HARMFULL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

A summary of the documentation of the Padare project

Implemented by Padare

Gweru, Midlands Province Zimbabwe

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Acknowledgements

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2010, Padare established school based clubs which were set as platforms on sensitizing and raising awareness in young men and boys on the problems of gender violence, child abuse of the boy child, children's and gender inequality. Due to the socialization process, cultural beliefs and practices, children and especially boys, imitate same sex family members' behaviours and attitudes on how they relate to each other and on girls on a daily basis contributing to the perpetuating of violence and abuse. Because of the cultural and traditional practice that treats and degrade women and girls, boys and males become the main perpetrators of violence and sexual abuse. However, because of this notion violence and abuse happening in the life of the boy child is being disregarded. The project had the following expected results:

1. Children, especially boys use knowledge to protect themselves and others from violence and abuse.
2. Boys and girls in Midlands Province demonstrate improved knowledge or understanding of harmful traditional notions of manhood that predisposes them to violence and sexual abuse.
3. Increase in previously unreported cases of abuse involving the boy child.

The end of 2014 marked the end of this project period and therefore SC conducted a documentation exercise to document lessons and best practices. SC intended to address the question of adopting and sharing the project's lessons for replication in similar environments. HIVSA's project experiences bring home programming lessons from a specific socio-economic background, which can be adopted in South Africa, Zimbabwe and elsewhere. The documentation was intended to draw good lessons from the project that can be shared with stakeholders and also for internal learning. The documentation was therefore a lessons learnt study towards replicating, scaling up and adaptation of the model in the region and in SCi Zimbabwe programming areas.

This document, a record of the programme's lessons, successes and challenges, was compiled through conversation with project management and staff, by making reference to various internal and external project documents and four days of fieldwork dedicated toward talking with the project beneficiaries (i.e. children, partner organizations, community members, teachers, caregivers).

2 THE INQUIRY PROCESS ~METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the documentation was highly qualitative and thus allowing an in-depth analysis of the issues surrounding the project. The assessment team comprised of a mix of M&E team, Child Protection team as well as representative of Padare. Two methods of data collection were used to provide data for the documentation process.

Focus Group discussions

The project targeted mainly in and out of school children in Midlands Province. Therefore children and young people became the main units of analysis in this documentation. Focus Group Discussions were therefore conducted in 8 schools which included both rural and urban schools. At each school, a group of club members were selected for the discussions. The Focus Group Discussions were used as a tool gather data on in-depth issues about the project in relation to lessons and best practices.

Key informant Interviews

The documentation process required special opinion from participants that are more informed about this project. This warranted the team to carry out further investigation about the project from the key opinion leaders. In this regard, the assessment team carried out some interviews with the traditional leaders who were involved, club patrons and matrons, several Padare champions including former club leaders who have further taken the work to universities.

3 SUMMARY FINDINGS OF THE DOCUMENTATION

3.1 Key successes of the Padare school clubs

The documentation process initially looked at the major achievements of the Padare schools clubs. Although the documentation process was not typically an impact assessment exercise, it should be noted that the major achievement of the clubs was however seen to be highly linked to impact of the project in the schools and communities around the schools. The process was basically meant to capture quick highlights of the key success of the clubs and further, an understanding of the factors that supported this success was also profiled. The following bullets therefore present a summary of some of the key successes identified by the documentation process;

- One of the major achievements of Padare clubs was contribution to the transformation of lives of school children. This was alluded to by club members and patrons who participated in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) during the documentation process. The transformation of lives was seen to start from the club members and trickled down to other children at the school. Live positive testimonies of children whose lives have changed as a result of the clubs were provided during FGDs. For instance, some children who once faced abuse and other social problems at home stood up to give their story and how the Padare club assisted them to overcome those challenges.
- The existing clubs have also managed to spread the concept to other schools who were not part of the project targeted schools. Further, some of the school clubs have also influenced some other institutions (colleges) and facilitated the formation of clubs. In this case, the facilitating the adoption of the Padare concept in other schools\institutions is also viewed as one of the key successes of the project.
- Besides impacting on their own schools, some of the clubs have gone an extra mile to raise awareness in other schools where there are no clubs and amongst they have also travelled to the hard to reach schools to raise awareness. In addition, the clubs have also reached out to some colleges as well as the general community through public campaigns. It is also acknowledged that some of the clubs earned greater recognition in the society such that they would be invited to give their massages in many public functions in the community.

