REGIONAL TRAININGS REPORT ON COACHING/MENTORING SKILLS TRAINING FOR CONCERN WORLDWIDE STAFF

AMHARA AND SOMALI REGIONS, ETHIOPIA 17-19 September, 2019 (AMHARA), 30 September -2 October 2019 (SOMALI) TRAINING LOCATIONS: CONCERN WORLDWIDE OFFICES, KOMBOLCHA FOR AMHARA REGION RAGASTAN CAFÉ, GODE FOR SOMALI REGION



Participants doing group work. (Photo credit: Martha Nakakande)

Report by Martha Nakakande, Tech RRT CMAM/IYCF-E Advisor





Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Concern Worldwide has been working in Ethiopia since 1973 providing emergency response, and currently long-term development and resilience building programs, targeted at the extreme poor in selected woredas in up to eight of the nine regions of the country among which is health systems strengthening (HSS) for the nutrition sector. One such project is the CMAM Surge pilot project and working with Government health workers to identify key bottlenecks in systems. There is a tendency to resolve system problems with NGO staff or funds and to not look at local problem solving or more sustainable solutions. This shows that there is still need to shift more from a "substituting" to "supporting" and ultimately "strengthening" approach as outlined in HSS guides.

One of the strengths of Concern is the committed and experienced staff with a diverse array of skills and competences. To fulfil the current Country Strategic Plan, Concern recognizes the need to continue to enhance the capacities of staff through training and development opportunities to increase their ability to support local problem solving through improving mentoring and coaching skills. In 2017 the Concern emergency team facilitated bringing one expert from the Technical Rapid Response Team (Tech RTT) to conduct a needs assessment followed by a Training of Trainers in coaching skills. The training methodology was highly appreciated by trainees, by regional counterparts who participated and by federal counterparts during debriefings, but was never cascaded on to partners due to various logistical and security constraints. In addition, the CMAM surge work also led to the recommendation to *"strengthen mentoring to reinforce capacity and encourage continuous learning"* during an external midterm review conducted by the Centre for Humanitarian Change (CHC).

In order to strengthen the HSS approach which is an integral part of Concern's support to the government to provide high quality essential service delivery in the nutrition sector, Concern embarked on building skills in-house and make coaching and mentoring capacity integral to the skill set of key technical staff. Tech RRT was requested to provide support through a CMAM Advisor whose role is to strengthen the delivery of health and nutrition response through the provision of senior leadership, technical support and capacity building in Coaching and Mentoring capacity through both in-country and remote support to Concern Worldwide, Ethiopia. Based on this, the initial training was carried out in June 2019 at Addis level for senior level program management team. The initial training included review of the training package and development of other supporting documents and tools. This was then followed with the cascade trainings at regional/field level reported herein.

Objectives of the training

The **overall objective** of coaching skills training was to build the capacity of key technical staff of Concern Worldwide Ethiopia on effective coaching/mentoring skills that are to be incorporated into routine supervision and facilitate the cascading of the training in the different regions.

The specific objectives of coaching include:

- Participants better understand the concepts of coaching and how to incorporate them into supervision visits
- Participants are able to identify learning resources and tools that can be used during coaching and action plan development at facility level
- Participants learn the 4-step coaching process and how to implement each step
- Participants develop effective communication skills for conducting supervision and coaching
- Participants develop an implementation plan at individual and team level of the skills learned.

The **expected outcome** of the training was to ensure effective transfer of knowledge on coaching skills so as to have technical staff that are confident and competent to support and improve the quality of CMAM services and increase their ability to support local problem solving through sustainable approaches. The trainings reported on herein are the ones

that were conducted in the Amhara and Somali regions thus accomplishing all the planned 3 trainings for phases 1,2&3 of the Tech RRT support.

Participants

The 2 trainings included 37 (5 females and 32 male) participants: 28 from Concern Worldwide and 9 from the government i.e. Woreda health, nutrition, WASH and agriculture departments. Of the participants, 22 were for the Amhara region training and 15 were for the Somali region training. The table below shows all the participants.

