



Report on the training course on life-skill development for children living with HIV in Da Nang city, Vietnam

Name of reporter: Vietnam Health Improvement project (VNHIP)

Project title: Life-skill development for children living with HIV

Location: Da Nang city, Vietnam

Number of beneficiaries: 10 children living with HIV

Period: From June 2017 to December 2017

1. Introduction

Because of the nature of the HIV/AIDS disease, many children who are suffering from the disease have lost one or both parents and are therefore living either with extended relatives or in a foster care situation. Further, there is a significant amount of fear and misunderstanding about the disease in Vietnam. Therefore, children who are affected by the disease being ostracized by their communities. These structural hardships in the lives of these children can mean that they miss out on crucial parental and community support in their formative years, leading to, in some cases, deficiencies in the areas of relationship-building, self-confidence, and positive lifestyle.

To help the children further develop and refine the skills that they need to successfully navigate the challenges of life, Hulza made its financial support for VNHIP to organize two training courses on life-skill development for 25 children living with HIV and those affected by HIV at Da Nang city in the Central Vietnam.

The first training course has been implemented from June 2017 to December 2017. The training course made a good contribution to life-skill development for 10 children living with HIV in Da Nang city. Those children could apply the improved skills to their daily lives.

2. Aims of the course:

The goal of the course is to equip the children with important life-skills, so that they feel better prepared to find their places in the world.

The course is aiming at the following:

- Promote positive thinking that lays the foundations for a happy, healthy, and productive life
- Help children to build confidence and pride within themselves
- Teach specific skills that children can apply to their daily lives that will develop better relationships with others and with themselves

3. The accomplished activities

This was an interactive course that taught through active learning and group discussions. Every month, the children focused on one skill or value that is important to living a successful and happy life. The training course consists of 12 training units which are visualized as a “train of 12 treasures” (See the flyer below). The children have actively participated in exploring each treasure to improve their life-skills.

The trainers tried to connect the theme of the previous day with the following training theme to make sure that the skills are build on the previous themes. Each training unit, at the end of the day, the children took 10 minutes to draw a picture or write in their diaries about the day. Those exercises helped the children process and absorb the lessons they have learned.

By the end of the course, the children did an evaluation to see how much they improved their life-skills, and made wishes of the following training in 2018.



4. Results of the training course

This course build the confidence and life skills for the children, so that they could apply those in their daily lives. We promoted positive thinking that laid the foundations for a happy, healthy, and productive life.

Table: The scores before and after training

(The scores are from 1 to 10; 1=lowest and 10=highest)

No. of unit	Themes of the trained life-skills	Pre-scores (before training)	Post-scores (after training)	Improvement scores
1	Self-protection from sexual abuse and other dangers	5.5	8	2.5
2	Seeking support	5.3	7.7	2.4
3	Empathy	5	7.2	2.2
4	Self-care of health and body	4.9	6.9	2
5	Helping others	4.6	7.1	2.5
6	Building relationship through positive interactions with others	4	6.5	2.5
7	Respect and responsibility "Treating people how you want to be treated"	4	6.2	2.2
8	Self-awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses	3.9	6.3	2.4
9	Decision making	3.9	6.4	2.5
10	Coping with stress	3.7	6.7	3
11	Building trust	3.6	5.9	2.3

Before the training, the children felt that their skills of “building trust”, “coping with stress”, “making decision”, “respect and responsibility” and “building relationship” were not good enough (the scores are from 3.6/10 to 4/10). Other skills of “helping others”, “self-care”, “self-protection” and “seeking support” were just fair from 4.6/10 score to 5.5/10 score. In general, those children really need this training for improving their life-skills.

The scores after the training is quite promising, those are from 5.9/10 to 8/10. The differences between the pre-scores and post-scores are also high from 2 to 3 out of 10. This shows that the children made significant improvement of their life-skills.

“Coping with stress”, “making decision”, “Building relationship through positive interactions with others”, “helping others” and “self-protection from sexual abuse and other dangers” are the most improved life-skills that the children achieved from this course.

Through interviewing the caretakers and observation of the trainers, it is found that the children are more confident and active in communication with trainers and other children. In the first training

session, all children did not want to participate in the game. For now, all children are so active and supportive. At home, the children take more responsible and care about other family members. The children have positive thinking and positive behaviors about the life and their future. The children knew how to deal with daily issues, seek for help and make decision by themselves.

The following is the key things that the children could learnt from the course:

- Building Trust: Trust requires positive communication, and it is reciprocal in nature
- Coping with stress: Children applied a 5-minute yoga to keep them calm and balanced. They learnt to recognize sources of stress in their lives, understand effects this stress, and act in ways that help control the stress. The 5-minute yoga is effective tool.
- Self-awareness: This unit helped children develop awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses, because self-awareness is crucial for personal development.
- Interpersonal Relationship: The children learnt to make positive interactions with other people to build good relationship.
- Empathy: The children developed the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. That helped children to understand and accept other people.
- Helping Others: The children learnt about values of supporting others, and being active in giving helps.
- Decision Making: The children developed skills to work on confronting a decision, formulating choices, addressing an issue by considering all possible options and effects those may have on people, selecting choices and following it through.
- Respect and Responsibility: This unit is to train the children the golden rule of treating others how you want to be treated, which is an act of respect that takes responsibility to follow through on.
- Seeking help: The children got confidence and knew whom they should ask for help.
- Self-protection from sexual abuse and other dangers
- Self-care of health and body

5. Challenges and solutions

In the beginning, the parents and caretakers didn't want to take their children to the course. They didn't believe in the trainers. After some training sessions, the children and families became interested in this training, so that more families wanted to send their children to the course. Fortunately, Hulza gave us enough budget to organize the second training for more children.

Some families didn't want to take their children to HIV center for this training. They were afraid that other people would know about their hidden HIV disease. For the second training course, VNHIP cooperated with two clubs of families affected by HIV in Da Nang city to organize the training. This second training is now taken place in VNHIP office.

6. Conclusion

The training course is very successful and meaningful for the children and their families. We reach the targets of the courses.

Beside the training, VNHIP also provide other supports for those children, such as bicycles, scholarship and livelihood development, etc. to make sure that all children have chances to go to the schools.

7. Next suggested actions

The children and caretakers made suggestion on continued training on the following issues:

- Leadership
- Receiving and giving a feedback in a constructive and positive way
- Communication and presentation skills
- Coping with fears and abuses
- Sexuality and reproductive health

8. Financial report

Total grant received: 88,792,848 VND (= 3,600 Euro)

Total expenditure: 37,988,000 VND (See the financial report as attached)

Total underspending: 50,804,848 VND. This underspending budget is used for the second training.

The total grant is for 20 children. However, there are 10 children participating in the first course, therefore the underspending budget is much. In addition, we tried to implement the training in the low-cost way by using the available resources of the HIC center in Da Nang.