- One of the most successful elements about the project is that the boy child is now able to stand open up on any abuse issues that may happen in their lives. Findings of the documentation revealed that there are some cases where boys have come forward and open up about cases of abuse, thereby showing the positive results of the project as boys usually do not disclose what happens to them.

- Extension of the Padare Concept to higher institutions such as universities has been recognized as one of the biggest achievements of the project. So far, there is evidence of Padare clubs that have been initiated and that are currently functioning at the Midlands State University, Chinhoyi University of Technology and some university in South Africa. The concept was spread by the former club members of the targeted schools who enrolled in these Universities after their secondary education.

- The clubs work have contributed to a significant increase of awareness in the schools and community particularly on the following issues;
    - Children's rights
    - Speaking out on abuse cases (boys and girls)
    - Harmful cultural practices (e.g. *chiramu, kugara nhaka)*

- Padare club activities were reported to also have positively influenced the way other clubs operate. It should be noted that there are other various clubs with different purposes at the school whose operations have been positively influenced by Padare clubs.

- The clubs have also been associated with improved reporting mechanisms on child abuse. The documentation exercise showed that the existence of clubs at the school has resulted in the schools strengthening the system of reporting any cases of abuse from the school or community. This is mainly because the clubs have built a close relationship with other children such that they can open up on issues affecting them.

3.2 Factors supporting success

The project key successes highlighted above would not have been possible without supporting factors which acted as enhancers to the project. In this case, the following have been documented as some of the positive factors that contributed to success;

- The involvement of influential traditional leaders (such as Chief Gambiza) in the programme provided a strong supporting pillar that contributed significantly to success. The figures were reported to have been so instrumental in contributing to the acceptance of the project in the schools and community and thereby giving more space for the clubs to carry out their activities effectively.
- Exchange visits and synergies with other institutions (e.g. Midlands Aids Support Organisation) have also played a part in strengthening the clubs through learning and sharing.
- Support from school administration, patrons, parents, Padare, was pointed out as one of the factors that contributed to success
- Boldness, empathy, teamwork, oneness, patience, confidence, commitment and innovation of the club members have also been enablers of great achievement by the clubs
- Knowledge and skills acquired by club members enabled them to function effectively and thereby contributing to success
- Personal testimonies given by club members during meetings resulted in other clubs members realizing the realities of life and how important their club was in terms of improving other children's social life. In so doing, this instilled a sense of wanting to improve the lives of other children by the club members.
- Inclusion of student leadership (prefects) who are influential within the clubs improved the effectiveness of the clubs. influenced implementation and crafting of school rules

3.3 Shortcomings of School clubs

A discussion of the shortcomings and possible solutions was also conducted to unveil some of the gaps that such projects may need to address if implemented in future. The following bullets provide some of the points considered to have compromised the project.

- Lack of adequate information on referral centres or services
- Misconception of child rights by children – rights vs. responsibilities
- Lack of visibility material in clubs
- Inadequate financial resources
    - Purchase of stationery
    - Purchase of fuel for outreach activities
    - Production of DVDs on club activities e.g. dramas for income generation
    - For learning visits to VFU, health centres courts,

- Lack of transport to carry out project activities
- Bureaucracy in the education system delayed activities i.e. protocols
- Negative attitudes from both within schools and other institutions towards the Padare concept
- Cultural and religious beliefs
- Resistance from the community e.g. as a result of child participation taking precedence
- Victimisation of teachers by the community on why they are providing information on child rights and child abuse
- Limited time to carry out Padare activities as a result of other commitments within the schools.
- Difficult to change attitudes of teachers towards certain policies e.g. corporal punishment
- Padare project information not fully understood by school administration
  - School heads
  - Teachers
- Labelling of children by the community as a result of the awareness being carried in the community
- No provision of safe places for the abused children and no post trial support of the abused children
- Children are reporting cases with inadequate evidence

3.4 Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt in this case are defined as what was not done right and therefore would not warrant to repeat in future. The analysis of the data collected compiled the following in a summary as the lessons learnt from the implementation of this project.

