

Transformation of PSW to system strengthening for social welfare services

INTRODUCTION

This paper tracks and explains the practical involvement of PSW program in Tanzania from a program designed for training volunteers, supporting and supervising them while working with most vulnerable children and families at grassroots level to system strengthening approach. It explains how Strategically the scope was widened and transformed from training and follow up to advocacy at community local government and national level, improved coordination and resource mobilization with local government departments and community funds, leveraging of resources with other implementing partners, the forged PSW network scope from service oriented to capacitating human resource through assessment and social welfare work force strategy development. The paper connects the systemic efforts with the program contribution to the follow on National Costed Plan of Action for MVC in Tanzania 2013-2017 (NCPA II)

Furthermore the papers shows the approach used in forming the partnership and its functions, developing and installing sustainability strategies, how trainings have been coordinated? How advocacy has been conducted involving and bringing impact? What are the monitoring and evaluation systems and the process of documenting results and reference.

The Data that show the number of MVC accessed services and change in terms of numbers of human resource social welfare and their career development, Local government budget for MVC and community funding scheme from selected region and district the project covered are shared.

The paper also documents key lessons, challenges and recommends principles and philosophies that can effectively guide volunteer program and system strengthening programs.

BACKGROUND

The USAID funded and intraHealth implemented project Para-Social Workers program(PSW) involved from a volunteer program that was producing semi trained staff to work with MVC and their families at grassroots level to the full system strengthening program forging partnership and networks targeting welfare systems at community, local government, regional and national levels.

The project started in 2008 as a pilot volunteer training program. The Tanzania Institute of Social work in collaboration with Jane Adam School of Social Work tested it while THRP facilitated its transformation to system approach from 2009 to date in responding to country demand and gaps created by frayed indigenous social safety nets, inadequate social welfare workforce, limited financial resources, low prioritization at community and local government level and crisis of care. The intervention aims at sustain a continuum of care that provides psychosocial support, protection, education, nutrition

¹The initial emphasis of the program was to train PSW and PSW supervisors to provide the basic social welfare services to Tanzania's most vulnerable children. Concurrent with PSW training, the Tanzania human resource capacity project (THRP) aims to strengthen the existing local government infrastructure to connect village level need to ward and district level support over the life of the project.

Theoretical framework

The key concepts reflected in this paper include social welfare systems, health systems, system strengthening, sustainability, Para-social workers and most vulnerable children. Concepts are described in terms of the connotation and linkages as they offer a clear comprehension while tracking the program evolution.

² A well functioning social welfare system serves a vital safety net for children and families made venerable by challenging circumstances. When system functions effectively, families and children have access to an array of quality services to promote wellbeing and protect them from harm. In that view the March 2011 conference on social welfare workforce held in Cape town in South Africa defines social welfare system as interventions, programs and benefits which are provided by governmental, civil society and community actors to insure the well being and protection of socially or economically disadvantaged individuals and families(including and perhaps most importantly children).

³The U.S President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) guide on OVC programming explains that social service systems have formal and informal components, which may not

¹ L sherise and Guyer L. Tanzania Human Resource Capacity Project PSW program Review Report June 2012

² Investing in Those who care for Children: social welfare workforce strengthening conference report (USAID) march,2011

³ Guidance for orphans and vulnerable children programming (PEPFAR) July 2012

always connect or coordinate. In some countries, coordination between the more “informal” (sometimes referred to as “endogenous family and community practices”) is complicated by differences in values, beliefs and expectations. The guide further explains the functionality of the social service system that include strong leadership and governance; a well performing work force, adequate financing, effective information management and accountability systems; effective coordination and networking mechanisms and Good service models and delivery mechanisms.

PROGRAM APPROACH

- **Partnership**
- **Training**
- **Advocacy**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**

PROGRAMMATIC INNOVATION

- **Initial PSW I Course and Addition of Supervisors**
 - In 2007, the first PSW course was for those already working for civil society organizations to “top up” their skill sets to serve MVC. After a yearlong pilot, it was determined that the reach of this program needed to go farther into the rural areas as a stop-gap human resource measure and supervisors needed to be trained to support and oversee the work of PSWs.
 - September 2009. A cadre of PSW Supervisors began to be trained at the Ward level.

PSW II Course Addition

- This was not part of the initial program proposal offered to USAID in August 2008. However, the DSW requested it be added to ensure that PSWs had a complete understanding of basic social welfare service delivery and six months of practice under their belts; therefore, in September 2008, planning for the curriculum and eventual implementation began.
- Impact: All PSWs trained by the Twinning Program and THRP have completed both PSW I and PSWII training, thereby qualifying them more fully to serve their communities.

PSW Supervisors Shift from Volunteers to Ward-level Officers

- When: 2009
- Why: In order to meet the established criteria and to strengthen retention, Ward level
- Extension Officers were trained to take on the PSW supervisory oversight.
- Impact: Supervision has ranged in quality and consistency.