			Gender	International or local	
#	Name	Position		organization (including Gvt)	Region
		Health and Nutrition senior project	Μ	Concern Worldwide	
1	Tesfa Marye	officer	_		Amhara
2	Amualto Ambaw	Agriculture senior project officer	F	Concern Worldwide	Amhara
2		Hygiene and sanitation senior	F	Concern Worldwide	A h
3	Mulatu Mekonnen	project officer	N.4	Concern Worldwide	Amhara
4	Eshetu Worku	Agriculture senior project officer	M		Amhara
5	Matacabia Abiv	DRR and Early warning senior project officer	М	Concern Worldwide	Amhara
5	Metasebia Abiy	Health and Nutrition senior project	М	Concern Worldwide	Amnara
6	Etagegnehu Hailu	officer			Amhara
-		Health and Nutrition senior project	Μ	Concern Worldwide	7 innuru
7	Shibeshi Worku	officer			Amhara
		Health and Nutrition senior project	М	Concern Worldwide	
8	Mulatu Ayalew	officer			Amhara
9	Addis Birhanie	WASH senior project officer	Μ	Concern Worldwide	Amhara
		Hygiene and sanitation senior	Μ	Concern Worldwide	
10	Habtie Yizengaw	project officer			Amhara
11	Biniyam Geremew	WASH senior project officer	Μ	Concern Worldwide	Amhara
12	Kifle Kassaw	Water quality officer	Μ	Concern Worldwide	Amhara
		DRR and Early warning senior	Μ	Concern Worldwide	
13	Teshome Walelegne	project officer			Amhara
		Delanta - Woreda health office	Μ	Government	
14	Desalew Tilahun	Nutrition officer	M	Government	Amhara
15	Mengistu Getahun	Zonal agriculture office expert			Amhara
16	Solomon Assefa	Water officer	M	Government	Amhara
17	Asrate Mekonen	Woreda health office MCH officer	F	Government	Amhara
18	Getachew Ergataw	Woreda Agricultural office expert	M	Government	Amhara
19	Besfat Alem	Woreda Agricultural office expert	M	Government	Amhara
20	Fiseha Zewdu	Zonal water office expert	Μ	Government	Amhara
21	Wondie Aweke	Woreda water Office	Μ	Government	Amhara
22	Seid Tesfaw	Zonal health Department expert	Μ	Government	Amhara
23	Seblegenet Zewdie	Nutritionist	F	Concern Worldwide	Somali
24	Yodit Mekasha	Nutritionist	F	Concern Worldwide	Somali
25	Binyam Leykun	Commodity Manager		Concern Worldwide	Somali
26	Berhanu Degefa	Logistics Officer	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
27	Abdulahi Bihi	Regional Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
		Regional Nutrition Program	М	Concern Worldwide	
28	Abdulahi Bedel Budul	Manager			Somali

29	Abdi Nour Mohumed	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
30	Abdiakader Abdulahi	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
31	Abdulahi Hassen	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
32	Abdi Majiid Ahmed	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
33	Abdi Malik Ahmed	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
34	Faysal Muse	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
35	Mujib Sherif	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
36	Mohamed Ali	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali
37	Siraje Bihi	Project Manager	М	Concern Worldwide	Somali

Training methods

Various methods were used. To engage the participants, many of the sessions were participant-led with a lot of group work, brainstorming, role plays, individual sessions, small groups discussions and plenaries. Case studies were utilized to bring the learning closer to what is really experienced in the field. The video on coaching shown at the beginning of day 1 was an eye opener and set the tone for what knowledge each participant was looking out for throughout the training. The PowerPoint presentations were done to affirm the already suggested answers and discussion on each session. Practical sessions were carried out in the health facilities enabled participants to exercise the 4-step coaching process. In all the case studies the participants had to review and come up with the strengths and challenges, action plans and a way for commitment and follow-up.

Scope of the training

The training took place during 2.5 days in each of the regions with activities beginning by 8:30am and ending at 5:00pm on day 1 and 2 and at 1:00pm on day 3. Each training began with introductions and setting the pace for the training and expectations from the participants and a presentation from the Concern representative (the CPAMA PM for the Amhara region training and the RRM lead for the Somali region training) on how the training is key to the on-going projects.

