
Integrated Family Service Organization

(IFSO)



**Best Practices on Child and Youth Initiative Activities
with Special Emphasis to Sport Activities**



**2011
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Acronyms

IFSO	Integrated Family Service Organization
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

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1. Introduction

1.1 Best Practice: Scope and Definition

Promotion and documentation of practices as 'best' and 'promising' has been increasingly becoming one of the recommended ways of learning from past practices and improving future intervention. It is difficult to learn from own successes and to repeat approaches and methods when it is not acknowledged, identified and described and documented through a process of rigorous and continuous reflection. Producing such documentation may have different purposes depending on the need and context of different organizations. Nevertheless, learning from the past practice to improving future intervention is a cross cutting purpose of any such endeavor. The learning could be on either activity, approach, strategy or policy issues or a combination of two or more of the above.

Working on and identifying of best practices commonly has rigorous steps to be pursued over a period of time. This involves an overview of practices carried out, result obtained, implementers and collaborators etc and more importantly setting of criteria. Though there may be many criteria depending on different contexts, in many documentations effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and replicability, and community participation are used as a criteria in order to qualify a practice as best practice. And if a practice fulfils at least one of the criteria, it can be considered as best practice in light with the criteria applied. ¹

However, the purpose of this documentation is not to examine a practice in light of different criteria. Rather, it is an attempt to highlight activities accomplished, results obtained, what work was well done and identify contributing factors. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to term it as promising practices. This takes us to a definition of promising practices in the context of this documentation.

¹ *Manual on Best practices, HIV/AIDS programming with children and young people (2007)*

Promising practice, in this context, is defined as a process of identification of working practices and strategies and outlining contributing factors for future replication.

The above definition may serve as an operational definition for this documentation. Therefore, we use promising practice rather than best practice because there are many conventional steps to pass through in order to qualify a practice and a strategy as best in its superlative form.

In line with the scope of the definition, this documentation focuses on child and youth initiative activities with particular emphases to sport activities. Therefore, it tries to highlight what are the main activities carried out, what has been accomplished, who were the key implementers and collaborators and what really worked well.

1.2 Objectives

1. To identify and replicate working practices & strategies of the intervention;
2. To identify and document major factors that contributed to the successful realization of the initiative

1.3. Source of information and Methods of data collection

In order to understand the full picture of the matter, attempt has been made to collect data from primary and secondary sources. In this regard, existing documents in IFSO such as project proposals, reports, case stories, midterm project review report etc are intensively reviewed. Moreover, information is collected from project staff, target groups (like Children and youth, families) and collaborators. Questionnaires, interview and focus group discussions are the major techniques/tools used to collect as much qualitative information as possible.

Having set the framework and objectives of the documentation, it would be necessary to give organizational profile and to highlight the project in order to gain a clear understanding and a full picture of the whole issues under consideration.

1.4 Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO)

IFSO was founded in 1995, and currently is registered as an Ethiopian Residence **Civil Society**. **IFSO is currently operating mainly in the north and north-east part of Addis Ababa.** Its primary target groups are orphans, semi-orphans and minors in vulnerable families.

The organization upholds the following vision, mission and objectives.

a. Vision

.....
“Striving to help alleviate poverty among families in Ethiopia”
.....

b. Mission

.....
Give vulnerable families the chance to provide their children with a secure upbringing within their own culture, thus enabling the minors to grow up as active and strong fellow citizens.
.....

c. Objectives

- Support orphans and vulnerable children without separating them from their family network (typically by leaving them in the extended family),
- Train/educate the children and their mothers with a view to making them stand on their own,
- Work in favour of orphans’ and abandoned children’s access to formal education and nursery school,
- Mobilize more people in the community to get involved in social and economic development endeavours,

- Search for sustainable solutions to social problems arising as a result of the country's low living standards,
- Support single mothers to engage in income-generating activities that are compatible with the need to mind their children,
- Meet the basic needs of orphans and vulnerable children through a sponsorship programme.

