



Introduction

In other SHIPO newsletters we are explaining a lot on technical interventions like Water and Sanitation or building projects. This time however the newsletter focuses on the support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

Background

SHIPO is located in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania in the district of Njombe. The district has about 7,500 (*) Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), this is more than 5% of the children mainly because of HIV/AIDS. SHIPO is supporting the idea that these children are taken care of by family, neighbours or other people of their community.



It is not feasible to have them all living in orphanage houses. In the region most families have one or more foster children of which they take care of. These care takers can use some support especially in rural areas. (* government data 2009)

History

Since 2008 SHIPO has been implementing OVC projects. In six villages in Njombe district. All these projects aimed at economic strengthening of the OVC committees for the short and long term. So they can have access to help Orphans and Vulnerable Children in their village. For example by timber trees planting, fruit trees planting (Avocado), tree nursery, poultry and pig keeping.



These projects were handed over to the communities in 2010. SHIPO learned that some interventions are successful while others face challenges.

Teaching and learning materials

Development starts with quality education in the very first years that children go to school. Education should – according to SHIPO- focus on creative thinking and problem solving instead of repeating the ABC, 123 or “good morning teacher”. For that purpose SHIPO designed teaching and learning materials for 5-8 year old children and train teachers. The materials are produced by local entrepreneurs, artisans, carpenters and a group of ten orphan girls who are being trained in sewing.



In the first five schools pre-primary and standard one teachers are trained and use the teaching and learning materials.

The same materials are also used outside of schools in OVC groups as play toys.



New approach



After handing over the OVC projects to the community, SHIPO re-thought and decided to start another OVC project which is mainly on psychosocial support, since January 2011 the project has started at Manga village. The reason for starting this kind of project is to help the Orphans and Vulnerable Children on another side of their lives, that is

psychosocial issues which embodies values, principles, actions, hopes and dreams. At Manga village, the project has started a “drop in center” where by groups of children get together for psychosocial support structured activities which also includes sports and games. Not only that but also foster parents (care takers) are getting together for monthly meetings which gives them a platform to discuss about child rights, recognizing resilience in children, serious challenges for children, dealing with difficult behaviours, how to listen to children and to form caretakers support groups.



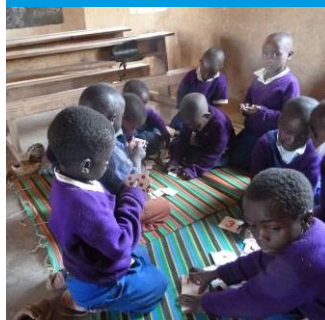
From communities

Foster parents are “saying” they wish this project could have started earlier, because many of them did things to their children like discrimination, paying no attention to the children or didn’t notice when their children were discriminated or stigmatized by other community members! However foster parents have realized that in order for their children to flourish, it is important that caregivers (forgotten mourners) they receive support as well. Often caregivers are overwhelmed by caring for children, particularly if the caregivers are older and have many grandchildren to care for. Although they are doing their best, caregivers may suffer from “burn out” or being exhausted by trying to meet the various needs of many children when they have limited resources.



Nowadays

Nowadays foster parents can support each other in their support groups where they get a platform to express their feelings and share their experiences, which of course gives them a better time in their new role!



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