Title of the Project:

Improving Access to, and quality of, Education at Bezawit Primary School (Ethiopia)

October 2018
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1. Project Summary

- **Title of the Project:**
  Improving and increasing access to, and quality of, education at Bezawit Primary School, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia

- **Applicant Organization:**
  Frances G. Cosco Foundation (FGCF: Education for Change)

- **Location of the Project:**
  WorebKebele, a rural community of Bahir Dar, capital of the Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia

- **Estimated Number of Beneficiaries:**
  Students: 240 (49% female)
  Teachers: 7 (100% female)
  Principal: 1 (Female)
  Guard: 1 (Male)

- **Duration of the Project:**
  January 2019-December 2022

- **Implementing Partners:**
  - Woreb and Surrounding Community Committee
  - Bahir Dar Education Department
  - Bahir Dar University
  - Frances G. Cosco Foundation (FGCF)-Education for Change

- **Estimated cost of the project:**
  ETB 4,226,423/Euro 150,944

- **Share of parties:**
  - **Community:**
    ETB 1,630,469/Euro 58,235
  - **Bahir Dar University:**
    ETB 1,222,927/Euro 43,676
  - **ISEE & Farfala Foundation:**
    ETB 1,372,927/Euro 49,033

- **Application Contact:**
  Yehalem Abebe, Executive Director, yehalem@fgcfoundation.org, yehalemab@gmail.com, Phone: +251-911250022; P.O.Box 15692, Ethiopia
2. Background

About Frances G. Cosco Foundation (FGCF: Education for Change)

Frances G. Cosco Foundation (FGCF): Education for Change is a non-denominational Canadian charity registered by the Government of Alberta under the Companies Act (No. 5117735828), the Canadian Revenue Agency under the Income Tax Act (No. 827187774 RR0001), and the Charities and Societies Agency of Ethiopia (No. 3337). It was founded by individuals who have many years of experience serving on the boards of charitable organizations and who, having done aid work in Ethiopia, have first-hand knowledge of the opportunities and challenges presented there.

The mission of FGCF is to improve the lives of disadvantaged people through quality education. Its strategies include: providing infrastructures such as school buildings, libraries, and educational materials; enabling access to improved learning by continuously upgrading pedagogical and classroom management skills; reducing health risks by building latrines and providing access to safe and adequate water; and, lowering poverty levels by facilitating skills training and income generating opportunities for destitute parents and protecting and rehabilitating the environment. To achieve its mission, FGCF follows a holistic and community driven approach, invests in long-term outcomes rather than in short-term outputs, builds on communities’ strengths and resources, closely works with a range of partners that share its mission and values, and focuses on measuring outcomes and continuously learning from its own experiences and those of others. FGCF works in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) of Ethiopia.

Since it obtained charitable status in May 2015, FGCF has upgraded the physical facilities of two elementary schools and built three new schools (two elementary and a high school) and has been implementing its holistic approach in all the five schools. In 2018, it is upgrading Firin, Birr Adama, and Addis Amba primary schools and building a new high school in Gimjabet town, Awi Zone.

2.1. Description of the Project Area

Bezawit Primary School is located in the rural village of Woreb on the outskirts of Bahir Dar City, capital of the ANRS. According to data obtained from the local administration, Woreb has a population of about 3,470 who rely on a rain fed subsistence farming for a living. The land has reached a stage that it can no further be divided among family members (average of 5/household) so good quality education is increasingly becoming the surest way for children from the area to become self-reliant and lead a better life.

2.3. Description of Bezawit Primary School (BPS)

Since its establishment (1997), BPS has been rendering services free of tuition and other forms of payments to its students. In the 2017/18 academic year, it had 239 (46.9% female) students attending grades 1-4 and had 8 teachers (all female), 1 principal (female) and 1 guard (male) who were all paid by, and will continue to be paid by, the Bahir Dar Education Department (BDED).

http://www.fgcfoundation.org/
BPS’ students come from other farming villages around Woreb including: Gulmeja, Jeramy, Arefami, Seyoum Sefer, Albas, Bure Feses, Bezawit, Amira Wonz, and Mazenit. Some walk up to an hour to get to the school.