IFSO is currently implementing different but integrated family support projects. These include:

- Child sponsorship project
- Prevention and rehabilitation of child sexual abuse
- Children's Safety Net Project
- Oasis Sustainable Development for Children Project
- Supporting children living with HIV/AIDS
- Community mobilization and child wellbeing at Afar Regional State

1.5 THE PROJECT: Oasis Sustainable Development for Children Project

Oasis Sustainable Development for Children Project is one of IFSO's development projects. The project has been under implementation for the last 4¹/₂ years. The project has the following development and immediate objectives:

Development Objective:

By the year 2011, basic rights to education, health, protection and participation of children and young people at the Entoto mountain range of Gulele and Yeka sub-cities are respected and protected.

Immediate Objective 1

By the year 2011, social change processes are initiated in families and communities at the Entoto mountain range of Yeka and Gulele Sub-cities through addressing basic education, basic reproductive health and the protection and participation of children and young people.

Immediate objective 2

By the year 2011, improved natural resource management of the Entoto mountain range of Yeka and Gulele Sub-cities has created a favorable environment for children's rights to education, health, protection and participation of children and young people.²

Looking at the stated project objectives, the project basically aims at bringing social changes in wide areas of intervention through active involvement of various stakeholders.

The project has education, health, environment and protection of children as its major project components. All in all, children and youth are the center of the project in terms of the process and the end result.

2. Accomplishments:

2.1. What activities have been carried out and who involved?

The project works on promotion of children and youth participation in a family and community spheres. **Picnics, recreation activities, planting of trees, peer education, participating in different trainings, youth self monitoring and sport** activities are some of the project activities in which children and youth participate in.

² *Project Proposal*, Children's Oasis Sustainable Development for Children's right

Participation is viewed both as an end in itself and at the same time a means to initiate the process of social change in the target areas. Sport, being one of child initiative activities, is emphasized and used as a means to promote children and youth participation in the target areas.

The project has been working on marginalized community in the north and north eastern outskirts of Addis Ababa where children and youth have lower status and where children rights to education, health and participation are at stake. Moreover, children and youth are also very much burdened with income generating activities (dominantly firewood collection and weaving) and household chores.³

There are 7 different sites (Leiele, Key ber, Ferensay, Ankorcha, Wolo sefer, Abado, Danse) as target areas of the intervention. Taking sport as a means of initiating social change, football, volleyball and athletic teams were established in 7 different target sites of the project. The teams involve both girls and boys and children and youth. Children and youth have taken the lion's share in the establishment and running of sport teams. Moreover, they are the ones who make decision on the type of activities they participate in and on other important matters.

Before the establishment of sport teams and commencement of any activities, the project did well in identifying and bringing relevant stakeholders in to the play. Relevant community members including Idir leaders, families, children and youth themselves participated in the process from the beginning. As a result important decisions on the kind of activities specifically sport types, how and who to involve were made in participatory manner. Children and youth themselves took responsibilities to establish and run the different sport teams in their respective sites.

Moreover, a prior orientation and intensive community based awareness creation activities were going on continuously on different issues of the project. This continuous awareness programs served as motivational factors for the community members to be on the track.

³ Midterm Review report of Children's Oasis Sustainable Development for Children's right

With the above background work three consecutive sport contests in football, volleyball and athletic were held among children and youth drawn from 7 different project sites. IFOS as the holder of the project plays a greater role in facilitation, coordination and provision of necessary financial and material support where as the sub city as the government office supports the process and contributed a play field, referee and security.

This is a remarkable practice where IFOS as civil society, sub city as government agency and the community come together and made a concerted effort in creating a situation where children and youth develop their potential and shape their future.

The other important point worth mentioning is that the sport activities have been supported by other project activities including workshops on children participation, peer education, youth self monitoring, plantation of trees, picnics and others.



