

Illustrative Program Description¹

Communities Nurturing Children and Youth

Context

For the members of the EQUIP 3 consortium (subsequently referred to as *Youth Trust*), one of the key under-developed partnerships within the family and community context is partnership between young people aged 13-25 and adults. After all:

- Many households supporting orphans and vulnerable children are now youth headed;
- Youth – especially young women—play a major role in providing care to orphans and vulnerable children along with AIDS-affected adults in their immediate and extended families;
- Many orphans and vulnerable children are themselves rapidly approaching adolescence with few social supports in place and very little control over services designed to assist them;
- Young family members are often those best placed to take advantage of income-generating opportunities;
- The 13-25 year old age group has the highest risk for new HIV infections, and interventions with this age group are likely to have dramatic impacts on overall prevalence rates and future numbers of orphans and vulnerable children.

Youth are a key untapped family and community asset. Youth are not just potential beneficiaries or advisors to new programs for orphans and vulnerable children, but are full fledged stakeholders and development actors in the coordinated international response to the crisis. Partnering formally with adults in communities recognizes the assets of each as complimentary and necessary for a comprehensive response to community action. The knowledge, life experience, access to resources, and authority of older community members coupled with youth's organizing ability, creative problem-solving skills, flexibility and openness to new solutions are all essential to working productively within the new paradigm that HIV/AIDS presents to communities. Youth insights into needs and motivation of children and youth are critical to designing relevant and age-appropriate programs.

Geographic Focus and Scale

This proposed project intends to reach over 280,000 youth and their family members and 480 institutions in over 240 communities.

¹ This illustrative program description was developed in the first year of EQUIP3 activities in a collaborative effort among EQUIP3 consortium members to better outline complementarities. This however doesn't answer a specific request from USAID.

Goal and Objectives

Goal

The goal of the program is to build the capacity of communities to provide support and care services for orphans and vulnerable children.

Objectives

1. Build the capacity of community-based adult-youth partnerships to support and care for orphans and vulnerable children

Anticipated Results/Outcomes:

- 480 local institutions will receive support to care for orphans and other vulnerable children.
- 280,000 orphans and other vulnerable children will receive assistance and support that meets quality standards.
- 240 youth-adult partnerships for improved community support services to orphans and vulnerable children.

2. Increase the capacity of vulnerable children and youth to meet their needs, and the needs of children and their families

Anticipated Results/ Outcomes:

- 30,000 vulnerable children and youth successfully manage their lives and contribute to those of their families.
- 10,000 persons trained or retrained to improve support of orphans/vulnerable children.

3. Increase the capacity of youth and their communities to advocate for orphans and vulnerable children policy and programs at local, district, state and national levels

Anticipated Results/Outcomes:

- Improved policies introduced at local, district, state and national levels for orphans and vulnerable children.
- Increase in programming at local, district, state and national levels for orphans and vulnerable children.

Project Description

One of the most devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is the erosion of traditional community support structures. This program aims to help communities build on the resources that youth can provide through effective youth-adult partnerships.

Youth-adult partnership teams in 240 communities will lead and guide their communities through action programs that identify, strengthen and create specific plans to address support and care for local orphans and vulnerable children. The communities will implement the plans by mobilizing human, material and financial resources and developing strategic partnerships.

Developing a new and dynamic community-level partnership between young people and adults will require a multi-step process. Young people and adults will identify the strengths and assets of their communities and institutions, as well as gaps in services and livelihood support that currently exist. The steps in the **Vulnerable Children Community Support Plan** Process are:

Step 1: Engage Communities – *Youth Trust* first identifies potential communities in collaboration with government and in-country partners. The youth-adult team led approach is then introduced to each prospective community. *Youth Trust* articulates what it can offer to the communities in the form of training in livelihood support, capacity building, developing youth-adult partnerships, and grants. When communities agree to the process and have identified youth leaders, an orientation of HIV as a development issue is offered to community members. This activity serves as a team building exercise to provide accurate information about HIV and develop shared ownership in the problem. Generally, a community forum will then launch the action planning process.

