



Food security initiative , in siloe Mohale's Hoek
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CATEGORY: Economic Justice

INSTITUTION: Non Governmental Organization

COUNTRY SADC GENDER PROTOCOL SUMMIT

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GENDER EQUALITY BY 2015, YES WE MUST!

ORGANIZATION'S BACKGROUND

The Society of Women and AIDS in Africa Lesotho (SWAALES) was established in 1997, the organisation was formally registered as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in 2003. Its prime purposes were to provide home based care for HIV/AIDS patients , to formulate and support HIV and AIDS control programmes for the Basotho women and their families and assist orphaned and vulnerable children with their basic needs

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project targets children, 0-17 years old and their guardians, who are either orphaned or made vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS. The project currently runs in five Lesotho districts and targets 4500 beneficiaries. SWAALES provides nutritional support ,referrals for health care, psychosocial support, educational and legal services.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

The society for women and Aids in Africa Lesotho implements a project that provides care and support Vulnerable Children (VC) and their house holds. Among the five key services provided the nutrition intervention has been successful in improving food security in the Siloe community council. Key elements of the intervention include

- Construction of communal gardens
- Community ownership and collaboration
- Alignment with existing community structures

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED? WHY?

The aim is to provide comprehensive and needs based care to VC in response to the following needs

- Food security crisis within VC households
- Barriers to accessing Healthcare , education and legal services

HOW IS THE PROJECT CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE 28 TARGETS OF THE SADC PROTOCOL?

PROTOCOL TARGET	ACTIONS
Article 27	Strengthening the capacity of the community to provide care for VC and their households.
Article 14, 27	The program is also structured in a manner that all community members provide care in their capacity regardless of the gender; this is a shift away from the conventional view and practise where women have always the primary providers of care.
Article 26, 27	The overall target of the project is OVC and their households including PLWHA and pregnant women who are referred to health facilities for PMTCT

TARGET GROUP

- The project targets 1200 VC and their guardians in 400 household. This is done across 20 villages in the Siloe community council in Mohale's Hoek.
- In targeting the beneficiaries there was no conscious gender disaggregation , however out of the present reach of 1549 clients who received at least one service 910 are female 639 are male.
- Consultations with the local authorities and beneficiaries prior to implementation resulted in prioritizing 20 out of 63 villages. This was based on vulnerability and overall needs of the village. The 20 was a result funding restrictions.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of program among others is to enhance nutritional support for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and OVC, this contributed to the overall goal of the project that was reducing vulnerability of OVC.

PROCESS

The steps outlined below specifically refer to the nutrition component of the program

- Identifying and selecting OVC household heads and SWAALES community volunteers to participate in training on community nutrition
- Conducting training for the 40 selected participants
- Trainees holding community gatherings in their respective villages after training and starting groups that would construct homestead gardens
- Providing wheel barrows and garden tool for each village to aid the construction and gardening process
- Providing nets for keyhole gardens of program beneficiaries
- Selecting participants for enrolment cooking into cooking demonstrations
- Holding cooking demonstrations for OVC household heads, OVC and PLWHA with support from the Ministry of Agric and Food security.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MAIN SUCCESSES

A total of 530 Keyhole gardens were constructed within three months across the 20 villages in beneficiary households. The initiative also spilled over to households that were not of program beneficiaries. This was brought about by strong community ownership and collaboration. These groups have recently started on working on other community based projects that are outside the scope of the project; these include digging pits used for disposal of household waste. As a result of involving local authorities groups in some villages have been given land by chiefs for communal gardens and constructing dams.



KEY OUTPUTS (MATERIALS ETC.)

- Rolling out of training on community nutrition and soliciting support from community stakeholders in constructing homestead gardens
- Construction of keyhole gardens by community teams and planting vegetables at beneficiary household
- Enrolling VC household members and PLWHA in cooking demonstration and food preservation trainings

KEY OUTCOMES (MAIN RESULTS)

- Increased collaboration in community's response to VC needs
- Increased vegetable production
- Increased knowledge on nutrition (food production , preparation, preservation)
- Improved food security within VC household



CHANGING LIVES

Qoqolosing is one of the 44 project sites that SWAALES has been serving in the Leribe district since 2007. This remote area is situated about 20 kilometers from Hlotse. The SWAALES community monitors in Qoqolosing have provided services for one hundred children this financial year. These are services such as nutrition, health care referrals, home based care , psychosocial support and educational support. Apart from these services , which are also common to the other project sites , Qoqolosing has also been involved in small income generating projects for the OVC in that area. The income generating project mainly involves food production and preservation. Like most Leribe rural villages peaches are abundant in summer; these seasonally available fruits such as peaches and grapes are dried by through the use of a food drier and kept for later months. When such fruits are no longer available in the village, they are sold to the Qoqolosing community, other neighboring villages as well as schools. Apart from the fruits the project also involves vegetable production, where potatoes and cabbage are produced in the communal that has been borrowed out to the SWAALES to one community member, the SWAALES community monitors have also decided to use their gardens for vegetable production. All these work is done by older OVC of age 14 upwards through the help and supervision of the SWAALES community monitors in that area. They also involve older OVC who have graduated from the program (above the age of 17). Support for these small income generating projects has been provided through training the community, and much recently the older OVC on small business skills. One community monitor is mainly responsible keeping revenue from the sales and ensuring that records of the sales. The money is used to assist the OVC with basic needs such as soap, Vaseline, school dues, scholastic material, clothes for OVC and other basic needs.



LESSONS LEARNT

It is essential that all projects for the community are community owned and that local authorities are involved throughout implementation and not only when the project is being introduced. It is also important that all hand outs are need based and contribute to achieving a certain objective and are also used as inputs that will help facilitate reaching the objective. This in turn ensures sustainability of program activities beyond phase out



WAY FORWARD

The next steps involve ensuring that economic strengthening activities are prioritised within the households and community to ensure that in the future they will be able to buy seeds for themselves and other required implements.