

## Community Support Project for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

### Progress Report submitted to DCOF Period: September – December 2000

---

#### 1. CONTEXT

Since September 1999, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance and IPC have been engaged in a project to support children affected by HIV/AIDS in Burkina Faso. Due to the current size and complexity of the problem, the speed at which it is expanding, and the fact that there are no readily available solutions, one must acknowledge the magnitude of the challenge that faces IPC in implementing such a project.



*(Community members watching role-play on OVC, Kumale de Komtoega Association, Boulgou province, November 2000)*

The project is designed to be a long-term self-sustaining project based on community mobilisation. However, after several months of implementing the project, we experienced resistance to the project due to a particular approach to development strongly in favour of short-term projects supported by foreign aid. Community solidarity and positive responses towards orphans are a phenomenon that still exists in the communities but seems to be dissipating more and more. Volunteerism and goodwill are concepts that need rejuvenating.

The implementation of the programme is divided in two phases:

- i) The preparatory phase, from September 1999 to July 2000, which mainly consisted of the following activities (cf. Progress report, Sept. 2000):
  - Enhancing IPC capacity to implement the OVC project,
  - Sensitising and mobilising key actors,
  - Integrating OVC issues to ongoing participatory prevention projects supported by IPC,
  - Developing tools and materials to train CBOs in facilitating the development and implementation of community projects to support OVCs.

- ii) The project implementation phase, consisting mainly of the following activities:
- Mobilising associations implicated in the pilot projects and strengthening existing IPC partners,
  - Developing training modules and training CBOs to facilitate the development and implementation of community projects to support OVCs,
  - OVC needs assessments in the communities,
  - Ongoing capacity-building for IPC to implement the OVC project, to build awareness, and to mobilise key actors.

## **2. KEY ACTIVITIES**

The last quarter of 2000 was a very active period for IPC and particularly with respect to the OVC project, which was marked by the preparation and implementation of activities in the field consisting of the following:

- Development of new OVC training modules,
- Designing and testing tools (“boite à images”) for awareness-raising activities,
- Technical support to partner organisations in the field,
- IPC review and replanning for 2000-1,
- Establishment of an OVC project Steering Committee,
- Start-up of an accelerated OVC project with two organisations (AAS and Kumale),
- Training and support to 4 local resource people.

### **2.1. Identifying Partner Organisations and Implementing Communities**

In September 2000, five organisations were selected to be part of the OVC community mobilisation pilot project. In order to facilitate the process of community mobilisation, the pilot project was deliberately limited to communities in rural areas. Amongst the organisations, four were chosen because they had previously been involved in the IPC project, and were seen to be well-established organisations in the community.

The organisations mobilised under this project currently reach approximately 23,000 people half (11,500) of whom are children under 15 years of age. It is estimated that between 5% and 15% of the children are orphans or vulnerable children, thus the pilot programme will reach between 575 and 1725 orphans and vulnerable children.

Table1: Organisations selected for OVC pilot project

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Intervention area</b>	<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Activities previously held</b>
Association "Kadini N'Tama" de Toma	Toma, Nayala province	Sector 5 district of Toma (± 1000 inhabitants)	Women's group, semi-urban	Participatory prevention activities
Association Insertion Aide aux Orphelins de Rambo	Rambo, Yatenga province	Rambo village(± 3500 inhabitants)	Organisation supporting children	Care and support activities for orphans
Association "Song Taaba" de Tougouri	Tougouri, Namentenga province	Sector 1, district of Tougouri (± 1000 inhabitants)	Organisation supporting the sick	Community prevention and care and support activities
Association ADDE de Dassui	Dassui, Kouritenga province	Dassui village (± 3500 inhabitants)	Village development organisation	General development activities and participatory prevention
Association Kumalé de Komtoega	Komtoega, Boulgou province	Department of Komtoega (± 14000 inhabitants)	Rural development organisation	General development activities and participatory prevention

The project adopted a community mobilisation strategy implemented by CBOs in order to encourage community-led responses to OVC issues. An additional challenge in this strategy is to bring CBOs from being service providers to take on more of a catalyst role of mobilising communities to take ownership and fully support the project.