Day 1 entailed: introductions to the training, introduction to coaching, current program strengths and challenges, benefits of coaching, coaching techniques and the coaching process, facilitation skills and review of several case studies.

During the discussion on program strengths and challenges, the following were mentioned as shown in the table:

Strengths in Health and Nutrition	Strengths in WASH		
 Job aids for quick reference in place MoH staff are trained Availability of HEW (health extension worker) Commitment of the government Availability of essential medicines Good screening practices in some facilities. 	 Joint supervision with government sectors Commitment on the ground Teamwork Common Kebele profile e.g. makeup of the committees On-job training and communication Community-level training on WASH 		
Challenges in Health and Nutrition	Challenges in WASH		
 Not following the protocols properly in some areas Supply chain issues Some health facilities (HFs) are closed No functionnal DRR (disaster risk reduction) Low nutrition screening Lack of support in community health Staff turnover Incomplete and inconsistent reporting and documentation 	 Different meeting schedules (by government) Poor community participation Poor planning Skills gap Poor data management and recording Poor hygiene practices 		

- Overall the participants were able to learn (and shared real experiences) on key aspects:
 - Coaching is aimed at empowering individuals to do their best, is about engaging with the person being supervised and there has to be an actionable plan
 - Supervision as was previously done was about finding out if everything is done correctly- participants realized that most of the time what is done is fault finding.
 - When coaching is done as part of supervision, actions are planned to address challenges
 - The qualities of a good facilitator. In addition to those presented, they mentioned qualities including motivation, communication skills, innovation, positive attitude, ability to delegate, understanding, willingness to share knowledge, open discussions etc.
 - The benefits of coaching are not only to the health worker but the coach/supervisor, the health facility and
 organization at large.
- The 4-step coaching process was the main focus on this day. The participants were shown the 4 steps and received explanation with examples on each step. Case studies of various scenarios were practiced as a whole group, in smaller groups and individually. The 4-step process is explained below in detail.



Step 1: Introduce yourself and Observe Work

- Purpose: Create an understanding between the team and the coach about what is happening
- Take time: Spend time following the flow of work in the health facility look at the patients and their files, observe a feeding, observe the environment

Step 2: Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement

- Look at what is working well and encourage the team to continue the good work
- Note the areas of improvement that you have observed
- Fill out "Strengths and Areas for Improvement" sheet

Step 3: Initiate a Plan

- Work with the team to discuss solutions to the challenges
- Apply tactics to improve performance using tools, policies and procedures as methods of coaching
- Work with the team to complete the "On the Job Coaching Action Plan" Sheet
- Turn challenges into actions
 - Challenge: hardship or problem; needing effort or skill to overcome
 - **Goal:** The desired result
 - Action: the process of doing something to achieve the goal
 - Look at the challenge
 - What change do we want to see?
 - What steps need to be taken to see that change?

Step 4: Get a Commitment and Follow-up

- Just because a plan is developed doesn't mean the team will follow through
- Initiate the first step with the team
- Set a follow-up meeting and schedule telephone check in
- Make yourself available for follow up and any questions that arise
- Be persistent, put in the time needed and follow through on what you say you will do (establish Confidence)

Day 2 included a field visit to practice the coaching process, adult learning skills and effective communication, public speaking, leading a discussion and dealing with challenging participants.

Health facility visit to practice the 4-step coaching process

Participants visited the nearest health facilities. Amhara region team was divided into 2 groups with one group visiting Hara health post and another visiting Kalina health post. The Somali team visited Gode Goro Health Centre.