- Much as the project did the best to reach most of the schools in Midlands, the project did not do well in reaching hard to reach areas which left the children in these areas not benefiting from the intervention.
- The project was acknowledged to be more active in schools but however it was noted that it was not so much active at community level and thus not much benefiting out of school children.

- Although the Padare intervention introduced more activities to contribute to the impact, the activities became too many to the extent of diluting the effectiveness of the real traditional harmful practices activities. The activities added included male circumcision, sexual reproductive health, PMTCT, maternal child health etc.

- It was also noted that the concept of Padare was diluted to some extent – it was also used as a platform by other stakeholders to carry out their activities where they would have received funding for example YPISA

- One of the observations was that the concept lacked its own standard manual and toolkit which would have guided the operation of the activities

- The ideal Padare concept is expected to have two ends, the school clubs and the community men's forum. However, the documentation process observed and concluded that there was no link between the school clubs and the community men's forums and hence compromising the effectiveness of the concept.

- It was revealed that teferral systems do not provide for safe places for abused children. Explanations given showed that abused children at home are returned back to the abusers as there are no safe places to keep these children

- The school clubs showed to lack some knowledge on the technical information required for a case to be valid for reporting and investigation. This would improve the effectiveness of the clubs.

- The lack of advocacy of the concept at the highest level, e.g. DEO and PED compromised the marketing of the project.

- The project lacked exchange visits with rural set-ups as all that were conducted have been conducted in urban set-ups

- There was lack of engagement of community during project implementation which reduced community participation in this project

- Although monitoring by the partner was done, indications of inadequate monitoring visits from PADARE to motivate members and school administration, compromised the project

- Shortage of resources surfaced as one of the limitations to club activities. The project however should have introduced the clubs to IGAs e.g. Drama recording and selling DVDs that could earn some income and at the same time raising awareness. The clubs relied heavily on project funds which is not sustainable.

- There was an identified lack of proper systems for documentation of success stories e.g. MSC and publishing of articles in newspapers. Resultantly, no evidence to demonstrate success was gathered overtime.

- The project also lacked the use of other effective media with a national coverage e.g. awareness raising to school clubs about the existing broadcasting on radio or TV programmes so that they are able to make their contributions.
- Non-inclusion of primary school students
- There was lack of visibility, however provision of visibility material could have increased awareness
- Use of public figures and celebrities in dissemination of information could have assisted the project in achieving more
- The project lacked strategies for continuity and succession (leadership) of club activities after club members have left the school. This had a negative impact on the sustainability of the clubs.

3.5 Best practices

- The project groomed clubs leaders to be real leaders. The leadership skills gained through clubs have benefited the cadres even after leaving high school. Testimonies of former club leaders who are champions at the university were provided during the documentation process.
- The project provided overwhelming guidance and support on child abuse issues at school level which has left an impact at the schools.
- The provision of IEC material was highly commented to have increased awareness even beyond the schools
- It was observed that learning of child rights at the schools where the project was implemented was overwhelming. The project was therefore highly commented for providing an enabling environment to child rights learning
- The system of awarding prizes for competitions was motivating to club members and contributed to the success made over time
- The club members testified having benefited from individual transformations through set up of Clubs. This included;
    - Confidence
    - Assertiveness
    - discipline
    - awareness
    - interaction

- The peer to peer model of counselling adopted was highly commented for creating an enabling environment for the peers to support each other in times of need
- The Padare clubs created good relations with one of the most influential chiefs who was instrumental in advocacy of the concept
- The existence of the clubs have strengthened the trust between pupils and school authorities and their parents
- One of the biggest best practices mentioned is the how other children have worked greatly to change the lives of other children through club activities. It has been mentioned that the clubs have provided children a platform to open their views on personal issues to get psycho-social support.