



Inter Aide France, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

DYNAMIC FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT
implemented by CDSE and Inter Aide France from 2001 to 2007
in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
SELF-ASSESSMENT and ANALYSIS REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two NGOs, Community Development Service Ethiopia (CDSE, an Ethiopian NGO) and Inter Aide France (IAF) in Ethiopia joined hands to implement the Dynamic Family Support Project (DFSP) in Addis Ababa from 2001 to 2007.

In 2001, CDSE was a very young NGO, eager to develop new projects, while IAF had been working in Ethiopia since 1987 in rural areas.

The general objective of Inter Aide is to increase the capacities of individuals or communities to develop appropriate and practical responses to the social, economical and psychological obstacles to the fulfillment of their basic needs. This objective has led IAF to develop various actions, including Family development programs (FDP) focusing on the most deprived families living in destitute urban areas in Brazil in the 80's, and later in the Philippines, in Madagascar and India.

“The FDP overall objective is to alleviate poverty in poor urban communities by supporting the sustainable improvement of the capacity and autonomy of the poorest families living in the most deprived urban areas, and by promoting / improving the access to health, education, family welfare services for all squatters areas’ inhabitants.”¹

Willing to develop this kind of approach in Addis Ababa, IAF proposed CDSE to test jointly this approach in Addis Ababa.

A project team (one coordinator, 5 to 7 animators and a coaching class teacher) supported by CDSE headquarters was in charge of implementing this project through 5 annual phases. IAF provided both financial and technical support all along the project. The French and Finnish Embassies also supplied subsidies in phases 1 and 5.

The initial assumption of this project stands on the marginality and de-socialization process touching urban poor families. Devaluation of self-esteem and lost of trust in their capacities lead some families to exclusion to a point where they can't any more maintain or develop functional interaction with their environment. In addition, low and irregular income hinders the family's capacity to participate in traditional social organizations (Idirs, Ekub).

To fight this process, the project goal was “to develop dynamism among the poor families and enhance their capacities to respond to their current problems related to income, health, schooling, etc.

¹ The Family Development approach” by Alexandra David, Inter Aide, July 2006, on line on Pratiques website at http://www.interaide.org/pratiques/pages/urbain/social/FDP_approach_july06.pdf

*The main objective of DFSP is therefore to enhance the capacities of the neediest families in the target area, so that they can solve their problems by themselves through effective utilization of the available resources and services in their surroundings”.*²

Two core activities led to support all targeted families

- **Home visits** were conducted in the morning at the beneficiaries’ home, every week at the beginning and then at lower frequency according to the needs of the family. They enabled the animator to: listen to the beneficiaries, help them to express and prioritize their problems, provide basics information and advice on health, education, income generating activities (IGA) and administrative issues, and organize mediation in case of conflicts among family members. The average length of this follow-up was 6 to 7 months (but 44% of the families were home-visited for less than 6 months whereas 47% of the families needed a 7 months to 12 months follow up).
- **Referrals:** During home visits, the animator addressed specific needs of the family by providing advice and information on the existing public & private services in the surroundings.

Moreover, a “**social reception**” (information & counselling centre) completed these two main activities: every afternoon, phased out or current beneficiaries as well as surrounding inhabitants could visit the project office to get information on the project activities, advice and information on health, education, administration and IGA issues and referral organizations.

CDSE chose to develop also three specific activities with selected beneficiaries to tackle the low and irregular income issue for the families, and children poor performance at school:

- **Small credits**³ were provided to allow selected families to start or improve income generating activities. 225 micro-credits were distributed through an external fund (in phases 1 and 2 thanks to a partnership with the micro-finance institution ACSI), and then with a specific fund of “small grants” managed by CDSE (from phases 3 to 5).
- **Self help groups** (SHG): CDSE organized and financed 9 SHGs (out of 12 planned) to enable beneficiaries to develop group activities (such as spices, cotton, handicraft activities) and generate income for the members.
- **Coaching classes** (CC) were conducted to help selected children to improve their academic level at school.

To date, the main results are:

- 1445 families⁴ were home visited, their problems discussed and prioritized, and a number of them resolved through advice or referrals; trustful relationship was developed, the animators giving time, paying attention and giving confidence to these very destitute families.
- 449 families were enabled to start or improve income generating activities thanks to small credits/small grants (225 beneficiaries) or self-help-groups (224 beneficiaries)
- 300 selected children benefited from coaching class, 69 % of them improving their academic level in 2 topics minimum, and 80 % of them improving their behavior with the CC teacher and/or their parents

² DFSP concept paper, October 2007

³ 100 (approx 8 € in 2007) to 500 ETB (≈40 €) per beneficiary with ACSI, 60 to 150 ETB (≈ 5 € to 12 €) as “small grants” with CDSE

⁴ = 7681 beneficiaries from phases 1 to 5

- Experience and competencies were developed by the project team, leading to more professional and personalized follow-up of the families
- Some strong links were built with referral organizations and kebeles⁵, allowing to answer part of the difficulties faced by the families

Yet, if the project team has shown a strong commitment all along the project, its work has suffered from a lack of training and capacity building, a lack of involvement in project's methodology and in activities assessment, and from a declining support of CDSE headquarters.

Moreover, the ultimate impact of the project on the families' situation is difficult to measure as the reporting process was insufficient and the evaluation process inadequate: CDSE only focused on a few activities indicators while no impact indicators were set up in spite of repeated discussions and propositions from Inter Aide.

The referral process was not a priority of the project team and the number of partner organizations declined instead of expanding phase after phase. CDSE chose to provide non-sustainable credit and saving services⁶ instead of using these services to provide the beneficiaries' with small business management skills before referring them to microfinance institutions. Moreover, instead of working with existing social groups, CDSE organized beneficiaries into SHGs that provided neither profit nor income for their members.

From IAF side, various competencies were assigned throughout the project with a particular focus in the last phase to record and analyse the project history, activities and methodology. The present documents are the result of this specific analysis and evaluation mission. However, IAF support lacked a precise and long-term capacity building plan setting clear objectives, activities and stages for both stakeholders. No initial contract formalized key issues: expectations & task allocation of IAF and CDSE, objectives, activities and planning for both stakeholders, methodology and means to assess the collaboration, and logical framework of the intervention. IAF/CDSE collaboration and project implementation thus remained dependent on the individuals involved in the project without clear milestones and lines of action.

At CDSE level, the NGO suffered from regular staff turn-over at both headquarters and field levels. The headquarters showed very variable leadership skills and commitment in the project, and minimal contribution in defining Inter Aide's support. The general trend of CDSE management shown even declining involvement in the project monitoring especially during the last phase, and no real impulse to raise funds ensuring the project continuation after the 5th (and last) phase⁷.

All these reasons explain the end of the collaboration between IAF and CDSE and led to the closing down of the project in December 2007. This questions the conditions of implementation rather than the relevance of Family support innovative approach to alleviate poverty in Ethiopian urban areas.

Cédriane Moreau for Inter Aide - May 2008

⁵ The smallest administrative units

⁶ as planned to disappear at the end of the project

⁷ As soon as the end of 2003 (mid of the 2nd phase), IAF informed CDSE that a progressive withdrawal was to take place, even if this was not formalised nor planned at that time. In the third phase, IAF requested CDSE to take charge of part of the budget of the next phases (by raising funds from other donors), showing thus its involvement and commitment to the project