

March 2023

LEARNING BRIEF

JOFA TECHNICAL
APPROACHES SERIES



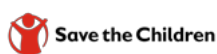
JOINING FORCES
For All Children



Co-funded by
the European Union

TeamUp as a common technical approach for the JOFA project

Joining Forces for Africa (JOFA)



BACKGROUND

The Joining Forces Alliance is a collaboration between the six biggest child focused agencies: Child Fund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children’s Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International.

About JOFA

The project “Joining Forces for Africa (JOFA)-protecting children during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond” is implemented in five countries (Senegal, Mali, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) across three years (August 2020-2023), supported by a €10 million grant from the EU.

The overall objective of the JOFA project is Children and adolescents experience reduced levels of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. It has four specific objectives

Technical Approaches and Methodologies in the JOFA Project

The JOFA project aims to use evidence informed child protection approaches and methodologies, building on the collective experience of the consortium members. After an extensive review and consultation process, three common technical approaches have been chosen for scale-up amongst several countries and Joining Forces partners.

1. **Parenting without Violence**

Save the Children

2. **Child Friendly Accountability**

Childfund

3. **TeamUp**

Save the Children, War Child Holland and UNICEF Netherlands

The JOFA project team has conducted a learning series on technical approaches, starting in April 2022 and culminating in an external sharing workshop in March 2023.

JOFA Objectives

- Strengthen national and local protection and response systems.
- Improve protection in resilient families, communities, and institutions in the context of COVID-19 and during recovery phase.
- Increase capacity and agency of children to prevent and respond to violence against them during COVID-19 crisis and recovery phase.
- Increase learning and sharing of knowledge and best practice related to child protection approaches.

Key facts

- **Duration:** 06.08.2020-05.08.2023
- **Budget** 10,000,000 € EU Funding
771,458 € consortium members
- **Countries:** Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Uganda.
- **Direct beneficiaries:**
438,000 child beneficiaries
3,000 service providers
23,000 parents and caregivers



The learning series aimed to learn from the process of adopting common technical approaches for scale up, and to exchange, share and analyse implementation challenges, solutions, good practices.

It is hoped that the learning series will also generate opportunities to further scale up these approaches with Joining Forces agencies and others, and explore opportunities for further research and learning on the approaches.

The learning series has consisted of the following stages:

Learning series stages

- 1** Country level Internal Learning- Peer reviews - qualitative research/ monitoring process.
- 2** Exchanges between two or more JOFA countries, to explore the common learning questions.
- 3** Three learning review workshops with JOFA country teams - specific to each technical approach.
- 4** Webinar- to present the findings of our learning series to an external audience of global child protection stakeholders.

This learning brief captures the essential outcomes of this learning series process.

ABOUT TEAMUP

Team up is a psychosocial support intervention of structured movement-based activities consisting of games based on sports, play, movement and body awareness for children aged between 6 and 18 years.

The approach was jointly created by Save the Children Netherlands, War Child Holland, UNICEF Netherlands and was intended for children affected by conflict.

The aim of TeamUp is to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of children.

The structured approach helps children create friendship, bonding, and teamwork, and enables inclusive participation and creativity among children and their facilitators through exploring local play activities that are culturally and age-appropriate for children in the targeted schools and Child Friendly Spaces.

SELECTION OF TEAMUP AS A COMMON TECHNICAL APPROACH FOR THE JOFA PROJECT

TeamUp was presented by global Joining Forces partners at the start of the project as a possible common technical approach, alongside other approaches related to psychosocial support.

In subsequent country level technical approaches workshops, country teams selected the technical approaches they would scale and adopt amongst all partners within one country.

The country teams in Uganda and Ethiopia selected TeamUp as their preferred approach, using a set of objective criteria with which to assess available approaches. In Kenya, after the results of the child protection needs assessment at the end of year one revealed further need for psycho-social support interventions, the team agreed to incorporate TeamUp into their project implementation in year two and three.

PROGRAM INCEPTION PLANNING

The JOFA team in Uganda planned to implement TeamUp from the initial design of their intervention; planning and budgeting for each step, from training of facilitators to

ongoing implementation, monitoring and mentorship support, to evaluation. In Ethiopia, the approach was incorporated mid-way through year one, and therefore adjustments

to budgets and workplans were required to ensure all relevant aspects were covered. The JOFA Project’s adaptive management approach allowed such changes to occur in response to the context.

