Keeping children off the streets in Ethiopia: the use of IGA support and Self Help Groups within reintegration and prevention programs

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STRIVE Symposium
6th March 2015
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• Working to ensure zero children forced to live on the streets
• Key strategy for 20yrs: family reintegration and alternative care
• Identification of “hotspots” in Ethiopia: many children leaving home and coming to the streets of Addis Ababa
• Push factors combine poverty and family breakdown
• 3yr project in SNNPR: 31% of children in AA program, specifically Hadiya Zone: 50% of SNNPR children
• Combine reintegration and prevention, and family and economic strengthening, funded by Cordaid
Economic Strengthening

Reintegration

• IGAs and small business training
  – Following Retrak’s Family Reintegration SOPs

• Assessed by social workers at placement

In 2 years, 160 families support, 77% receiving IGA grants (against a 3-yr target of 126 families)
Economic Strengthening

Women saving in weekly SHG meeting in Hadiya Zone

In 2 years, 18 SHGs established, with 355 members (against a 3-yr target of 15 SHGs and 225 members)

Prevention

• Savings and Loans SHGs
  – Based on Kale Heywet/Tearfund Self Help Group model

• Targeted through participatory community survey, home visits and envisioning workshop
Family strengthening

**Reintegration**
- Transitional care for children from the streets (Addis Ababa and main town in Hadiya)
- Tracing and reunification with families
- Parenting skills guidance for care-givers
- Follow-up to assess and support children and families

**Prevention**
- Empowerment through group participation
- Parenting skills and child protection education in weekly meetings of SHGs
- Reinforced through children’s clubs (in school and through sports) and community education
Results:
Children returned and kept at home

Reintegration
- 160 children taken home from the streets of Addis Ababa and Hossana
- 239 caregivers supported, who care for an additional 371 vulnerable children

Prevention
- 355 mothers supported, who care for 1,557 vulnerable children
- Several mothers brought children home from exploitative labor or street life
- 96 children rescued from trafficking and reintegrated by government
- 3 traffickers convicted
  - Attributed by beneficiaries to education on street life, child labor and trafficking, and a greater understanding of children’s needs
Results:

Improved children’s wellbeing

**Reintegrated children**

**Placement (n=16)**

**Follow-up (n=16)**

**Children of women in SHGs**

**Point 1**: 6.5-8.5mths (n=150)

**Point 2**: 11-13mths (n=150)

Domains:
1a Food Security, 1b Nutrition and Growth,
2a Shelter, 2b Care,
3a Abuse and Exploitation, 3b Legal Protection,
4a Wellness, 4b Health Care,
5a Emotional Health, 5b Social Behaviour,
6a Education performance, 6b Education access

Scores:
- Good
- Fair
- Bad
- Very bad
Results:
Economic progress

Reintegration

• When child wellbeing is assessed at risk (score 1 or 2) then the IGA is used to provide basic needs
• Once child wellbeing shows no risk (a score 3 or 4) then the IGA is able to grow and develop
  – From ongoing research with reintegrated families

Prevention

• Savings average of 240 ETB ($12) per SHG household
• 94% of SHG members have plans to increase their income
• 25% reported improved work skills
  – From economic survey with SHG beneficiaries (at mid-term review)
Results: Empowerment

• “The teaching made me realize how I abandoned my son in uncertain situation. I started to visualize how he is living so as a result I decided to bring my son and care for him by myself” – SHG member

• “Since the commencement of the SHG these very poor women have worked together to bring change. They are negotiating with their local government to get renovation for houses that are falling down.” – Community worker

  — From Most Significant Change stories collated by beneficiaries and community workers

Prevention

• Women feel able to act for the benefit of their children

• Women beginning to advocate for policy change on community issues, eg: one SHG wants to address poor sanitation in the community
Lessons learnt

Reintegration
• Challenge to provide effective ES with dispersed families
  – Potential use of graduation model, audio business training and consideration of building women’s agency

Prevention
• Combination of economic and family strengthening, with empowerment, as well as targeting family and community, is effective
  – Potential for use elsewhere

Both
• Important to look at how reintegration and prevention can reinforce each other