

Network of Organizations for Vulnerable and  
Orphaned Children (NOVOC)

P O Box 1266

Lilongwe

"Children in Difficult Situations are the Reason We Exist"



## **STOP AIDS NOW! PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS) PROJECT**

### **END OF PROJECT REPORT**

**Project Title:**

**Scaling up Psychosocial Support Services  
for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in  
Malawi through Linking and Learning**

## 1.0 Introduction

The STOP AIDS NOW! PSS project which is aiming at scaling up psychosocial support services for orphans and vulnerable children in Malawi through Linking and Learning is being implemented by various partners namely: Network of Organizations for Vulnerable and Orphaned Children (NOVOC), Youth Net and Counseling (YONECO), Eye of the Child and Ecumenical Counseling Center (ECC). NOVOC is a lead organization in this project.

The project started in 2008 and is finally ending in 2011.

This report captures the progress made and lessons learnt from 2008 to January 2011.

## 2.0 The Project

### 2.1 The Project Goal

This project draws its overarching goal from the GoM's (Government of Malawi) National Plan of Action for OVC in that it *seeks to contribute to the facilitation of support for care, protection and development of OVC in a coordinated manner in order to provide them with an environment in which they realize their full rights and potentials.*

### 2.2 The Project Objectives

The project aims at realizing the following expected results:

- a) Increased understanding of psychosocial support issues, strategies and interventions for OVCs service providers through linking and learning in Malawi by March 2009.
- b) To create a learning environment for the provision of improved Psychosocial support services rendered to OVCs by March 2009.
- c) Increased integration of Psychosocial support in the various OVC related initiatives undertaken by various organizations in Malawi by March 2009.
- d) Increased networking and exchange of experiences/best practices between and among the participating organizations and beyond.

### 2.3 Division of Responsibilities According to Objectives

Objective No.	Lead Organisation (s)
a. To promote increased understanding of psychosocial support for OVCs service providers through linking and learning in Malawi by March 2009.	YONECO
b. To create a learning environment for the provision of improved Psychosocial support services rendered to OVCs by March 2009.	ECC

c. To mainstream Psychosocial support in the various OVC related initiatives undertaken by various organizations in Malawi by March 2009.	Eye of the Child
d. To increase networking and exchange of experiences/best practices between and among the participating organizations	NOVOC / <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was agreed that NOVOC will also be responsible for the overall coordination of the project as a lead organization.

### **3.0 Progress on Activities**

#### **3.1 Baseline survey report on psycho social issues and strategies for OVCs in the selected districts (Under Objective 1).**

- Baseline survey done.
- 150 copies of the baseline report printed and distributed.
- Leaflets on the survey findings printed and distributed.
- 250 copies of a PSS info-pack for Members of Parliament printed and ready for distribution. Waiting for the next parliamentary session for easy distribution.

#### **3.3 PSS Best practices tool kit development (Under Objective 2)**

- PSS Source Book developed and waiting for designing and printing.
- Orientation and distribution to be done after printing.

#### **3.4 Research on PSS mainstreaming (Under Objective 3)**

- Research on PSS Mainstreaming done.
- Mainstreaming report finalized waiting for printing.
- Mainstreaming strategy finalized waiting for printing.

#### **3.5 STOP AIDS NOW partners meetings and sharing of best practices (Under Objective 4)**

- Partnership Meetings
  - Partnership meetings proved to be important to the project as such these meetings were held regularly. Some of the partnership meetings involved all partners in the Linking and Learning Project while some meetings were only for the PSS partners.
- Directors Meetings
  - During the project period directors managed to meet twice. The first meeting was held at NOVOC Offices and the second meeting was held in Blantyre during one of the partners meetings.