As per the preparations, each group had a team leader whose role was to introduce and coordinate the group and 2 volunteers who carried out the supervision with practice of the four steps. All the participants observed the process and recorded the strengths and challenges. There were then combined into a master list with input from all. The volunteers along with the health extension workers reviewed the challenges and came up with action plans. The participants then returned to the training venue where a debriefing and experience sharing was done. Shared experiences included:

- The volunteers did a good introduction and were able to explain the purpose of the visit
- The process takes longer than usual when you incorporate the coaching steps and so objectives should be very specific and not many
- It's always better to observe so as to see the actual practise of certain aspects or ask the HEW to show you
 how they do e.g in the event that you do not find any children on site, you can ask the HEW to show you how
 MUAC is measured not simply explaining the process.
- The HEW were more involved especially in the action prioritizing and action planning.
- There are challenges that can be addressed on site and so should always be part of the support visit.
- The adult learning session looked at the definition of adult learning, principles, the adult learning process and common barriers to adult learning. Through group work, the participants were able to contextualize the barriers to adult learning and suggest solutions on how they can be overcome. As part of the discussions, the participants were also able to relate the 4-steps coaching process to the adult learning process.
- Using the origami ¹paved the way for a discussion on effective communication. This resulted in the understanding that effective communication occurs when the coach/facilitator listens, observes, questions, clarifies and gives feedback. The cone of learning ²emphasized the need to utilize the various coaching techniques.
- The facilitation skills session focused on understanding of the qualities of a good facilitator, how to be a good public speaker, leading a discussion and dealing with the different types of participants. Through the questions, the presentation, experience sharing and group work; participants received and learned the following:
 - Definition is about helping "to make easy" or "ease a process", guiding and ensuring full participation
 - Focus is on the group not the facilitator
 - Good facilitation skills ensure that coaching is effective
 - The public speaking practice showed the importance for preparation, engagement of the people through gestures, intonation and clarity

¹ Origami: Art of folding paper into decorative shapes and figures

² Cone of learning: Model of learning that incorporates several theories related to the learning process. Edgar Dale theorized that learners retain more information by what they "do" as opposed to what is "heard", "read" or "observed". His research led to the development of the Cone of Experience.

- During the session on leading a discussion, participants practiced how to ask open-ended questions instead of close-ended questions, give feedback and seeking clarity
- In groups, participants discussed the different types of challenging participants- the quiet, dominant, experts, rambling, the clown and distracted. The discussion looked at the definition of each type and how to deal with them.
- Leading a discussion session: This session aimed at helping participants know how to facilitate a discussion. Participants learned the following:
 - Why it is important to hold discussions
 - How to lead a discussion
 - Differences between close-ended and open-ended questions and how to translate close-ended to openended questions
 - Giving feedback (how to, clarification, boomerang questions)
 - Dealing with incorrect responses
- Dealing with different types of participants session reviewed the various personalities one might encounter in any form of discussion. The discussions looked at
 - Quiet participants
 - Dominant participants
 - Self-appointed expert
 - Rambling participants
 - The clown, the distracted/absent etc.

The discussions evolved around the definition of each type, any experience with any of them and how to deal and relate with such participants.

Day 3: The third day included a post-test, review of the whole training and developing a plan for implementation.

- As a culmination of the training, participants grouped themselves according to project/geographical distribution and agreed on some actions and plans on how and when to implement the coaching and mentoring skills as a complementary activity to supervision. The plans are shared alongside the report as a separate document.
 - The Amhara region team only created a supervision plan for all the health facilities where they will conduct coaching along with supervision with the aim of visiting the selected health facilities at least twice within the next 3 months post the training.
 - The Somali region team proposed activities aimed at cascading on-site/on-base trainings for the supervisors and some Woreda officials, supervision where coaching is incorporated and involvement of the government (Woreda) and partners in the coaching process.

Post-training field visits (Induvial support during supervision visits and meetings with zonal/woreda officers)

Visit to health facilities: Visited Asgedo health post in Dessie Zuria Woreda on 20th September and on 23rd September, together with the CWW program managers visited Goshmeda health post and Wegel Teina health centre in Delanta Woreda. The CWW supervisors carried out supervision with coaching as a component. The process was observed and feedback and recommendations given to the supervisors at each visit.