In Kenya, the TeamUp approach was not incorporated into the planning until mid-way through year two, which limited the scope of the intervention to small numbers of children at the end of year three.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

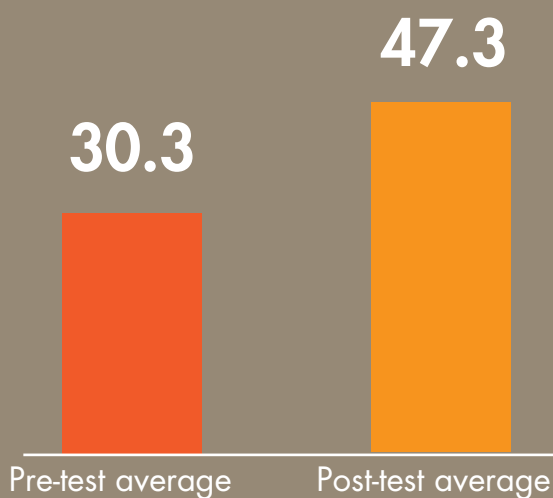
The JOFA project logframe has incorporated M&E tools related to the psycho-social well being of children, and the technical approaches learning series included additional implementation research elements which have provided extra input to the MERL process. As the measurement of children’s psycho-social well being was specifically targeted for children participating in a defined set of project activities, the assessments were not incorporated into the baseline-mid-line-end-line evaluation process of the project, but were instead administered by project teams at pre-test and post-test (before the start of, and then after the completion of a defined set of project activities).

This gives the advantage of being able to specifically measure the impact of the project intervention, but reduces the objectivity of the measurement, as it is conducted by project staff rather than external evaluators. Project staff were guided and supported to apply the measurement tools objectively and consistently across the different target countries and contexts.

JOFA Country teams have engaged over 21,000 children in TeamUp sessions so far. Results to date are very encouraging in Ethiopia, with results from Kenya and Uganda expected by project end:

Results

Average psycho-social wellbeing score of TeamUp Ethiopia participants Pre-test and Post-test



ADAPTATION OF GUIDELINES AND MATERIALS

Whilst the team in Uganda benefited from having existing TeamUp guidelines and materials that had been used widely in the country context, this was not the case in Ethiopia and Kenya.

The team in Ethiopia reported some challenges related to the ability of facilitators to use the guidelines, handbook etc. which were all in English rather than in local languages- a translation into local languages is recommended.

INITIAL TRAINING OF STAFF

The Uganda country team implemented well planned, structured initial training for project staff from Save the Children, Childfund and Terre des Hommes/ Somero using the available trainers from Save the Children Uganda.

In Ethiopia, a team of trainers from TeamUp Global travelled to Ethiopia to train staff from the implementing agencies- Plan and SoS, as well as from Save the Children Ethiopia.

This then enabled the trained staff to cascade training for facilitators in each supervision area.

Similarly, in Kenya a team of trainers from TeamUp Global travelled to Kenya to train staff from the implementing agencies- World Vision, Save the Children and Terre des Hommes, as

well as staff from Plan International Kenya and Childfund Kenya.

Developing plans to further capacitate trainers in the current countries of implementation (particularly in East Africa) are essential to allow for cost-effective ongoing training and mentoring of new trainers, as well as monitoring and support to existing trainers so they can continue to train and mentor facilitators.

The training and mentoring should be in line with the learning trajectories for facilitators, trainers and master trainers in support of certification.

These plans for strengthening in-country TeamUp capacity will decrease the need to fly in master trainers from TeamUp global in support of further scale up.



IMPLEMENTATION

Issues related to implementation were assessed and analysed during the peer review process, exchanges between partners and country teams, and at the learning review workshop.

Qualitative approaches were employed during the peer review, consisting of Focus Group

Discussions with children, and with TeamUp facilitators, and an Observation Adherence Checklist was used.

Participants were purposively sampled because they had participated in the implementation of TeamUp in target areas.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING AND PREPARATION

TeamUp as an intervention – TeamUp is not a tool/method, but a complete intervention that needs a supporting structure (e.g., referral pathway), therefore this is fundamental to be considered when a TeamUp training is planned.

It is also important to involve children and community mentors, and existing government structures in co-creating and contextualizing TeamUp activities, and for buy-in.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF TEAMUP

TeamUp facilitators in Uganda emphasized the many positive impacts they have observed as a result of the intervention. TeamUp:

- Helps them to identify children with protection issues and take appropriate action.
- Has improved class attendance as children don't want to miss TeamUp during physical education time.
- Has instilled the spirit of creative thinking and openness in children through the feedback-sharing session.
- Has improved relationships between children and teachers-children can now share freely with the teachers.
- Has enabled children to make friends and improve their relationships with their peers due to the teamwork in the sessions.

