

RUIRU KIAMBU ROAD
NEXT TO HEGA CENTER
P.O.BOX 27
RUIRU

Email: info@focusvik.com / focusvik@yahoo.com

Website www.focusvik.cm

Tel 0723 – 725942 / 0720-366493

2008 FINAL YEAR REPORT

INTRODUCTION

One of the most tragic and difficult challenges of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is the growing number of youth and children who have lost parents to AIDS or whose lives will never be the same because of it. The crisis is both enormous and complex, affecting many millions of children. Nothing can take away the pain that these children have already endured. But a conscious shift in our attention and efforts can help alleviate the suffering that many of them still face and provide brighter prospects for their future.

It is with this in mind that FOCUS realizes and asserts that all young children require affection, protection and nurture. This includes relationships with stable caregivers that support their developing psychological and social capacities, and ongoing interactions with encouraging adults that promote their language and cognitive development. As they grow, children require friendships with same-aged peers and to be members of social and cultural associations, including educational, play, social and/or religious groups. This sociality helps children acquire the behavior and moral values expected of people in their society and equips children to become full participants in their communities.

It is also important to note that emphasis should be put on behavior change and prevention of new infections in the community with special emphasis on the youth.

To this end FOCUS in partnership with other organizations led in the implementation of services to the community aimed at fulfilling the vision and mission of the organization and inline with our strategic plan and annual log frame and budget for the year 2008. This is thus a report of the year 2008's activities, interventions and services to the community, these are based on four key strategies which are

1. Strengthen the **capacity of families** to protect and care for orphans and vulnerable children by providing economic, psychosocial and other support.
2. Mobilize and support **community-based responses**.

3. Ensure access for orphans and vulnerable children to **essential services**, including education, health care, birth registration and others.
4. Raise awareness at all levels through advocacy and social mobilization to create a **supportive environment** for youth children and families affected by HIV/AIDS, through promotion of **behavior change** and **prevention of new infections** among the youth and the community at large

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF FAMILIES TO PROTECT AND CARE FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Families are the best hope for vulnerable children, but they require support from outside sources for both immediate survival needs and the longer term. Families require a combination of economic, material and psychosocial support. FOCUS realizes that the capacity of families to protect the rights and ensure the well-being of their children depends largely on the ability of a household to meet immediate needs, ensure a steady income and maintain the integrity of its economic safety net.

Since January the emphasis has been on improving the livelihood and the economic status of the guardians and also by providing psychosocial support to the orphans and vulnerable children.

Activities

Livelihood support

Various activities have been undertaken in this department to ensure that the children are well supported at their homes. The focus was actually basically on the guardians' savings and credit. With the main aim of improving the household economic capacity and also strengthening their child care capacities

Achievements

- The program introduced in the year 2007 had 12 guardians saving by the end of the year 2007. with a lot of emphasis placed on sensitizing the guardians the number rose to 34 guardians. Thus an addition of 22 started saving
- Out of the 34 guardians who are saving so far 12 have taken loans and have started small businesses that are doing quit well out of which 3 have repaid their loans and are planning for an expansion
- The credit and saving component also received a boost from St John community centre who injected in a 100,000/=

Challenges

- The repayment rate of some of the guardians who took the loans is not satisfactory with 2 not even saving after taking the loans

- Illiteracy among some of the guardians
- Slow rates of savings by the guardians due to their income
- Poor attendance during the monthly meetings

Recommendations

- More emphasis should be placed on the monthly meetings to encourage more experience sharing.
- There should be PSS sessions for the guardians to encourage more openness during the monthly meetings
- More trainings, talks and sensitization to encourage more saving among the guardians

Provision of psychosocial support for the OVCs

HIV/AIDS undermines, then destroys, the fundamental human attachments essential to normal family life and child development. Children affected by suffer anxiety and fear. These problems are often compounded by cultural taboos surrounding discussion of AIDS and death. It therefore cannot be assumed that children and their caregivers are always able to cope without support. They need plenty of opportunity to express their feelings without fear of stigma, discrimination and exclusion. It is with this in mind that FOCUS put in place a PSS program to help the children and their guardians the activities included, objective play and games as well as focused discussions and quizzes for the children. There also was role play and drama as well as other talent shows for the children.

Achievements

- There have been continuous running of weekly objective games, quizzes, discussions, role plays as well as talent shows
- The children have exhibited great growth spiritually, socially, psychologically, emotionally as well as mentally. This has been exhibited through improved performance in their education, more openness among the children.
- There has been better bonding among the children and the staff, which has led to better growth.
- Two of the staff were trained in PSS by CCF Kenya

Challenges

- Some of the planned activities were not done for example the exchange visits couldn't be done due to lack of finances
- Change in staff in between the year also led to some hiccup in the implementation
- Lack of enough personnel

Recommendations

- Trainings of more personnel in PSS could be an added bonus
- Allocation of more finances to enable implementation of all activities

- More time should be added to cater for the children in upper primary

Strengthening young peoples life and survival skills

Having realized the ramification of the loss of a parent is that skills are no longer passed from one generation to another most of the orphans are left as heads of household and thus have to fend for themselves. FOCUS thus in partnership with St John Community Centre thus introduced apprenticeship training for youth OVCs with emphasis on heads of households . Though no placement has been done this year, the identification of both the training centers and the youth to be trained has been done with the hope of placing them in the course of next year.