Step 2: Assess Impact of HIV/AIDS: Youth-adult partner teams will lead community members through an assessment to gather information about HIV/AIDS, vulnerabilities, economics and other necessary data to give an overview of the impact of HIV on its community. Key human, material and financial resources will be identified. External resources will also be included. The data will be analyzed by the community using participatory approaches. Priorities will be articulated by the community for community, group and household level interventions.

Step 3: Design the Vulnerable Children Community Support Plan: The youth-adult partner led process continues as they establish key program areas to address the orphans and vulnerable children challenges and capacity building needs of the community institution service providers. They will develop activities, budgets, key outcomes and indicators. Community institution service providers will be identified as well as how the proposed projects can link to complimentary efforts. The plan is presented to the community for approval.

Step 4: Implement the Vulnerable Children Community Support Plan: The community will implement its first 12 month multi-activity plan. *Youth Trust* contributes to the achievement of each plan through grants, training and technical assistance in institutional capacity building (both technical and governance), leadership development, and livelihood support for vulnerable youth. There will be quarterly community meetings to track progress and make adjustments during the first year. At the end of the first cycle, a multi-year action plan will be implemented.

Step 5: Share the experience: encourage spread and facilitate scale-up through a series of sub-regional exchanges. Community service providers will periodically come together to share effective practices. Exchanges between youth undertaking livelihood initiatives can spread new ideas and opportunities. Leadership teams will demonstrate new and effective youth-adult partnerships.

The role of *Youth Trust* in the proposed program will be to facilitate community-level change with training, technical support, concrete methodologies and grants. *Youth Trust* partners bring an array of tools, effective practices and models that will constitute a “Tool Kit” which draws upon partners’ experience in the areas of livelihood generation; HIV prevention, education and care; institutional capacity building; effective practices in youth development work; media; and, community participation. Many of the partners also bring experience in health education, prevention and care.

Proposed Activities linked to the three objectives

1. Build the capacity of community-based adult-youth partnerships to support and care for orphans and vulnerable children
 - 1.1 Provide community institutions with training in youth-adult partnering, resource mobilization techniques (human, material, financial), management of financial and social accountability, and in consensus-building techniques.
 - 1.2 Provide institutional partners with training in livelihood program planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring.
 - 1.3 Identify opportunities for youth and adults to work together on livelihood support activities through community institutions.

Drawing on the experience of World Learning, EDC, PLAN, CRS and others, capacity building tools such as SEXTANT will be used to guide community institutions through a strategic planning process. As community institutions decide how to provide services to vulnerable children and their families, they will be accompanied by Youth Trust in developing both technical and institutional capacity as a means to long-term sustainability. Including youth as full participants in the institutions is an essential element to assure relevance and building of leadership capacity.

2. Increase the capacity of vulnerable youth to meet their own needs and the needs of their families.
 - 2.1 Provide youth with basic education, education for earning and education in family economics.
 - 2.2 Provide youth with training, tools and opportunities for expanding social and economic networks, generating income and preserving assets.

Through the Vulnerable Children Community Support Plan “tool kit”, Youth Trust will respond to the educational needs articulated in the community plans. Whether it be an adapted version of Street Kids International Business Tool Kit, an integrated literacy/livelihoods program, other alternative education programs, or entrepreneurship training, Youth Trust will work to adapt education needs to their community.

3. Increase the capacity of youth and their communities to advocate for orphans and vulnerable children policy and programs at a national level.
 - 3.1 Instill a culture of learning at all levels of the program.
 - 3.2 Provide forums for a range of local and national stakeholders (individual leaders, NGOs/CBOs, and government) to engage in policy and programming dialogue regarding orphans and vulnerable children support.
 - 3.3 Implement a public outreach strategy focused on the need and potential of youth-adult/community partnerships to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

The community findings and recommendations will be heard at the district, state and national levels. Youth Trust will facilitate the sharing of information among communities, institutions, related public initiatives, and policymakers through dialogue, policy forums and media. The experiences of Sesame Workshop, EDC and Plan will be adapted to each country context.