- Sharing of Best Practices
  - Reports of international trips where partners were involved were shared among the partnership such as:
    - International AIDS Conference that took place in Mexico
    - ICASA Conference in Senegal
    - PSS learning trip to Zambia commissioned by the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development with support from UNICEF.
  - A brochure on Community Parenting developed by Monica for the Mexico trip was also distributed to OVC service providers in Malawi.
  - Exchange visit to South Africa which involved all the organizations in the Linking and learning Project in Malawi.
  - The national Symposium was the climax of it all where achievements of the project were showcased to many OVC service providers including government and donors. It was used as a platform for sharing experience and learning, and advocating for more PSS services to OVC.
- Capacity Building
  - Training on selected PSS tools and Hear Our Voices was conducted to 22 participants who are OVC services providers in Malawi.
  - Through the partnership with CEYCA, 3 networks were established in Mchinji, Kasungu and Lilongwe.

#### **4.0 Challenges Faced**

- The initial lack of a shared understanding of PSS among partners, service providers and consultants.
- Lack of MOU between the lead organization and the implementing partners contributed to delayed or non-existent feedback and delays in the completion of reports and products.
- Chronic delays in meeting deadlines, whether from unrealistic planning, poor time management, tensions between organizational work and the work of the PSS project or the challenge of managing external consultants.
- Inadequate coordination between project personnel and the accounts department resulted in the failure to disburse funds to partner organizations in a timely manner.

#### **6.0 Successes**

- The project was successfully implemented despite lack of MOUs between partners.
- The project is still surviving and all partners are still on board.
- The establishment of a shared understanding of PSS among partners and other organizations working with OVC in Malawi.
- The identification of gaps in the provision of PSS in Malawi.

- The production of PSS materials to address those gaps, including the PSS leaflet, the Mainstreaming Strategy and the Source Book.
- The building and strengthening of both formal and informal relationships among partner organizations which resulted in greater sharing of information increased joint implementation of PSS activities and the practice of partners providing support and capacity building to one other.
- The integration of PSS into already existing programmes of the partners and also other organizations.

### **7.0 Key Achievements**

- Increased collaboration (and decreased competition) between partner organizations. This can be seen in the increase in joint projects and in an increased willingness to help and support one another.
- Increased understanding of and respect for the relative strengths and expertise of different organizations.
- The development of a better and shared understanding of PSS among relevant service providers in Malawi.
- Contributed to strengthen the PSS sub-committee by the Technical Working Group on OVC. One of the partners chairs this committee.
- The development and (initial) dissemination of PSS materials relevant to the Malawian context.
- The project was a platform for more partnerships e.g. NOVOC and CORDAID, NOVOC and UNICEF, NOVOC and World Vision Malawi.

### **8.0 Key Recommendations**

- In order to enhance the gains made in this project to date, the PSS materials developed needs to be made widely available and all service providers working with OVC in Malawi must be trained and supported in their use.
- To expand the impact of the PSS project, a user-friendly version of all materials should be produced for use at local level by community-based organizations.
- The GoM should develop and disseminate a national strategy and standards for PSS service provision. The strategy should ensure that training for all people who work with children includes issues of PSS and should ensure the integration of PSS into existing initiatives to support the well-being of children.
- Establishing a common understanding of the concept of PSS among policy makers and practitioners is critical to the effective delivery of PSS services to children, families and communities. While great strides in this direction have been made by the project, this work needs to be reinforced and expanded.
- More resources must be mobilized to support OVC service providers if we are to fully meet the PSS needs of children in Malawi.
- Partnerships are the most effective way to meet the PSS needs of children as they strengthen both the individual and collective response of participating organizations to the needs of OVC. For this reason, both

- donors and government should give preference to - and provide support for - collaborative projects and partnerships.
- For partnerships to be effective, regular, face-to-face meetings between the partners, and between the partners and the donor, are essential. These meetings build and strengthen relationships and are a critical component of a successful partnership. Those role players supporting partnerships must allocate resources for this purpose.
  - Linking and Learning is greatly enhanced by well-planned and designed exchange visits to other organizations – and countries - engaging with similar issues. Such visits provide new insights and information and should be seen as an important vehicle to strengthen existing work.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

The PSS partners would like to commend STOP AIDS NOW! for its continued support to this project. This project has gone a long way in assisting PSS services in Malawi as seen in the evaluation report. The partners expressed a commitment to continue to create forums and opportunities for linking and learning, and to open these forums to other stakeholders. At the same time, they plan to motivate for, and to mobilize, funds to support continued partnership meetings.