SWA Role Approved and Certificate Program begun with PSWs Being Identified for Initial Training and Employment

- When: late 2009
- Why: The DSW and PMORALG worked collaboratively to create a new role at the Ward level for ensuring quality delivery of SW services in the community; in a way, this is the government-endorsed role of the PSW Supervisor.

Expanded LGA Sensitization training - 1 day to 2 days

- When: 2010
- Why: With the initial delivery of the LGA Sensitization training on raising awareness of local government to their role in providing services to MVC, there was not enough time to do adequate action planning with participating district council members. Therefore, the training was expanded to ensure this critical step was done thoroughly.
- Impact: In concert with Advocacy Team follow-up, we are seeing more detailed LGA plans coupled with demonstrated cases of follow through in resource support.

New IPs Deliver PSW Program – Scale up – Joint Trainings

- When: August 2010, Implementing Partners, Africare, Pact, and WEI to scale-up the PSW program

Expansion of Training Days in PSW 1 – 8 Days to 9 Days

- In 2011, For the purpose of accommodating new materials which are relevant to the PSWs work such as: M&E sessions and techniques on how to enter to the community after the training. Also, comments from participants cited some critical topics weren't given enough time; thus the course was expanded to deepen content knowledge.

Revision of Curriculum (with ISW)

- When: Late 2011
- Why: To update course content especially in the area of HIV/AIDS and other new and relevant policies such as the Child Right's Act and UNICEF's recent finding on Violence against Children Report, as well as new procedures for PSWs.

- Potential Impact: Improved quality of services provided to MVC, as well as increased number of MVC served.
- Connection to the Literature: Again, whenever volunteers can play a role in determining the programmatic aspects of their work (i.e. participating in course revision) commitment as well as service delivery and relevance increase.

PSW Update Course Addition

- When: 2011/2012
- Why: PSW's having completed both PSW I and II need ongoing refresher training
- Impact: Beyond skill and knowledge transfer by sharing updated information on Tanzanian legislation, policy and more in regards to OVC, this course reportedly generates enthusiasm and renewed commitment to service.

Start Matching Funds Program with LGAs

- When: 2012
 - Why: To encourage LGA commitment and sustainability as well as model how they can mobilize and allocate resources for MVC and PSWs in their respective areas.

MORE SIGNIFICANT TRANSFORMATION

- **Volunteerism to System strengthening**
 - Need for professionals
 - Social welfare workforce assessment
 - Social welfare workforce strategy
 - Link with other national strategy(child protection, NCPA II,HRH/CHW)
- **Creation of Advocacy Teams**
 - To put a consistent advocacy mechanism in place
 - To bring other sectors on board
 - To cover more areas as the program expanded
 - To facilitate LGAs ownership of the program
 - To offer more support to the District Social Welfare Officer
 - To ensure sustainability of LGA advocacy activities
 - The impact of advocacy teams has been multi-fold including:
 - Formation and training of District Advocacy Teams
 - Advocated for establishment of MVC Community Funds
 - Advocated for planning and budgeting for MVCs and PSWs from District Council's own budgets
 - Advocated for importance of hiring Social Welfare Officers and their roles in supporting children Executive Directors understand the roles of Social Welfare

Officers and there is significant increase in hiring of Social Welfare Officers in the District Councils (see M&E data appended)

- Raised awareness of the Program/MVC in Dodoma, Mtwara, Mwanza and Iringa; specifically, conducted awareness meetings with Regional and District Leaders
- **Creation of PASONET**
 - The Para-Social Workers Network (PASONET) is a network of PSWs that was established by PSWs themselves for the purpose of sustaining social welfare service provision to MVC. Additionally, PASONET was formulated to serve as a platform for advocating for the rights of MVC and PSW issues in Tanzania.
 - PASONET has had impact in a range of ways including:
 - Facilitating the formation and operation of PSW Network (PASONET) in Dodoma, Mwanza and Iringa
 - Networking among PSWs has improved
 - PASONET has elected PSW leaders at district and regional levels
 - The Network has facilitated PSWs attending TASWO meeting (the national Social Workers Association) on the process of establishing the Social Workers Council.
 - PASONET made a presentation of on their activities during the THRP annual data dissemination meeting for LGAs and partners
 - The Network facilitated PSWs attendance at the PSW update meeting in Dodoma

SERVICE DELIVERY AND IMPACT

- PSW trained
- MVC received services per domain
- significant increase in hiring of Social Welfare Officers in the District Councils (see M&E data appended)
- Raised awareness of the Program/MVC
- Data shows increased prioritization of MVC/PSW issues on district agendas as well as increased resource commitment at the LGA and community levels.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMMATIC PHILOSOPHIES AND PRINCIPLES

- Working with Government at all levels inevitable
 - Village /ward government
 - Local government
 - Regional

- Central
- Developing partnership and ways to manage it
 - Training institutions, government and other stakeholders
- Consider factors to minimize drop out
- Coaching and mentoring
- Government staff participation/own M&E and Advocacy systems
- Annual and mid program review
- Defining systems
- Developing network
- Documentation and dissemination
- Sustainability