## **2.2. Capacity-Building of Organisations**

### **◆ Training in participatory prevention and integration of OVC issues**

The integration of certain OVC aspects into ongoing IPC supported projects (prevention and care & support projects) was introduced in the last session of the participatory prevention training cycle (5 sessions in total). Approximately 30 administrators from 15 community organisations participated in the workshop that was held in Bobo Dioulasso in early September.

This workshop allowed the organisations to address OVC issues during behaviour change (CCC de proximité) sessions. Several workshop participants mentioned the fact that this topic raises a lot of interest in the communities.

*The chief of the village of Dassui during a follow-up visit admitted that: “Before the OVC awareness-raising sessions, we were conscious that there were children experiencing some difficulties but they seemed to be ordinary problems; however, when we discussed the issues more in-depth as an organisation, we realised that these children were actually enduring many difficulties. We also realised that all their problems were linked and that it wasn’t just one problem needing to be solved.”*

### **◆ Development of a youth-focused strategy (“jeunes-jeunes”) with youth organisations in Ouagadougou**

Another opportunity for streamlining OVC work into community work was the start of the “jeunes-jeunes” project, facilitated by IPC, with five youth organisations in Ouagadougou. With IPC’s support, these organisations started a strategic planning and thinking process, which resulted in the establishment of a “jeunes-jeunes” project in the Bogodogo community (one of the five districts of Ouagadougou, which has approximately 250,000 inhabitants). The project aims at engaging the most vulnerable young people who live in urban settings mainly through prevention activities organised by youth for youth but also comprises of a community mobilisation component and OVC support activities.

### **◆ Training on information-sharing/ awareness-raising and the community mobilisation process**

A first workshop was held at the beginning of October and enabled administrators from community organisations to be trained (4 people per organisation) on the following:

- OVC issues, the community mobilisation process and the role of organisations as facilitators of the process,
- Workplan development assistance to each organisation, held between October and December 2000, which enabled partner organisations to plan key OVC awareness-raising activities and community mobilisation activities between October and December 2000. (see annex for training modules)

This workshop provided partner organisations with the necessary background for undertaking significant communication and awareness-raising work with community leaders and community members around the issue of OVCs. These activities resulted in the community making an official commitment to support a community-based OVC project. Information-sharing and awareness-raising activities around OVC issues were illustrated using role-plays and a tool developed by IPC (“boîte-à-images”) to present “the Story of the Tinga family”.

In addition to the use of “boîte-à-images” during one-off events, organisations have asked to use “boîte-à-images” and role-plays as broader awareness-raising techniques for OVC issues. Several organisations (Kumale, AIAO, ADDE, Kadini N’tama) are already using these techniques systematically for awareness-raising activities in their communities. It is through these methods of portraying OVC messages that an important proportion of the population has been reached (see Table 2).



*(Facilitating a group discussion, Kumale de Komtoega Association, Boulgou province, September 2000)*

Table 2: N° of people reached by the Organisations

Organisation	Address	Intervention area	Type of awareness raising activities	N° of people reached
Association "Kadini N'Tama" de Toma	Toma, Nayala province	Sector 5 district of Toma (± 1000 inhabitants)	One-off , using "boite-à-images"	<b>10 to 20%</b> <b>± 150 people</b>
Association Insertion Aide aux Orphelins de Rambo	Rambo, Yatenga province	Rambo village(± 3500 inhabitants)	General "boite-à-images"	<b>± 50%</b> <b>± 1225 people</b>
Association "Song Taaba" de Tougouri	Tougouri, Namentenga province	Sector 1, district of Tougouri (± 1000 inhabitants)	Meetings Role plays and "boite-à-images"	<b>± 5%</b> <b>± 50 people</b>
Association ADDE de Dassui	Dassui, Kouritenga province	Dassui village (± 3500 inhabitants)	Ongoing Role plays and "boite-à-images"	<b>± 50%</b> <b>± 1750 people</b>
Association Kumalé de Komtoega	Komtoega, Boulgou province	Department of Komtoega (± 14000 inhabitants)	Ongoing "boite-à-images"	<b>± 30%</b> <b>± 4000 people</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>± 23,000</b>		<b>± 8175 (± 35%)</b>

