) workshop should be conducted for English-speaking CODE staff who will then train the librarians in their local language.

  “It would save time and effort if TOTs who understand English from CODE are trained in English and then they train us in our local language. We will understand better.” – Yomiyo Bekele, Librarian, Ejere Library.

- The libraries are all at different levels. Some have been able to achieve more than others. Further learning can be achieved by including a visit to a library during the training programme.

- Librarians reported that the tablets are delicate and prone to breakage and recommended provision of protective covers. There is need to include tablet cases in the budget for acquiring tablets.
• Funds for refurbishment were limited. Librarians would have loved more funds to buy banners and paint murals.

• Librarians need to develop more targeted programmes for girls and reach out to their parents. The librarians at Holeta Library reported that more boys were visiting the library than girls.

“There are more boys than girls visiting the library. This is because girls are busy with domestic work and not allowed to go out of the house.” – Getu Tofa, Librarian, Holeta Library.

• Librarians need more forums where they can meet and share experiences. CODE Ethiopia needs to plan learning forums for the librarians.

“The training helped me to get experience from others and evaluate how I have been serving children and performing my duties. It was a great learning to hear how the other librarians manage the libraries.” – Tigist W/semayat, Librarian, Holeta Library.

• We recommend CODE Ethiopia looks into alternative ways of disbursing project funds to the libraries. Delays were experienced due to the long process of getting the funds from the District Office. Librarians stated that they could have established a committee to spend the money and CODE staff could have been represented. This would have made implementation easier and faster than through the District Office.

• The libraries need more local books in Amharic and Afan Oromo languages which are more relevant to the school curriculum. This calls for more resource mobilization efforts by librarians. Children love the UK donated books because of the colorful illustrations, however most of them cannot read English and prefer the local books.

• The librarians reported that the Library management committees were not supporting the libraries as expected. There is a need to relook at the composition of the committees. Librarians need to hold discussions with the Mayors and Heads of the District Offices so that more willing members are incorporated in the committees.

7.0 Conclusion

Several positive results have been achieved through the Book Havens for Ethiopia project. More children are visiting the libraries and the librarians are more confident and are offering vibrant children’s services. Through the project children’s services have been revived in the five libraries. Children are happy to have their own space.

Librarians reported a significant change of attitude among the community members. The community is more aware of the libraries and are offering support in various ways. The internal and external signage have helped to create awareness. More parents are sending their children to the libraries.

Librarians, teachers, parents, children, municipal and district officials have all experienced significant change in the libraries and are more supportive. Librarians are more conscious of their role to promote a reading culture by attracting children to the library. Yalew Zeleke, Executive Director of CODE Ethiopia stated that the new environment for children is encouraging and motivating. He stated that training was a great motivation for the librarians who
now feel empowered to do more for children. He expressed his desire to see the project rolled out to more libraries in Ethiopia.