### 3. Description of the Problem

FGCF was invited by the community to help them address the following key challenges facing BPS.

#### 3.1. Absence of basic facilities and hard-to-use classrooms

All classrooms are dark, mud-walled, and falling apart, making teaching and learning extremely difficult. Parents are primarily responsible for building classrooms while the government provides teachers and textbooks. Because they are poor, parents could not afford to build cement classrooms that meet the government standard and students have been forced to learn in facilities that are dangerous to the safety of the children and the teachers.

The school does not have the following facilities critical to children’s safety and learning: functional classrooms, latrine, water, playground, and library and science laboratory, to mention a few. The poor classrooms and the absence of basic facilities resulted in, among other things:

- **Declining student population.** Unlike other schools where student populations have been growing exponentially, BPS’ has been declining. As example, in 2017/18, the total student population decreased by over 10% (the number of females by 20%) from what they were in 2015/16.

- **High student absenteeism.** In 2017/18, more than one out of four students (26.7%) had more than 6 school days of unexcused absences (17.2% for more than 10 days).

- **Delayed enrollment.** In 2017/18, 21.3% of grade one students were overage for their grade (above the official age of 7 years).

- **Loss of learning times.**
  
  - Students bring water and fresh cow dung and every Friday the last two classes are canceled to let the students plaster the floors with the dung in order to keep the dust down. This results in the loss of 36 classes a year.
  
  - Because the school does not have drinking water, students must bring water from home or go to nearby homes to ask for water often missing their learning times.

- **Poor sanitation**

  The absence of a latrine (even a makeshift one) forces many students, especially the younger ones to relieve themselves in the open field. As a result the space behind the classrooms has unpleasant odor and is posing health threats. Given the large overage student population, many students, especially girls and staff who need facilities with reasonable safety and privacy can’t use those open spaces; they often stop learning/teaching and go to nearby homes to use private latrines.

Click on https://photos.app.goo.gl/GfAw2yJqiaodNrH73 to see pictures that show BPS’ existing physical facilities and the learning environment.
3.2. Poor quality of teaching

The evidence is clear that the current focus should shift from the years of schooling attainment to improving quality of learning. Quality of education is what matters to economic development. Scores in standardized tests are better predictors of real per capita GDP growth than years of schooling attainment (Hanushek and Woesmann, 2008, 2012). Cognitive skills are more strongly associated with increases in earnings and development outcomes than the number of years spent in school (UNESCO, 2011; Jamison et al. 2007; Laurini and Andrade, 2012). Many children are functionally illiterate and innumerate despite at least four years in school; many children’s reading abilities are way below their grade levels. The 2016 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) of Ethiopia revealed that over 85% of Ethiopian children read below the standard set for their grades.

Studies have shown that what the teacher “believes and does” in the classroom has the maximum impact on children’s learning outcomes (Wyatt, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000; University of Tennessee, 1998; UNESCO, 2014). When the Essential Components of Powerful Teaching and Learning are evident in classroom practices, student achievement is higher, regardless of poverty (Baker Evaluation, Research, and Consulting, Inc.).

The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (ETP, 1994) set standards for teachers and described new approaches to education, i.e., active-learning, student-centered, and problem-solving approaches associated with constructivism. The policy requires teachers to ensure that their students engage in meaningful learning through various forms of active learning, and learn to use higher-order thinking skills. This is to be achieved by, among other things, improving the quality of pre-service program and providing continuous in-service teacher development. However, recent assessments of teaching practices (Frost and Rolleston, 2013) and teacher professional development and support systems (Save International, 2014) found that use and knowledge of the student-centered model of teaching was sorely lacking across the Amhara and other regional states of Ethiopia. Barrow and Leu (2014) found that this was because, “teachers lack preparation for using the cognitive dimension of active learning, and conceptual learning, critical thinking, and higher-order thinking skills essential to active learning are not widely taught, modeled, or practiced in the pre-service and in-service development programs.” Because of the extremely poor preservice training, only 12% of graduates from ANRS’ 10 teacher training colleges passed the teacher certification exam

1 It is common to hear principals complaining about fresh teachers unwilling to teach their majors (especially Math and English). BPS’ teachers revealed that they haven’t got any in-service training other than those on the government’s education policy. Poor pre-service and a lack of in-service training have failed to empower BPS’ teachers to understand and effectively use the student-centered approaches.