During this phase, members of IPC conducted follow-up and technical support visits in the field to support the organisations. The presence of IPC was first and foremost a source of motivation for the organisations and encouragement in the communities. These visits also allowed IPC to familiarise itself with the organisations and the communities in which they are active in the process of establishing OVC projects. Furthermore, these visits enabled IPC to appreciate the reality and complexity of the relationships, which can exist between the organisations and the community.

At this stage of programme implementation, collaboration between organisations has been encouraged by IPC but is not yet directly facilitated by IPC. However, two organisations (Kumalé and ADDE) are collaborating closely. In this particular case, geographical proximity (~25km, Bissa region) and cultural similarities have contributed to this collaboration.

#### ◆ **Data collection and situational needs analysis training**

The second training workshop was aimed at equipping the organisations with situational needs analyses methods and techniques. The preparation of this second workshop was labour intensive for IPC staff who, on the one hand had to learn the content of the training and on the other hand had to produce the modules for needs analysis training. In order to achieve this, IPC solicited the assistance of local resource people.

The different methodologies used for data collection and OVC needs analyses were the following:

- Counting the numbers of orphans and vulnerable children,
- The creation of participatory tools (“cartes participatives”) and the use of certain PRA materials adapted for community self-assessments,
- In-depth discussions with orphans and vulnerable children and resource people.

In order to facilitate a more significant involvement of orphans and other vulnerable children in the projects, a module on communicating with children was compiled. The training workshop was held in Kaya at the beginning of December with the heads of partner organisations. The workshop also comprised of a practical component (field exercise) in the village of Gaoua (near Kaya). The results of the OVC needs analysis in this area were communicated to the community and to Plan International, which also does work in that area. (see annex for training module)

During this phase, local resources people were trained, in collaboration with Mwangaza<sup>1</sup>, to provide support to partner organisations in the field during the implementation of key activities of the community self-assessments to take place between January and March 2001.

#### ◆ **Capacity-building for community-based care and support organisations**

With regards to the community care and support project supported by IPC, partner organisations are increasingly confronted with the issue of orphans whose parents were beneficiaries of services provided by these organisations. The organisations are increasingly aware of the significant psychosocial support needs of children whose parents are ill. Before community responses are still up and running, care and support organisations are already attempting to fulfil the immediate needs of a limited number of children.

However, these partner organisations also realise that they can only help a limited number of orphans if they remain exclusively service delivery organisations. An organisation like AAS in Ouagadougou that provides support to approximately 250 sick persons is also faced with the reality of more than 450 children needing help who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

With IPC’s support, AAS has started a strategic planning process with the aim of establishing a project for children thus combining a service delivery approach with a community mobilisation component. This approach will certainly be replicated by other organisations confronted with similar issues.

---

<sup>1</sup> A local group supporting social mobilisation activities.

## **2.3. Strengthening IPC Capacities (and the OVC Programme)**

### **◆ Revue and Replanning**

Ken Morrison and Beth Mbaka provided support to IPC in its annual revue and replanning exercise. Several issues linked to the training cycles were identified in this process especially the need to streamline the different training cycles to ensure integration of the prevention, community care & support and the OVC community mobilisation components of the IPC programme.

### **◆ Technical support visits**

Dr. Tim Lee's visit in November 2000 presented another opportunity for IPC to discuss their ongoing strategy. Tim Lee is the Deputy Director of the Alliance and author of the report entitled "OVC in Burkina Faso: First Steps in Community Mobilisation". Tim Lee's recommendations assisted IPC in focusing more accurately the direction that the OVC project should take. Firstly, this visit pointed out the necessity to undertake an accelerated phase with two partner organisations in order to allow IPC to increase its knowledge base and to be more comfortable in assisting the organisations. Secondly, it was planned that IPC obtain technical support in OVC programming from Stefan Germann, of the Salvation Army's programme for OVC in Zimbabwe.