Achievements

- We managed to get ,ore support from St John Community centre for the program
- Identification of the OVCs to be trained

Challenges

- Reluctance among the youth to be trained for it took quite a while to get the youth during the identification

MOBILIZE AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSES.

General Overview

When families cannot adequately meet the basic needs of their children, the community is a safety net in providing essential support. In practice, care of orphans and vulnerable children comes from nuclear families surviving with community assistance, FOCUS throughout the year has also with this strategy in mind helped to reinforce the community to provide support protection and care. This has basically been done through community theatre outreaches in the community and also participation in other advocacy and awareness performances or invitations.

Achievements

- Being able to hold or participate in community theatre outreaches in the community
- There has been some interventions among the community members with some of them supporting the centre materially
- We also received support from St John Community Centre towards a community leaders sensitization sessions
- Support from some community leaders

Challenges

- Lack of finances to be able to hold more awareness sessions

Recommendations

- More support from community leaders and involvement in the activities could send a positive message to the community
- More financial support to be able to hold more advocacy and sensitization activities

ENSURE ACCESS FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES, INCLUDING EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, NUTRITION AND OTHERS.

General overview

Orphans and vulnerable children are at a disadvantage in obtaining essential services necessary to their welfare. They have lower school attendance rates and are at risk of poor nutrition and health. They are also at greater risk of abuse and exploitation because of their status in society. Typically, orphans and vulnerable children have significant psychosocial needs and their support systems to meet those needs are weak or, in extreme cases, non-existent. FOCUS in response to this and in line with our objective put in place interventions to ensure the children have access to these basic essential services these included; - health services, feeding and nutrition, access to education

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

FOCUS in the course of the year managed to provide health services to the orphans under our care this has been through treatment of minor ailments at the centre and also referral of the children to health center for major treatments

Achievements

- Acquisition and stocking of a first aid kit
- Successful referral to health centre for treatment
- Having been trained in first aid the staff had no major problem that they couldn't handle
- We also managed to organize a medical check up for the children though no follow-up of a medical camp

Challenges

- Lack of finances to be able to hold a medical camp
- Ignorance amongst the guardians

Recommendations

- More sensitization of the guardians on importance of good health and managing it

- Making of referrals books for the children and getting a definite referral center

ACCESS TO FEEDING AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Having noted that orphans and vulnerable children are at a disadvantage in obtaining nutritional services due to various factors, a situation that affects their health as well as their education as most of them drop out of school to go fetching food, FOCUS thus has interventions to help these children access nutrition services this is through a feeding program at the FOCUS centre for the orphans, this is to ensure the children at least get a meal a day.

Achievements

- Having successfully had a feeding program for the children throughout the year
- Improved nutrition and health status for the children
- Improved hygiene in the kitchen
- Affordability of a balanced diet for the children

Challenges

- Change in personnel (staff) during the year
- Lack of enough finances
- Change in the cook during the year due to insubordination
- Not enough finance to purchase a new jiko

Recommendations

- More finance should be allocated to ensure better service provision

ACCESS TO EDUCATION SERVICES

Education is a cornerstone of every child's life as this lays the very foundation of their future, FOCUS realizes that every child has the right to a primary education. It is vital for children's futures that they attend school and take full advantage of this right. Beyond academic learning, education is also important for their psychosocial development. Schools can provide children with a safe, structured environment, the emotional support and supervision of adults, and the opportunity to learn how to interact with other children and develop social networks. It is with this in kind that FOCUS promotes access to education for the orphans and vulnerable children this has been through provision of scholastic materials supporting secondary school education and promoting of early childhood education

Achievements

- Successful provision of scholastic materials to the children
- Having successfully placed 6 children in class one
- Having taken 12 children in nursery for the early childhood education
- Having successfully taken 10 children to be placed into class one next year

- Improved performance among the OVCs
- Having facilitated regular tuition at Githunguri primary school
- Purchase of furniture for educational needs
- Increased enrolment of the OVCs in school

Challenges

- Lack of enough finances thus we couldn't provide uniform and shoes
- Change in personnel during the year

RAISE AWARENESS AT ALL LEVELS THROUGH ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION TO CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS, THROUGH PROMOTION OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND PREVENTION OF NEW INFECTIONS AMONG THE YOUTH AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

General overview

From the beginning, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been accompanied by fear, ignorance and denial, leading to silence and inaction, as well as stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS. Orphans and vulnerable children, youth as well as their families are frequently victimized in this way. Stigma and discrimination give rise to rejection, hostility, isolation and human rights violations. Reducing stigma and discrimination will require increasing access to information, challenging myths and transforming the public perception of HIV/AIDS. This has been one of our key strategies in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. This has been majorly done through theatre and performing arts as well as theatre community outreaches. Focus has been on the youth to help prevent new infections and also encourage behavior change. These activities have been done in partnership with PSI Kenya / APHIA II as well as other partners including the ministry of youth and sports, national bank of Kenya among others.