Girls' foot ball team

2.2. What has been achieved (results):

Since I joined a football team in my residence area, I have showed a remarkable improvement in my attitude and behavior. The sport helps me to improve my communication with people and develop fairness towards others. (Respecting opponent teams and respecting referee's decisions etc)

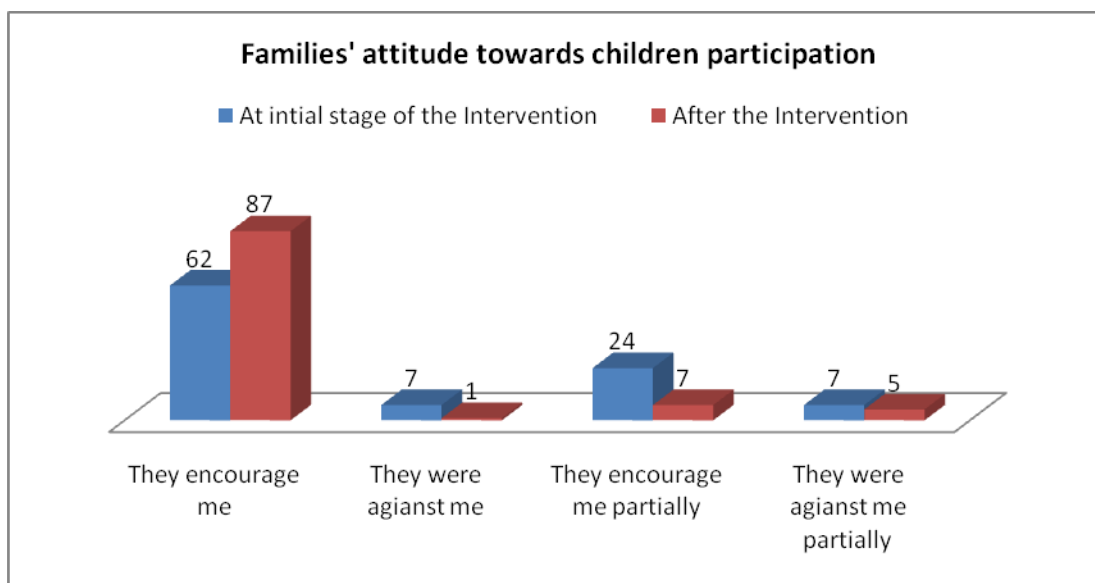
By one of the participant
from Qusequam Tyetu butule School

First and very importantly, the sport activity offered opportunity to children and youth who were not part of sport contests that were regularly organized by sub-cities. Their participation enables them to drill out their potential. This is an important step taken to reach the unreached and worth mentioning as an exemplary practice. Moreover, the sport activity brought children and youth from different localities together and enabled them to share experiences. Participants reported that improvement in communications skill, being assertive, building self-confidence, solving problems through discussion and accepting and respecting others were some of the skills and behavioral changes developed as a result of sport activity.

I have benefited a lot being a member of football team. I have developed patience and tolerance and able to solve problems through discussion. I would like to see more frequent sport activities than what it is now.

by a participant
from Kefetegan 12 Secondary School

Families also exhibited a paradigm shift about leisure time, in particular and children/youth participation in general. Families have been heard commenting sport activities to be expanded in terms of type of sports, number of people involved and in terms of its frequency. Interestingly parents also stress on the importance of the involvement of girls in different sports. More demands to increase the type of sports, the number of people involved and the number of events organized can be taken as an indication of the effectiveness of the intervention.



Source – Quantitative Finding

The above bar chart is derived from quantitative collected data from 100 children and youth. Accordingly 62 children reported that their families were supportive about their participation on sport activities during initial stage of the intervention. After the intervention, parents who support their children's participation for sport activities increased to 87. Parents who encourage their children partially or to some degree only also decreased from 24 (at initial stage of the project) to 7 (after the intervention) which seem they transferred to support their children absolutely.

It has also been observed in one of the sites that the community has contributed money in order to enable youth to participate in the city cup competition.⁴ This is a great change especially considering the fact that children and youth in the target community have been intensively engaged in income generating activities.

Our children are being changed since they started sport activities. They became obedient to their families and role model for their younger siblings. More over sport activities saved our children from bad habits. So we would like the sport to be strengthened and continued.