### **◆ Preparatory meeting for the establishment of a project Steering Committee**

A meeting was organised on 22 December 2000 as a first step towards establishing a Steering Committee. Members from approximately 30 official structures (government, multilaterals, NGOs, CBOs, etc.) were invited. The members agreed that the committee should be a forum for the following issues:

- Exchange of experiences
- Co-ordination of activities
- Information-sharing
- Skills-building
- Collaboration
- General support to the IPC OVC project

This committee will also serve as a forum for advocacy in support of OVC issues, amongst which, the establishment of a national strategy on OVC.

## **3. THE RESULTS**

The activities undertaken as part of the OVC project between September and December 2000 produced the following results:

### **◆ Capacity-building for IPC**

IPC currently has at its disposal training materials not only for information-sharing/awareness-raising on OVC but also a documented process and other tools for

conducting community self-assessments. Consequently, IPC is now equipped with the skills necessary to assist CBOs in their role as facilitators for community development.

In addition to strengthening IPC staff in programme implementation, and with support from Mwangaza, IPC started the development of a pool of local resource people trained in community mobilisation and OVC issues. University students studying social sciences were selected, some of whom already had a background in community-based work, and introduced to IPC's work. At the moment, three resource people, including two women, are able to directly support IPC partner organisations in using data collection methods and in conducting needs assessments.

#### ◆ Capacity-building for CBOs

The capacity of five organisations to use the community mobilisation approach has been strengthened. These organisations have successfully used the approach and managed to get several communities to commit resources to address all aspects of the challenges faced by OVCs in their community.

One organisation is already carrying out awareness-raising activities in order to strengthen the ability of families and the community in general to develop significant, relevant and especially sustainable responses to OVC issues.



*(Role-play, Kumale de Komtoega Association, Boulgou Province, September 2000)*

One care and support organisation, with substantial experience in service delivery for PLHA and people affected by AIDS has been sensitised to the need of implicating families and communities in caring for children affected by HIV/AIDS. The organisation is receiving support from IPC in developing a community mobilisation approach to support OVCs living in urban areas and to promote the spirit of volunteerism.

Fifteen organisations initially mobilised to conduct participatory prevention activities have been sensitised to OVC issues. As part of their outreach campaigns (CCC de proximité), these organisations have initiated discussions around the living conditions of OVCs in the community with the aim of identifying existing gaps and solutions.

#### ◆ Sensitising CBO members and community members

Many CBO members, community leaders and thousands of other people have been reached through discussion groups, behaviour change sessions (CCC de proximité), as well as information-sharing and awareness-raising sessions held as part of the community mobilisation approach.



*(Team-building exercise, Kumale de Komtoega Association, Boulgou Province, September 2000)*

#### ◆ OVC advocacy activities start-up

IPC is increasingly cited as the key partner in the fight against HIV/AIDS, especially with regards to its OVC work. As stated above, an initial meeting of the Project Steering Committee was set up and is composed of several structures with the aim of promoting the well being of children. Contact has also been made with other co-operating structures to accelerate a national response to OVC issues in Burkina Faso.

#### ◆ Strengthening the collaboration with technical partners

Collaboration with Mwangaza provided a pool of resource people for the project sensitised to children's issues, thus constituting an alternative source of technical support for IPC partner organisations.

### **4. LESSONS LEARNED**

The following are lessons learned by IPC over the past few months of project implementation:

- It is crucial that IPC, its partner organisations and the communities themselves spend ample time in developing appropriate strategies that are designed to ensure genuine community ownership of the projects and that facilitate a joint learning process.
- A great deal of time was dedicated to holding thematic discussions, that were unproductive at times, to arrive at a common understanding of the OVC concept. This was important in order to avoid discrimination arising from the use of terms such as "AIDS orphans", "children in difficulty", or "children without protection" which often create misunderstandings of the issues. Because of stigma and discrimination, orphans whose parents die of AIDS are not often "visible" in the community, which means that



there is no direct evidence of the epidemic in every day life, even though after being questioned, everyone recognised the existence of the problem.