Teachers are also using TeamUp games to demonstrate concepts taught in class, for example, the concept of number sequence using the "over and under game".

In Ethiopia, Facilitators and participants also explained the many positive impacts of TeamUp:

- Increased school attendance and reduced school dropout, as per the district education office and the school's statistics data- especially for girls

- Reduce Child labor: Increased school attendance also minimized the engagement of children in risky work such as foraging in the jungle areas to find fruits.
- Children become more self-resilient, able to deal with and adapt to child protection issues like child labor- crucial for girls who are heavily involved in household duties.
- TeamUp also helps children to learn different issues like hygiene and sanitation through play
- Children's time management skills have improved because of the game's educational element
- Children have now made the transition from engaging in risky games at school to non-risky games, thanks to the newly included, easily adoptable games from the game book.

Socio-emotional impact:

- Children who before were not good at maintaining relationships and were afraid have now begun to socialize with other children. Children who are being bullied by their peers find relief, happiness, joy, and a reduction in stress.
- Children learn how to deal with their emotions. The skills they gain from the activities can be of use in their daily life.
- Children who previously liked to fight or acted aggressively changed their behavior

and started acting more amiable, loving, and attentive. Their attention and participation in class has also improved.

- TeamUp brings a positive impact for unaccompanied, separated, and other

vulnerable refugee children to relieve from stress and enhance their resilience.

- TeamUp helped the interaction between children and adults, to create safe spaces and foster communication

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

The JOFA implementing teams also encountered some minor challenges in implementation:

Negative attitudes of school heads/ other teachers

Some schools initially deemed the approach as a waste of time due to its play nature and therefore did not register full buy-in by school administration and individual teachers.

In some schools in Uganda there was no time allocated for physical education on the school time table- especially for older pupils in higher classes, limiting their participation in TeamUp.

To address these challenges, the engagement of school leadership and district education offices from the planning stage and through implementation is essential.

High population of learners during TeamUp sessions

The TeamUp activities attract large numbers of children as it is fun and seen as enjoyable for children. This presented challenges for facilitators as they had limited playing materials, and fewer trained TeamUp facilitators compared to the population of the school.

- To cope with this high demand, the following good practices are recommended:

Identify active children during TeamUp sessions to become TeamUp child champions. The child champions co-facilitate/lead Team Up sessions- especially in overpopulated schools.

- Children participate in choosing games to engage in the different sessions.

- Children with disability are given leadership roles to instruct the games.

- The teachers trained on TeamUp by the project staff can cascade the training to other class teachers. This helps reduce the workload on the few initially trained teachers, enabling them to roll out TeamUp in all classes at the schools.

Where the cascade training approach is used, it is important to plan for ongoing support and mentoring of new facilitators.

Physical component of TeamUp

It is important to create a safe and adequate area, in terms of water, food, and separated spaces for boys and girls where it is possible to change clothes after playing, before and after the TeamUp sessions.

In some schools in Ethiopia, the playgrounds are unsuitable/unfriendly to children. As the approach is more of a physical movement game, the participants need drinking water and a shower, which are not available in most contexts.

Some schools in Uganda had limited space and small playing grounds for children hence limiting participation for large number of children as well as activities.

Engagement of the wider community, school administration and other key stakeholders are essential to work to address these challenges of facilities, space and equipment.

INTEGRATE TEAMUP AT ALL LEVELS

It's important to create awareness and integrate TeamUp, from a local to an institutional level, in order to act an effective change. Continuous mentoring and support to TeamUp implementors is required, which means dedicating staff to the TeamUp project, for trainers to be able to provide continuous mentoring to facilitators and for Master trainers to provide mentoring to trainers.

Dynamics and contexts such as hostile and poverty stricken environment, urban informal settlements, and refugee setups may prompt adaptations to TeamUp implementation (include budget for food, play area and work more closely with the other levels of MHPSS pyramid).

Build support from multiple stakeholders to create awareness and integrate TeamUp

Schools and education authorities

- Train both school leadership and teachers on the approach so as to ensure understanding, ownership and support by the school administrations.
- Where feasible, train as many teachers in a school as possible in order to meet the demand from students.
- At local levels, ensure the District Education office is oriented on the approach and participate in orienting the school leadership for better buy in.
- A strong working relationship between the education office and the school's faculty is essential- appointing a proactive focal point person can enable facilitators to use the equipment. Material and facilities the school

has to offer and to integrating the sessions into the school timetable.