Community theatre outreaches and other performances

The main aim of the community theatre outreaches is basically to educate, challenge myths, and also transform public perception. In partnership with APHIA II FOCUS has been able to implement community outreaches as from February to December with doing an average of 15 outreaches per month totaling to 165 outreaches by the end of December these attracted an average of 300 people in the audience per outreach thus totaling to 49,500 people reached in the community outreaches .

In the latter part of the year apart from the community outreaches we also had invitational performances at different functions which attracted a large number of people in the audience roughly an average of over 10,000 people in total.

The group also participated in the provincial and national cultural and drama festivals. Emerging Number 1 at the provincial festivals and number two at the

national festivals a very encouraging feat for the staff.

Trainings and capacity building

Having recruited a new group as the staff it was very imperative that the staff members undergo capacity building and training sessions to ensure they have the right information to pass to the community this was done by partnering organizations who came in handy to train the staff. The youth staff was thus trained in various messages which included

- Youth friendly post abortion care by APHIA II
- Group dynamics by CCF Kenya
- Theatre for developments by PSI Kenya
- Psychosocial support for OVCs by CCF Kenya
- OVC care and support by CCF Kenya [
- Pediatric care with emphasis on PMTCT and CT by APHIA II
- Peer education by Hope World wide
- Men as Partners Training by Hope World wide
- PSS and Human rights training by Hope World wide
- Human rights training by KANCO

These trainings have gone quite a long way in assisting the organization in program implementation .

IGA

Income generation is a very important tool in helping sustain the staff in the organization, Thus in line with the organizations objective of sustaining the staff, FOCUS engaged in activities to ensure it is achieved, thus using the organizations talented staff art was used as one of the major tools to generate income. This has been done through performances that were paid for and also through organizing the annual variety show dubbed **Vipawa Pure** with the theme of *art for social change* a show that raised some finances which helped facilitate our programs.

EXCHANGE VISIT

Exchange visits are very important to assist in capacity building and also help the staff learn more from other organizations and also get other ideas on how the other interventions are being implemented. It is in line with this that FOCUS organized an exchange visit with support from St John Community Centre and also personal fundraising efforts to visit an orphan care program at Kendu Bay and also an outreach program to the hard to reach area of Mfangano and Remba islands. The organization held very successful exchange visit and also very successful performances in Remba and Mfangano that reached out to an average of 10,000 community members.

The exchange visit was also a very good morale booster to the staff who came back fully rested and ready to embark on the other activities

BONDING SESSIONS

One important aspect of growth common to every organization and useful to any development is unity and cohesion a people acting as one is believed to grow faster as opposed to a divided one. Thus in our desire to facilitate growth and proper service delivery it was important to introduce bonding and discussion sessions among the staff. This has been done on monthly basis among the staff and also including the children at the centre. These ventures have really helped in building the organization and also improving service delivery.

Challenges

- Lack of finance to ensure facilitation of all the activities
- Limited staff
- Change in staff during the beginning of the year

Recommendations

- More finances should allocated for better service delivery
- The staff allowances be upped to ensure continuity
- More training and capacity building of the staff to be enhanced
- Introduction of more way to make theatre a more viable income generating activity
- More effort should be invested in the staff to achieve more

ADMINISTRATION

To ensure proper facilitation of FOCUS activities it is important to have a proper administration. With this in view the management board thus put in place strategies to ensure it happens. Part of the strategies put in place were developing of a strategic plan and an annual log frame and budget to guide our implementation of the activities.

The strategies and plan were also to assist in resource mobilization. This has been a very successful strategy for it really assisted in service delivery and also resource mobilization. it is due to the plans put in place that we were able to reach the far we have.

Streamlining policy administration and also ensuring the staff understand all our policies was also another strategy that assisted in service delivery. One other strategy was to enlarge our PR base this was to be done through increased performances and also developing and having our website hosted. This was successfully done with our address at www.focusyik.com . all in all this year has been a very successful year as we have had much accomplished than ever before.

Challenges

- Lack of enough finance
- Change in personnel during the beginning of the year
- Limited staff

Recommendations

- Constitution of a board of advisors to assist in resource mobilization and also advice in program implementation
- Registering the organization as an NGO to ensure proper service delivery
- Acquisition of more office utilities e.g. computers and office printer
- Getting a better office space

It is thus with great gratitude that we the management board of FOCUS give our thanks to the FOCUS staff for their support and their commitment in implementation of the activities. We would also like to pay our gratitude to the other partners for their support in ensuring implementation of our activities. We would like to request for the same commitment and dedication.

Thank you and may God bless you