- Establishing community-based projects that rely on resources existing in the community is a notion often resisted by politicians, community leaders and some NGO and CBO leaders who would much prefer to acquire external funds to implement short-term projects. This is indicative of the context within which most development activities take place.
- The method used for counting the number of orphans and vulnerable children in the communities turned out to be a positive and significant part of the needs assessments. On the one hand, the skills acquired for this method are easily transferable and can be used to collect other types of data, and, on the other hand, the community was able to get involved through this process.
- The involvement of children as resource people for the projects and communicating with children to learn more about their situation and worries was an innovative approach for the communities but once the cultural barriers had been crossed, they unanimously recognised the importance and wealth of this involvement.
- The choice of organisations is a determining factor in the success of community mobilisation. Indeed, it is important that CBOs have a strong community-base and thus a strong capacity to mobilise the community. IPC should be more proactive in identifying and mobilising other appropriate organisations, which are not yet part of the project.
- Despite the fact that on the whole IPC partner organisations were competent in carrying out community mobilisation activities, it is clear that there are weaknesses with regards to follow-up and evaluating community activities in a dynamic way. This makes the projects difficult to monitor and the process is not adequately documented. IPC will put special emphasis on strengthening organisations to improve their capacity for documentation.
- In the interest of obtaining significant project results, it is more strategic to prioritise population size, the number of people potentially reached by the project and the number of OVCs rather than the number of partner organisations involved.

## **5. PERSPECTIVES FOR 2001**

In the initial phase, the project will focus on community OVC needs assessments and replication of activities at the community level. This will be the basis upon which participatory community prevention activities for supporting OVCs will be designed. Special emphasis will be placed on obtaining commitment and ownership of the community for the success of these projects. The objective is to identify a type of organisational structure that will implement the project and ensure its sustainability within the community.

The first half of 2001 will be marked by the implementation of several accelerated OVC community mobilisation pilot projects, one in an urban context and the other in a rural setting. The objective being to accelerate the learning process for IPC and to learn from these experiences in order to apply them and generalise the strategies in other projects and programmes supported by IPC. These pilot projects are the following:

- A support project for OVC using a community mobilisation strategy with AAS in Ouagadougou,

- A support project for income-generating activities to benefit OVCs and their families with Kumale de Komtoega,
- The establishment of the “jeune-jeune” project that includes an OVC community mobilisation strategy with five youth organisations in Bogodogo (Ouagadougou).

In the interest of continuous learning, IPC staff will conduct many visits to existing IPC sponsored projects and other projects for children and OVCs throughout the country.

It is within this framework that the Alliance and IPC have drawn upon the knowledge and experience of Stefan Germann of Masiye Camp Project in Zimbabwe to provide support to IPC and its OVC project. A continuous and close collaboration will be maintained with him during 2001 in the form of technical support visits. Stefan will also provide general support, feedback and information exchange via email.

In May/June this year two IPC staff who support the OVC project and a youth NGO representative will go to Zimbabwe to learn from community OVC projects there (amongst which projects supported by FACT and FOCUS). Stefan Germann will facilitate the visit whose objective is to learn and share information and experiences of OVC projects in Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe.

2001 will also be a year marked by the activities of the Steering Committee that will be fully functional as a forum for learning, co-ordination and collaboration. This committee will also be very involved in accelerating the launching of a national response.

The culminating moment of the year will without doubt be the 12<sup>th</sup> African conference on sexually transmitted illnesses and HIV/AIDS (ICASA) which will be held in Ouagadougou at the beginning of December 2001. The conference will serve as a platform for presenting results and sharing experiences from the IPC OVC project.

## **ANNEXES**

**Annex 1:** Training modules A to H – 1<sup>st</sup> OVC Community mobilisation workshop

**Annex 2:** Training modules A to H – 2<sup>nd</sup> OVC Community assessment workshop

**Annex 3:** Training module – PP2 (Participatory Prevention training workshop)