Community structures

- Community-based structures should be involved, including community leaders, women representatives, faith based organizations, youth groups, teachers etc.
- Establish links with the community-based child protection case management processes- as TeamUp helps teachers to identify vulnerable children during the sessions, they must then be connected into the referral and case management process.

Government service providers and coordination bodies

- In addition, train para-social workers to support the teachers –for co-facilitation, following up children's issues at home and to handle referral of cases identified.
- All related government partners, including the children's office, education office, health office, etc., from the zone as well as the district can be engaged to supportively monitor and supervise the activity together with project staff.

For all of the abovementioned key stakeholders it is important to provide them with orientation, training and with TeamUp resource materials and documentation to help foster ownership and buy-in. A demonstration of TeamUp can be very useful, during which a trainer facilitates some activities in a TeamUp way, and afterwards explains what we have been doing, why, and how this brings on change for children.



FACILITATOR TRAINING, MENTORING AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS

From the very beginning (even before the training), it's useful to highlight to programs coordinators, supervisors, leaders, and then facilitators and trainers, the certification process and the TeamUp minimum standards.

Consider the requirements for online certification, and the feasibility of this online training for your specific context, and make provisions for both face to face and online training, ongoing mentoring and supervision, together with staff from TeamUp global.

Training and support for facilitators

It is essential to provide additional training in Psycho Social Support (PSS) and Psychological First Aid (PFA) to the facilitators and orientation on appropriate Case Management and referral procedures & provide case record, follow up and referral books.

Involve para-social workers and/ or other key service providers in the child protection sector to support referral and case management

TeamUp resource materials and documentation should be provided to all facilitators- where possible in their own language- and project staff should ensure facilitators understand the purpose of each game, in order to be able to structure the sessions according to needs and the theory of change

Good practice

The JOFA team in Ethiopia developed an information sharing and coordination platform using a telegram team where activities are monitored, different of formats for reporting are shared, analysis and reflections on results, and sharing and exchange of good practices.

ETHNIC COEXISTENCE

Contribution of TeamUp to diminish ethnic tension. The movement-based approach helps to face the language barriers and the methodology itself creates safe spaces where children can express and manage their emotions, play together and make new friends.

- In the refugee settlement in Obongi, northern Uganda, TeamUp has helped foster harmonious relationships through playing together, which trickles down into their communities.

- In the refugee camps in Ethiopia, there are different South Sudanese ethnic groups and language differences, however all of them participate in TeamUp sessions together, which has increased interactions and understanding.

- Children have begun to learn languages and cultures of other groups through interactions. In the east of Ethiopia, ethnic Oromo and Somali children have learned to interact with each other in better way, avoiding community conflicts and separation and hatred.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

In order to ensure the inclusion of children with disability in TeamUp implementation, they are given specific roles and often empowered to be child champions. For example, they can be given instructional roles, whistle blowing, adjudication.

In Uganda, Childfund have identified specific schools for disabled children in their target areas and introduced the TeamUp approach, adapting the games and using those most appropriate for the students in the school.



ADAPTATION

The TeamUp component of adaptation helps facilitators to adapt the games to the local context

In Uganda, games have been translated to local language, and local version e.g the lion and sheep game became the cat and mouse game with a known Luganda song-Kapa egoba emese. Play materials have been developed using local raw materials such as banana fibres, recycled polythene bags and TeamUp participants (children) make their own child-friendly play materials such as footballs from clothes to supplemented the few play materials provided by the project.

At the beginning of implementation in Ethiopia, facilitators were challenged with a lack of play materials to facilitate the games.

To address this challenge instead of anticipating foreign play items, the facilitators adapted and now use play tools that are locally accessible or resources that are locally sourced.

SCALE UP AND NEXT STEPS

Given the successful experience to date, Joining Forces teams in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia are currently exploring ways to integrate TeamUp into ongoing and new projects.

As a result, traditional games that are popular in one village have spread to other villages and vice versa thanks to experience sharing and collaboration amongst the facilitators.

TeamUp games are complemented by cultural events and activities like songs, local traditional dances, martial arts, sports, history readings by students etc.

As in Uganda, children in Ethiopia take part in developing and adapting the games themselves and have been able to co-create/adapt games from their own culture. Children now possess the capacity to take charge of game facilitation and support in facilitation, working closely with the teachers.

Facilitators still face the challenge that the training materials, game book and tools have not been translated into the local language-some facilitators have difficulty understanding the English version of the resources. A local translation of the materials is therefore recommended.

Any agency wishing to learn more about TeamUp and explore implementation can contact the TeamUp global: teamup@warchild.nl



Save the Children



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