3.3. Lack of outdoor learning opportunities for the children and sources of income for the school

BPS does not have adequate open spaces for students to learn by doing, or for the school to generate income that would enable it to provide teachers and students with more teaching and

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1 Presentation at the ATKILT NGO-GO Forum by Ato Habtamu Bizuneh, Head, Educational Planning and Program Department of the Education Bureau on December 26, 2016, at Koso Ber.
learning resources and to support children from destitute families to obtain uniforms and learning materials. As a result, children spend the entire time seated in the awful classrooms.

4. **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

4.1. **Goals and objectives**

- **Goal:**
The project’s goal is to increase and improve access to, and quality of learning in BPS.

- **Specific objectives/outcomes:**
The specific objectives (anticipated outcomes) directed toward improved life-long learning skills and improved quality of life through the following:
  - increased net enrollment
  - improved attendance/participation
  - increased student achievement
  - Improved grade progression/completion rate
  - Improved hygiene and sanitation awareness and practice

4.2. **Strategies**

Key strategies for achieving the above outcomes include:

- upgrading physical facilities (replacing hard-to-use mud classrooms and other facilities with new, furnished, cement ones). The school will have 8 new classrooms which will allow it to increase its student population by up to 235% (from 239 to 800 students) teaching 50 students/class in two shifts. It will also have a library, a science laboratory, a computer lab, latrine and a teacher resource center/staffroom and office spaces. The new facilities will allow BPS to provide children in Woreb and surrounding communities access to grade 5 and 6 close to home. The community has secured a 2 hectare suitable land (20,000 m2) and the school will move to the new location when the construction is finished and the facilities are furnished.

- providing adequate and proper furniture for the new buildings (See the list of furniture in Appendix 2-Detailed Budget)

- providing library books (reference, fiction and self-help and appropriate to the age and interests of children)

- developing teachers’ pedagogical skills and content knowledge through providing them with training on the best teaching practices; observing them in their classrooms and providing them constructive feedbacks; modeling lessons in their classrooms; arranging experience sharing visits; and improving the weekly continuous professional development sessions, etc.

- providing safe and adequate water close to the classrooms and hand washing facilities for the new latrines by connecting the school to the nearby water system

- improving students’ sanitation and hygiene awareness and practices through strengthening the school’s water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) committee, providing training of trainers course for the school’s WASH members so that they will educate fellow students

- converting open school spaces into green outdoor learning environments and sources of income by planting shed and ornamental trees, fruit trees and developing a good vegetable garden on 1.25 hectares of land.

*(Detailed activities, measurable outputs, implementation time and responsible body are provided in Appendix 1.)*
4.3. Project Implementation partners and their roles

- **Frances G. Cosco Foundation (FGCF)**
  FGCF will be responsible for managing resources, liaising with key partners and coordinating the implementation of the project on schedule and on budget. FGCF has two full-time senior education experts based in Bahir Dar. Apart from facilitating the teacher training workshops, their times are spent in FGCF’s target schools assisting teachers, principals and supervisors to better implement the best teaching practices and help the schools attain their school improvement targets jointly set by FGCF, the schools and education offices. FGCF will secure its contribution of ETB 1,372,927/Euro 49,033 to this project from its partners (ISEE and Farfala Foundation) and provides timely and informative reports to donors and Ethiopian partners.

- **Bahir Dar University (BDU)**
  Bahir Dar University is the second largest public university in Ethiopia. We have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with BDU and they will provide us the experts we need (E.g., landscape designers, foresters, horticulturist, etc.) and seedlings at no cost to the project besides a cash contribution of ETB 1,222,927/Euro 43,676.