Observations by the TechRRT training facilitator:

- There are still some challenges with the introduction especially about asking for time. The supervisors assume
 that since it is a planned supervision day, the HEW must have the time for the discussion (reminded the supervisors
 to always ascertain how much time the HEWs have as this has an impact on the attention they give to the process).
- Using open-ended questions to elicit discussions was still difficult but improved at each visit- the supervisors were asking mainly leading questions (encouraged the supervisors to practice more and with time, the questions would come naturally and if necessary, prepare some open-ended questions in advance).
- The 4 steps of the coaching process were followed and action plan were created together with the HEWs and left at the health facility.
- There was more involvement of the HEWs in the whole process and a better explanation of the challenges.

Feedback from the HEWs

- The ConcernWW Supervisors took more time and paid more attention.
- The supervisors provided detailed explanations. The HEW from Goshmeda health post said, "Most of the things are the same but today they gave more time and showed me how to use the bincard for monitoring RUTF use properly."

Feedback from the health and nutrition supervisors

- We were used to not develop action plans, now we do it together with the HEWs.
- They mentioned that they will do more in terms of probing further to find out the challenges.
- It is a good training but the process takes a lot of time.
- Have learnt that some problems can be solved immediately on site.

Feedback from the managers

- The supervisors have now started asking why so as to understand root cause of the challenges encountered and get as much details as possible.
- The supervisors now do action plans. Initially, they only wrote a short summary in the register/visitation book.
- The supervisors are allowing the HEWs to participate in the process.
- The CWW Health and Nutrition supervisors too need to be responsible for some of the actions in an action plan.

ii) Meetings with the zonal and Woreda health and nutrition officials

The meetings held were; Delanta Woreda health focal person on 24th September (Mr. Akala), Dessie Zuria Woreda nutrition focal person (Mr.Demis Refisa) and the acting Zonal health department focal person (Mr.Getachew) on 25th September. Points of discussion were:

- Brief on the training (objectives, components and anticipated outcome from the training)
- The need for improved feedback between Concern, the Woreda and the other levels of supervision up to community level so that everyone is aware of the action plans and how the support from supervision is evolving.
- Joint supervision for more impact.
- Informed the different officers about an assessment that will take place in a few months to get some supporting data/evidence that will be used as part of the learning workshop next year.

Conclusion and recommendations

The training ended successfully and the participants appreciated the training with overall 61% scoring the training on a scale of 0 to 5, at 5 or "very satisfied" and 39% at 4 for "satisfied". Participants found all parts of the training interesting. The key concern from the participants was the need to increase the amount of time allocated to the training. All participants said they had learned something new and would apply what they had learnt including allocating more time during supervision so as to do coaching, commitment and follow-up, direct application of all the 4 steps, further reading and orientation to the staff on the ground. Participants did a pre and post-test with an overall knowledge positive change of 13%. This is low and was attributed to some participants limited ability to read and write in English in which the test was administered.

Overall Somali team scored better than Amhara region. However, it should be noted that some of the participants (Amhara region) had challenges with the English language and this may have affected their overall understanding - the managers helped to translate during the training. This calls for a need to have the tools and presentations translated into Amharic. Results from the training evaluation and the pre and post-tests per region are in the table below:

Aspect evaluated	Score	
Overall		
Overall satisfaction with the training	61% very satisfied, 39% satisfied	
Clear definition of the training objectives	72.2% very satisfied, 25 % satisfied, 2.8% somewhat satisfied	
Context organization and ease to follow	75% very satisfied, 25% satisfied	
Sufficiency of time allocated	44% very satisfied, 30.5% satisfied, 16.5% somewhat satisfied, 9% not satisfied	
Allowing participants to ask question	47% very satisfied, 36% satisfied, 17% Somewhat or not satisfied	