By parents of Keyber site

3. Contributing factors and exemplary working practices

3.1 Concerted efforts:

It has been witnessed that IFSO- implementing organization, sub city- government body and the community have come and worked together to create a favorable condition for children and youth to actively participate in issues that concern them. The three stakeholders involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of activities. IFSO has played a great role in initiating the activities and providing financial and material support for the activities; whereas the sub-city contributed in providing play field, referee and security. The community also supported the process well and a community in one site has exhibited contribution of money for the success of the intervention.

⁴ Midterm Review report of Children's Oasis Sustainable Development for Children's right

3.2 Holistic approach

Sport in itself was mainly employed as a means to bring about social changes in education, health, environment etc. However, Sport activities are well supported by many other project activities which are believed to bring about positive changes in the attitude and practice of the community in general about children rights to health, education and participation in particular. Awareness programs and different trainings (children needs and rights, child up-bringing, child participation, health environment etc.), child participation (youth self monitoring, picnics, plantation of trees and peer education etc) are all an integral part of the intervention. All these come together and contributed a lot on the process and result.

3.3 Playing a facilitation role

IFSO has initiated and played significant facilitation role rather than implementing the activities directly. It has been the responsibility of children and youth in particular and the community in general to establish and run sport teams in their respective localities (sites). Decision on kind of sport to organize, and who to involve was made by children and youth themselves. This has actually helped the target children and youth to develop their capacity and capacitated them to take more responsibility in the future. It has also an implication for the issue of sustainability.

3.4 Gender sensitivity

The sport activity equally involves girls as it does boys. This scenario indicates that the intervention has been gender sensitive

3.5. Reaching the unreached

The Sport activity largely targets children and youth who were not participants of the previous sport activities organized by sub-city. Since these areas are found in the out skirt of Addis Ababa where due attention was not given by sub-city. The sub city has started considering the youth in the out skirt community after the initiation of the activities by the project. In this regard, the current practice is exemplary in terms of reaching the unreached.

4. Summary

Sport activities were used as a means to initiate social change process in education, health, and environment and also promote children participation in different communities in the north and north eastern out skirts of Addis Ababa. Sport has been found as an effective means of addressing different issues.

It is the conviction of the Organization to develop and document practices through thorough analysis of the matter. The preparation of promising practice documentation, like this, may have different purposes. Drawings lessons and improve performances in future similar intervention is, however, a general cross cutting purpose of such documentation. The purpose of this documentation is not far from this. Furthermore, it also helps not to begin things always from the scratch and not to reinvent the wheel again.

This documentation is believed to serve as a reference for IFSO to scale up activities in the future and for other organizations working in similar intervention. Therefore, the following points have to be well considered in future attempt to replicate and scale up such initiatives.

1. Bringing Contributing factors in to the picture

Contributing factors for the success of the intervention have been listed and well discussed above.

- Concerted efforts
- Holistic approach
- Playing a facilitation role
- Gender sensitivity and
- Reaching the unreached

Therefore these contributing factors are pillars for the successful implementation of the intervention in the whole process. So bringing these factors in to the picture is recommended in any similar endeavor.

2. Awareness Creation

Combining of sport activities with a prior community based intensive awareness creation program helps to solicit the active involvement of the community at different stages and helps to overcome possible resistance from different actors of the community.

3. Identifying and working with relevant stakeholders

Thoughtful Analysis has to be done in order to come about with relevant stakeholders from community and government structures and establish a forum and system where they work together for common goal. This plays important roles in terms of sustainability and scaling up.

4. Ensuring Participation and Ownership

What and when to do things, who to involve in the process, level of participation and decision making power of different stakeholders and Contribution of different stakeholders etc has to be discussed and agreed in a participatory manner from the beginning. This is identified to build sense of ownership from stakeholders.

References

- 1) Bjarke Oxlund (2007) *Manual on Best practices , HIV/AIDS programming with children and young people* , Denmark (www.bu-net.dk)
- 2) IFSO (2007) *Project Proposal , Children's Oasis Sustainable Development for Children's right* , Addis Ababa
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