- **International Community School-Addis Ababa (ICS)**
  ICS is FGCF’s technical partner. We have a MoU with them whereby they provide, among other things, in-kind support during their breaks. They also send their specialists and provide workshops for FGCF’s target school teachers and administrators; arrange for selected teachers from our target schools to shadow their classrooms and learn how ICS implements the best teaching practices, etc.

- **Bahir Dar Education Department (BDED)**
  The department will continue to pay salaries of the staff of BPS and provide textbooks to the students. It will mobilize community contribution, coordinate teacher training and learning assessments and provide other support the project needs to improve access and quality of education at BPS.

- **Bahir Dar Health Department (BDHD)**
  The department has agreed to provide technical support in the provision of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). It will, among other things, assign a competent staff who will assist in the selection of appropriate sites for latrine construction, installing of water points, digging pits for burying and burning dry waste, and educating the school community on safety, hygiene and sanitation and, from time to time, inspecting the safety and cleanliness of the school facilities and the personal hygiene of students.

- **Woreb and nearby Communities Committee (CC)**
  There is a strong committee elected by and from parents. The CC will mobilize the community contributions of ETB 1,630,569/Euro 58,235 to the project, and work closely with FGCF in ensuring the smooth running of the construction of classrooms and other physical facilities and the improvement of student attendance and the quality of education.
4.4. Financial Resource Requirements

The project will require an estimated ETB 4,226,423 or Euro 150,944. Out of the total, the community will contribute Birr 1,630,569/Euro 58,235, Bahir Dar University will contribute ETB 1,222,927/Euro 43,676 while ISEE and Farfala Foundation will cover FGCF’s share of ETB 1,372,927/Euro 49,033. Below is a summary of the estimated costs. A detailed budget is provided in Appendix 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost item</th>
<th>Estimated Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Upgrading physical facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Construction of 2 cement classroom</td>
<td>3,242,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blocks (8 classrooms), 1 block</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for teachers' resource center, offices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and IT lab; 1 block for library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and science lab; 2 blocks of latrine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separate for boys and girls, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplying sport equipment and materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Furnishing the new buildings</td>
<td>512,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture, science kits, library books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Improving Quality of teaching</td>
<td>117,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training, classroom follow up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and support, exposure visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and professional learning community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Providing WASH</td>
<td>88,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the school with the nearby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water system, constructing distribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>points and hand washing basins, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing training for WASH club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members and educating the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 School greening and gardening</td>
<td>115,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape design, providing a 15,000-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>litre reservoir and constructing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concrete base, providing farm tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and implements, strengthening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental club…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Project monitoring coordination and</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audit for FGCF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,226,423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Sustainability

FGCF will do more than build and operate a facility. We propose to follow a holistic approach and establish a long-term relationship with the school, BDED and the community until the envisaged changes happen and local capacities are strengthened so that the benefits of the project continue long after FGCF’s involvement ends. It is in line with this philosophy that all teacher
capacity development interventions will be followed by classroom visits and one-on-one support to help teachers master and successfully apply the new teaching approaches and techniques. The project will also offer a more sustainable way of helping children from destitute families continue their education by providing them with the opportunity to work in the school's garden and pay for their educational materials from the income they will earn. The school can also finance its school improvement initiatives from the sale of fruits and vegetables long after the end of the project.

6. Monitoring and measuring outcomes
At FGCF we focus on educational processes and outcomes. We will collect student, school, family and community baseline data, qualitative assessments on the part of parents and community along with more conventional sets, achievement targets that continuously assess progress towards standards set by the government and student learning goals. FGCF will collect qualitative data from parent surveys and baseline data using the Early Grade Reading Assessment, a tool developed by USAID and used by the Ministry of Education and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) in June 2018. These data will also serve to identify children with special educational needs, assess community and family perceptions and inform the training of teachers on how they can plan, teach and assess their students based on their learning strengths. FGCF will also administer a well-being metric created by the World Health Organization (WHO) to assess perceived changes in quality of life of students as a result of our interventions.