Pre and Post test results	Pre-test: 64% Post-test: 77%	
Amhara region		
Overall satisfaction with the training	57% very satisfied, 43% satisfied	
Clear definition of the training objectives	71% very satisfied, 24 % satisfied, 5% not satisfied	
Context organization and ease to follow	62% very satisfied, 38% satisfied	
Sufficiency of time allocated	43% very satisfied, 38% satisfied, 14% somewhat satisfied, 5% not satisfied	
Allowing participants to ask question	38% very satisfied, 43% satisfied, 19% somewhat satisfied/not satisfied	
Pre and Post test results	Pre-test: 63% Post-test: 74%	
Somali region		
Overall satisfaction with the training	73% very satisfied, 27% satisfied	
Clear definition of the training objectives	73% very satisfied, 27 % satisfied	
Context organization and ease to follow	93% very satisfied, 7% satisfied	
Sufficiency of time allocated	40% very satisfied, 40% satisfied, 20% somewhat satisfied/Not satisfied	
Allowing participants to ask question	60% very satisfied, 27% satisfied, 13% somewhat satisfied.	
Pre and Post test results	Pre-test: 64% Post-test: 77%	

While overall the training went as planned, there is some concern that momentum has been lost regarding the overall aim of these deployments that could potentially impact on its longer term utility, partially due to the transition of the management team. This has been demonstrated, for example, by the fact that those initially trained in June 2019 did not participate in October 2019 trainings (due to understandable conflicting priorities that should have sparked reconsideration of the timing of the October deployment); therefore, some discussions will be necessary to adjust and reorient the work as the original intention was to have Addis-level program managers involved in trainings at regional level in order to identify and prepare any promising managers for a Coaching trainer role – this is not yet possible. Reconsideration also is necessary around the learning workshop planned for the final phase of this work when Concern WW would potentially lead the uptake of the approach within Ethiopia, if seen as relevant. However, ownership of the work is not yet strong enough for Concern to take up this role. This process of professional coaching provided in different phases to lift the organisational soft skills capacity is quite innovative and to have a positive impact requires not only attendance at trainings but thoughtful and proactive implementation between visits of the Tech RRT adviser. Therefore, together, Tech RRT and Concern WW will need to address this loss of momentum before the process moves on.

Annexes

Annex 1: Training agenda

Time	Day 1	
08:00- 8:30	Session 1: Opening, introduction and ice breaker	
08:30- 9:00	Pre-test	
09:00- 9:10	Session 2: CMAM services: strengths and challenges	
09:10- 9:30	Session 3: Introduction to on-the-job coaching	
09:30- 10:00	Session 4: Characteristics of a good coach	
10:00-10:30	Session 5: Benefits of coaching	
10:30- 11:00	Break	
10:00- 11:30	Session 6 : Effective communication-facilitation skills	
11:30- 12:00	Session 7 : Coaching techniques	
12:00-12:30	Session 8: Overview of the 4-step coaching process	
12:30- 01:30	Lunch break	
01:30-02:00	Session 9: Coaching process: Step 1: Introduction and observe work	
2:00-02:15	Session 10: Coaching process: Step 2: Identify strengths and challenges	
02:15-02:45	Session 11: Coaching process: Step 3: Developing a plan	
02:45-03:00	Session 12: Coaching process: Step 4: Get a commitment and follow-up	

03:00- 03:20	Break
03:20- 04:40	Session 13: Case studies
04:40- 05: 00	Preparation for the site visit
Time	Day 2
08:00- 8:30	Recap of day 1 and preparation for site visit
8:30-11:30	Session 14: Practical: site visit to practice coaching
11:30- 11:50	Break
11:50- 12:30	Session 14: Recap of the site visit
12:30- 01:30	Lunch Break
01:30-02:20	Session 16: Adult learning skills
02:20- 02:50	Session 17: Facilitation skills and being a good co-facilitator
02:50- 3:20	Session 18: Public speaking skills
03:20-03:40	Break
03:40-04:20	Session 19: Leading a discussion
04:20:04:50	Session 20: Dealing with challenging participants
04:50-05:00	Wrap up
Time	Day 3
8:30-09:00	Session 21: Review of the past 2 days
09:00-11:00	Session 15: Develop a cascade training and implementation plan
11:00- 11:30	Break
11:30- 12:00	Wrap-up and closing remarks

Annex 2: list of tools and handouts provided for the training:

- Cases studies 1-6
- Video on coaching.
- Presentations
- Handout 1: Coaching techniques
- Handout 2: Identifying strengths and challenges
- Handout 3: Action plan for on-the-job coaching
- Handout 4: Coaching implementation plan