



JeCCDO

The Experience of JeCCDO in Deinstitutionalization

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JeCCDO in Brief

- **Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO):**
- **is an indigenous child-focused NGO working in Ethiopia in 1985**
- **had been working on institutional childcare program for 12 years and benefited about 1000 orphan children in six orphanages**
- **phased out the orphanages through family reunification and reintegration strategy and moved to integrated community development and community based childcare program.**

The Deinstitutionalization Process

Objectives:

- **Ensure successful reintegration of institutionalized children in to the community.**
- **Make a strategic shift from institutional childcare to community based approach**
- **Working towards addressing the root causes of children's problems**

Why not Institutional childcare?

Main disadvantages from Experience

- Promote dependency syndrome and does not prepare children for self reliance
- Deter proper socialization
- Lack family love & protection
- Creates identity crisis
- Lack of self-confidence
- Discrimination and Stigma
- Children lose trust and vision
- Prevents children from developing life skills and coping mechanisms



Why not Institutional childcare (cont'd..)?

- Discourage community participation
- Cost ineffective/Expensive
- Does not address root causes of children's problems
- Focus only on immediate needs
- Does not take individual differences
- Violates child rights



Strategies of Deinstitutionalization

- **Child - Family Reunification**
- **Reintegration of older children through academic and vocational training**
- **Initiation of community based childcare and community development program as alternative approach**



Achievements & Impacts

Deinstitutionalization

- Over 200 orphans were reunified with their extended & immediate families.
- About 600 orphans became socially and economically self supporting
- Assessment on the impact of the whole program was conducted from which important lessons were drawn



Achievements and Impacts (cont'd)

- **Social, psychological, behavioural, spiritual and physical recovery of the children**
- **Enhanced economic base of the reintegrated youngsters and families of reunified children.**
- **Community awareness on community based support as preferred childcare mechanism**
- **Replication of de-institutionalization of orphanages by other organizations.**
- **Realization of the negative impacts of institutional childcare by different stakeholders**
- **JeCCDO practically demonstrated that community based childcare is the best alternative to address the problem of orphans (as compared to orphanages)**

Factors for Success

- **Careful planning and effective implementation strategies**
- **Participation of children in the whole process**
- **Continuous review of the deinstitutionalization strategy and its implementation**
- **Supportive government and donor policy**
- **Commitment of management and the staff**
- **Effective partnership with the private and government sector**
- **The introduction of community based childcare as alternative approach**

Community Based Childcare Approach of JeCCDO

- **In the process of deinstitutionalization, JeCCDO established relationship with the local community**
- **JeCCDO realized that there is a huge child related problem that can be addressed through community based intervention with little resources as compared to the cost of institutional childcare.**
- **As a result JeCCDO designed and started executing community based development and childcare projects based on participatory needs assessment process.**

Objective:

Enabling communities to take care of disadvantaged children at family setting

Strategies

- **Community capacity development**
- **Family empowerment**
- **Improving access to basic services (education, health, etc.) for children**
- **Advocacy and lobby**
- **Networking and partnership**



Principles

- **Integrated/Holistic intervention**
- **Community based**
- **Child focused**
- **Rights Based**
- **Participatory**
- **Sustainability**
- **Learning and sharing**



Challenges of Deinstitutionalization Process

- **Lack of data about the origin and family background of children**
- **Deep rooted poverty in the community**
- **Dependency on the part of children and their families**
- **Resistance from Support staff and children and families**
- **Difficulties in rehabilitating children with Sevier disabilities**
- **Diversification of children's background**
- **Distance and communication problem for follow up**
- **Problem of adjustment for children to their new social settlement and absence of social services in destinations**
- **Lack of adequate training and job opportunities for reintegrated youngsters**

Lessons Learned

- **The services rendered to institutionalized children should be equitable to the local community standard of living to help them easily adjust their lives in the real community.**
- **Provision of children with adequate and quality information about the deinstitutionalization plan is crucial.**
- **Carefully assess the socio cultural situations of communities where children will be reunified and reintegrated .**
- **Participate children in each step of deinstitutionalization process**
- **Ensure the involvement of other stakeholders**
- **Deinstitutionalization should not be done to get rid of children from orphanages. It should base itself on the best interest of the child leading to long lasting solution.**

Lessons from International Experiences

- The 2nd International Conference on Children & Residential Care held in Stockholm in May 2003, recognized the negative consequences of institutional care for both individual children and for the society at large.
- A research by Save the Children Sweden also established that institutional care can often cause serious and negative impacts on the development and rights of children.

Lessons from... (Cont'd...)

- **The Stockholm declaration indicated that the negative impacts of institutional care could be prevented through adoption of appropriate national strategies in order to support children by:**
 - **Adopting community based care & its advantages**
 - **Reducing the use of residential care**
 - **Setting standards for public care and**
 - **Monitoring existing/remaining residential care programs.**
- **The conference urged governments, civil society organizations, the research community, funding partners and practitioners to:**
 - **Diminish the use of institutions and strengthen community based approaches**
 - **Develop appropriate policies and legislatives**
 - **Support strategies to deinstitutionalize children**
 - **Mobilize communities to support children**
 - **Allocate resources**
 - **Advocate for community based child care alternatives**
 - **Ensure child participation and fight discrimination**

Progresses

- **Studies indicate that realizing the undesired impacts of residential childcare, many of the developed countries closed orphanages earlier.**
- **Since recent years, many organizations in developing countries are also moving away from providing institutional care to community based approaches which needs to be encouraged and replicated.**
- **There is an encouraging awareness about the disadvantages and consequences of residential childcare and the need to move towards community based alternatives.**

Issues of Concern

- **The number of orphans and vulnerable children is continuously increasing due to HIV/AIDS and other factors.**
- **The social and economic capacity and traditional coping mechanisms of communities to support needy children are being challenged by poverty, HIV and AIDS, etc**
- **And thus, in spite of diminishing trends, institutional childcare programs and orphanages are still being established and functional mainly due to HIV and AIDS.**
- **As a result, 8 million children live in institutions Worldwide and their number is growing (Save the Children)**

Issues ... (cont'd)

- **Studies indicate that the use of institutional care is increasing in some high HIV prevalence countries.**
- **In Uganda, for example, the number of children in residential care increased by 66% between 1998 and 2001 (International Social Service & UNICEF, 2004).**
- **According to a study in Zimbabwe, the number of privately funded institutional childcare facilities has grown for the fact that 24 new childcare institutions were built between 1994 and 2004 and the number of children in residential care doubled (UNICEF 2006)**
- **The number of orphanages in Liberia grew from 4 in 1989 to 117 by 2001 (Save the Children)**

Implications

- **Common understanding on the impacts of residential care and on the significance of shifting to community based alternatives has not been fully achieved to the desired level.**
- **There is growing concern that the gains of deinstitutionalization and community based efforts may be lost if residential care is still viewed as appropriate response to HIV/AIDS affected children.**
- **In spite of encouraging progresses in the efforts to move from residential care to community and family based alternatives much is still remaining to be done in the areas of:**
 - **Consensus building**
 - **Research**
 - **Practical Action**
 - **Advocacy**
 - **Policy Development**
 - **Partnership building**
 - **Sharing and learning**
 - **Supporting and Scaling up good practices**



***Together, We Can Reduce the
Vulnerability of Children in the Time of
HIV and AIDS!!***

Thank You!!