



Implementing partner EFIDDA



EMRDA/Global Fund-R7 Best Practice

“Community Conversation cutting edge of development”

Background

Community Conversation (CC) Program and Care and support to OVC are some of the major Global Fund project Service Delivery Areas that have been executed by EMRDA since the implementation of the project. CC program is mainly focused on raising awareness on HIV/AIDS, bringing about behavioural change towards avoiding risk practices in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, and combating of its effects. On the other hand Care and support to OVC focuses on providing them with basic human needs particularly provision of food items, clothing, health, shelter, educational materials, and financial and training on income generating activities.

Community Conversation (CC)

The Situation

As of 2009 Ethiopia is estimated to have 5,459,139 Orphans of whom 855,720 are Orphan due to HIV and AIDS (single point HIV Prevalence Estimate; MOH, 2007). In Ethiopian context all OVC directly or indirectly are vulnerable to HIV and AIDS and other Socio-economic Problems this vulnerability is linked with extreme Poverty, hunger and child labor practices among other threats.

Though various measures that the Ethiopian government and other NGO, UN agency, FBOs and CBOS is taken there is still lack to access and uniformity of service and support offered to OVC and their care givers. Most of the programs that have been carried out are strangled usually due to lack of trained human resource at community level, absence of clear and workable strategies, limited financial and other resources, poor coordination, etc. most importantly the programs has failed due to ownership confusion, limited participation of local people, and priority issues. The community has no clearly speculated and agreed upon causes and means of particular intervention. Most the interventions seems that they are imposed..

Response and Action taken

It is apparent that, strategy is needed that bring the local community together and systematically discuss on their challenges, possible causes, its solution, and possible source of resource needed to crab the challenges. To this effect, in collaboration with EIFDDA, EMRDA and other FBOs came together and designed a proposal that ensure the participation of the community. It was fortunate for the proposal to be admitted by The Global Fund from its series grants (Global Fund Round 7 Grant).

As per the proposal and agreement, Community (Clan) Leaders, Religious Leaders, and CBO Leaders were selected from the community and trained on the basic knowledge, skills and practices of Community Conversation (CC) as CC Facilitators. The community has identified issues of OVC and HIV/AIDS as major concerns during community conversation sessions. As a result, they have developed action plan (that had not been considered as a requirement within the project proposal) to sponsor at least additional 4 OVC per site and carry out other major problems of the community. EMRDA has prepared by law to the CC groups to manage and govern the session which is instrumental to sustain the group as organized institution to benefit the members and the OVC and PLHA



CC Session Being Conducted at Sekoru

The Witnesses

One of the innovative approaches adopted by EMRDA is the development of CC bylaw and other important strategies to implement the bylaw. The strategy is mainly used to address the unaddressed OVC and also to mobilize the initiation of the community. According to the plan, one facilitator is expected to mobilize 100-120 discussants in to two groups to support 4 OVC, 2 OVC each. Therefore it was expected that the total 354 facilitator will sponsor additional 1,416 OVC at community level. As a result EMRDA was able to mobilize the community and sponsor 1,416 OVC at community level. The region, Woreda, site, name, and other addresses of these OVC are registered at the database as the Best Practice performance of the organization.

On top of these, based on the conversation and consensus build on the program, the community has identified various problems to be solved and has been participating on various development activities such as provision of assistance to old and helpless member of the community, small scale water scheme development, environmental protection, and other activities.

The success story of Afar CC,

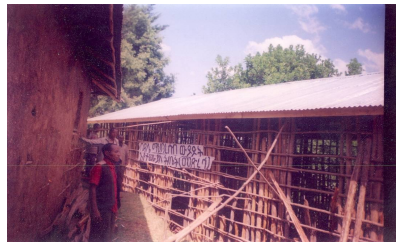
Afar is one of the region where various harmful traditional practices that make the community at risk to HIV/AIDS were identified to be Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), polygamy, wife inheritance among the many faces of the Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP). “Even though, these HTPs are forbidden by law at federal and regional level, there were gaps in its implementation at the Woreda and Kebele level” said Ato Gardo Handa, the Zone 2 social worker.

Dupty is one of Woredas of Afar Region in which these HTP have been widely exercised. Shek Humad Hussein is a respected Religious Leader in Dupty Woreda. He has traditionally and religiously descended authority to act as local arbitrator in different local circumstances such as conflict resolution, marriage engagement, and other matters. He has also special authority as religious virtue to engage couples for marriage. He is also trained as CC Facilitator to manage two CC sites of Global Fund Project in the Woreda.

After a series of community conversation sessions, he was able to convince the local clan and religious leaders to directly implement the regional strategies on HTP and to have their own bylaw to avoid risk behaviours that could enhance the spread of HIV/AIDS. To this effect they reached consensus to adopt local bylaw that urge/recommend anybody not to engage couples or not to exercise wife inheritance before their HIV status is tested. According to their bylaw, he said “if anybody has found attempting to exercise such a thing, he will be brought to the local court for punishment and to Woreda court according the seriousness of the issue.”

The success story at Dale woreda

Besides teaching on HIV/AIDS, CC groups have been also participated on infrastructure development. Ato Nuri is a Facilitator in Dale Woreda (Yirgalem area) of SNNP region. He said that “the first concern raised by the people through CC were the remoteness of school from their residential area”. Then he added “the community has determined to construct one block building that has four classes with the local material and corrugated iron sheet”. The CC group members mobilized the community and were determined to construct the kind of block observed in the picture.



The school under construction

The success story at Dedo Woreda

Dedo Woreda is found in Jima Zone of Oromia Regional State. The Recurrent problem identified by the community was the absence of pure water in the region. Ato Rashed, one of the facilitators in the Woreda, said that the water problem of Dedo Woreda was serious. Animals and People used to drink from the same water point. It was unprotected so that animal and human wastes drained to the water and often contaminated and cause water borne diseases” to the community. Since the issue was very serious in the life of the community it

was not as such difficult to mobilize the local community including the Woreda Health Office to construct well protected Water Point.



Before Construction



After Construction

The success story at Sekoru woreda

The Community conversation Groups has also been participated in to community welfare programs. In Sekoru Woreda of Oromia Region there is a 120 years old man Aba Sanbi. He has already lost his sight and can't move from place to place independently. He is given care only by his poor granddaughter within the observed nearly fallen house. The Sekoru CC groups understood the dangerous situation in which this elderly man exists and tried to mobilize the resident of the Sekoru Town. Finally with minimum financial resource and maximum cooperation they were able to construct an corrugated iron sheet covered house, manifesting the respect they have for the poor and elderly people.



120 years old Man



His worn out house



Construction underway

Sustainability

For one thing, what makes this practice best is its sustainability nature. That community has proved in practical terms that it now well understood the problem of the OVC and what to do with or without the presence of external aids. The capacities of these facilitators have significantly improved in terms of handling conversations, identifying local concerns, planning and reporting skills. Beyond doubt, the knowledge and skills acquired remain with them and even become more strengthened as they continue on practicing the CC.

The other advantage of the strategy is its cost efficiency nature. As it is known CC takes place within the existing structure of the organization and community based organizations. Moreover the budget required to conduct structured CC session from external assistance is very costly. Therefore, without the external assistance (finance or human resource) the community can conduct the CC program by their own.

Reliability

From then on wards CC have been used by Ethiopian government and other different development partners to solve different local problems ranging from conflict resolution to solving of any development and social problems. So, it is wise to replicate it in any sphere of life within the community by attaching in it different approaches and systems,