The project activities will be reviewed monthly in a joint meeting of FGCF, BDED, CC, BDHD and the BPS administration and appropriate remedial actions will be taken. FGCF’s staff will collect weekly data which will also help inform decisions on progress. At the culmination of each teacher training workshop, teachers will be required to set action plans and fix timelines for employing the new instructional approaches in their classrooms. FGCF’s experts and the school’s principals and supervisor will use the action plans for monitoring the implementing of the new approaches by trained teachers and provide tailored support to those struggling to implement the new instructional strategies.

FGCF will also help teachers strengthen learning communities where those who teach the same subjects will meet every week and discuss how better they can plan, execute the next week’s lesson, and simultaneously assess to what extent their students have achieved the learning objectives.

Performances of teachers and other staff of BPS will be evaluated based on the extent they have applied the new teaching approaches and by the number of students they helped achieve the minimum learning objectives. The BDED has agreed to revise its performance evaluation system and build in incentives (priority for educational opportunities, promotion and transfer) for teachers who have successfully applied the instructional approaches they have acquired through this project.

BDU’s students and staff will also do research on students’ progress towards their goals and the achievements of the projects’ intended outcomes which will provide important data to inform program planning and adjust interventions.
## Appendix 1. Detailed Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Implementation time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Upgrading the school’s physical facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constructing new cement classrooms</td>
<td>• 8 classrooms (2 blocks)</td>
<td>February 2019 - August 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constructing new cement block (staff resource center, offices and computer lab)</td>
<td>• 1 block</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• constructing new cement block (library and science lab)</td>
<td>• 1 block</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constructing new latrines</td>
<td>• 2 blocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Improving quality of teaching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Best teaching practices workshop for 10 days twice each for 5 days</td>
<td>• 33 teachers, 2 principals &amp; 1 supervisor trained</td>
<td>- Sept. 2019 &amp; Jan. 2020 Feb. 2019-May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classroom follow up and one-on-one support (50 days/year for 3 years): Sept. 15-June 15</td>
<td>• 50 days/year/school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure visit at ICS, an IB school in Addis for selected staffs</td>
<td>• 3 teachers and 1 principal</td>
<td>- March 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strengthening teachers’ professional learning communities</td>
<td>• 2 hours/week/department professional learning sessions held</td>
<td>- Sept-May. 2019, 2020, 2021 &amp; 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Improving access to water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH)</strong></td>
<td>- Adequate water made available</td>
<td>Sept. 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide adequate and safe water inside the school</td>
<td>• 2 washing basins (1 at boys and another at girls’ latrines)</td>
<td>Oct. 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide hand washing facilities at the latrines and other convenient places</td>
<td>• 30 club leaders trained for 2 days</td>
<td>Oct. 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate training of trainers (ToT) workshop on hygiene and sanitation for WASH club members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.-June: 2019, 20 &amp; 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cascade the WASH training to the larger school community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Provide learning resources for students</strong></td>
<td>- Worth 50,000 Birr</td>
<td>Sept. 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide library books (reference, fiction and self-help)</td>
<td>- Worth 54,000 Birr</td>
<td>Sept. 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide materials and equipment for co-curricular activities (sport, drama, literature…)</td>
<td>- 5 clubs/grade in grades 3 and 4</td>
<td>Oct.- May:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strengthen student reading clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Create green outdoor learning environments and income generating schemes on existing school site**

- Collect data from teachers about the topics they can teach outside the classrooms
- Design the landscape
- Facilitate student and staff training on planting and protecting trees, vegetables and other plants
- Plant multi-purpose trees, flowers, etc.
- Establish and run a vegetable garden
- Strengthen the school’s environmental club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified topics by subject and grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape design on A3 paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in grades 3 and above and teachers trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hectares planted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25 hectare planted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 active members trained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- April-June, 2019
- June 2018, 2019 & 2020
- May & June 2019
- June and July of 2018, 2019 & 2020
- Oct.-June 2019, 2020 & 2021