



CATHOLIC ACTION FOR STREET CHILDREN

P.O. BOX MD 709 MADINA-ACCRA
GHANA

EVALUATION



NEWSLETTER 63

DECEMBER 2013

Dear Reader,

During the months of October and November, CAS evaluated its performances with the assistance of a Misereor representatives Mrs. Heidi Theimann from Germany and Dr. Joe Tabazuing from Gimpa-Ghana. The Heads and one member of the departments as well as members of the management team took part. Several members of the Board of Advisors came to join us during the discussions. The organizers visited and interviewed members of other NGOs as well as the Director and a member of the child protection unit of the Department of Social Welfare.

Of course, these evaluators were not with us during the preparation period of two months, but we at CAS were busy with this exercise during this time. We were also busy with other things because we drafted a proposal for “100 % for children”, a donor from Denmark. “100 %” sent two volunteers to CAS to assist in drafting this proposal. The two volunteers, Camilla and Nina have since returned home.

In our previous newsletter, we explained our plans and we had these in mind when we evaluated the various activities.

CHILDREN VISITING CAS.

Although, we have not intensified our fieldwork activities, we experience an increase in children visiting the Refuge. We almost reached the previous level of 50 to 60 children a day. What are the reasons for this response of the children? It is difficult to explain. At times, large groups of girls appear in the Refuge. At other times, more boys than girls are present. Peer pressure or peer initiative could be a factor. Children do not come alone but with friends. From the group who visit us presently, many children are scrap collectors at Konkomba market. Their ages are between 12 years and 18 years.

In fact it is at times very difficult to know the age of the child because of lack of nutritious food. Many are stunted and appear younger than they are.

They are all survivors and are hardened. Do not make the mistake and consider them as young children. Because of their survival instinct, they can be smart and easily mislead you.

THE PROBLEM.

Many children we meet are too old to attend primary school and too young to follow apprenticeship training. You have to be 15 years or above to be allowed to follow apprenticeship training. In fact, this is not the main problem. Children who are born in the street do not behave well.

Many do not know how to take care of themselves. They have learnt how it should be done by their understanding but do not know the correct way. Our skill is to reform them. Most of them have to be reformed either during the time they are at the Refuge or at Hopeland. Many of them have not followed education as well and do not see education as a necessity. In addition, several children have learning difficulties.

In fact, the decision **to take better care of children we meet these days** is the main resolution of the evaluation.

In addition, to improve our awareness, Lobbying and fundraising programs, is another resolution.

The sponsorship programs could be organized differently. More intensive preparation followed by longer period of introduction of skills. Although, we do not know the background of the children as yet, members of staff will prepare the children to a certain level.

This is of course risky because money will be used on children we do not know very well.

Those who are capable to go to school will be assisted provided CAS can find donors who are willing to finance this schooling program.

There are many ideas of improving our performances. However, we have to choose what to do first.



What should CAS do with these kinds of children?

Do we (CAS) show the correct skills and trades? Are the methods we use effective? Are we capable of handling such a large group of children?

Some years ago we started teaching skills at the Refuge and Hopeland because of this dilemma. Introducing children in skills and trades is different from teaching them.

For sure in addition, we have to improve the literacy training. This should be done more intensively. To do this, we need the assistance of experts.

The variety of skills and trades shown at CAS should be increased. At Hopeland this will be possible, because space is available but then we have to employ more staff. But should it become an official Training Centre?

INSTITUTE:

There is a big danger to run an official school or training centre. As soon as it becomes official, I can assure you that not a single street child will be able to enter that place again. We know the regulations of running a school or a training centre.

Yes, the child does not have an appropriate dress.

Yes, s(he) does not behave according to standard.

Yes, s(he) is not punctual.

Yes, s(he) talks before the teacher does.

Yes, s(he) has no past records.

But we at CAS want to train him/her anyway so that they get back their dignity. If they want, they can live as if we have not known them without an identity or label.

This reasoning is difficult to understand, but this is the fundamentals of CAS.

In order to work more effectively, we will need the help of others. This could be teachers who can give these literacy lessons. We are also hopeful that we can work with officers of the Department of Social Welfare in the streets. We also want to highlight more on the problem and find common solutions. "Out of school children" do not appear only in the centre of the city, but are everywhere. As explained before, in one part of the City many Migrant children operate. In another part, many Urban Poor live.

In other parts , the majority are working children. Therefore, we have to assist these children at various locations.

CAS will not be able to solve these problems alone, but we can be instrumental to involve other NGOs and organizations.

DISTRICT WORK.

Let us start working together with the officers of the DSW. The plans are:

1. CAS staff intends to visit all social welfare districts and do some town mapping together with the officers of the DSW.
2. The second training session for officers of the DSW will be organized. The aim is to have 32 officers, two from each district under DSW trained.
3. The CAS awareness group will organize presentations in the districts and schools.
4. Daily street corner education will be organized in 5 districts during the first year. NGOs and other organizations in the various districts will be invited to collaborate.
5. Street children will be registered and receive an identity.
6. Excursions for these children will be organized. They will visit the Houses of Refuge of the various NGOs and Hopeland and visit other places of interest. Special programs will be organized during these excursions so that these children will be better informed.
7. The programs will be evaluated.

CAS also wants to improve our services at Hopeland. The present preparation program is as follows:

- Children visit the House of Refuge regularly.
- They take part in all the activities organized.

- The children are assessed and receive advice from the welfare committee.
- Usually, after 8 to 12 months social surveys are conducted and some are invited to go the Hopeland for a period of six months. Others start their training either at the Refuge or in workshops.

The plans are in place to change it as follows:

- Children visit the House of Refuge regularly.
- They take part in all the activities.
- After a few months, the children are invited to stay at Hopeland.
- They stay for two months and return to the Refuge and “new” children go to Hopeland.
- The literacy program at the Refuge and at Hopeland will be improved.
- Social Surveys will be completed before any child starts his/her training.

If possible, CAS will introduce another trade/skill at Hopeland. This can only be done when the existing skills are functioning well. For approximately one and a half years, Hopeland staff are running the training of sewing and hairdressing as an official training program. Basically, it means that children and staff should be much more disciplined to make the program work. Hours of training, as well as the training program should be adhered to strictly.

Skill training and trade training requires a lot of materials and tools. Fortunately, we have received several tools from donors. Some tools we do not need at this moment or at times we have too many of one kind. We are trying to exchange them for tools we need. Some workshop managers are ready for these exchanges.

COMMUNICATION

Communication remains a great skill. CAS has a website which we try to keep up to date. CAS also writes quarterly newsletters. Approximately, 500 persons and organizations receive these newsletters.

During the evaluation we were confronted with NGOs who claimed not to know CAS, although members of these NGOs met us during coalition meetings. Many Parishioners of the Catholic Church do not know us, although, the parishes received newsletters during the past twenty years.

We have to examine what is wrong. Is it because they are not interested or are too many needs presented to the society?



We have to close with another sad news. Another long serving member of staff Theodora Ntumy, passed away after a short illness. She was the mother of three small children.

TRIBUTE TO THEODORA NTUMY

Theo, we write this tribute with our eyes full of tears and heavy hearts saying farewell to Part Company with you after almost 19 years. It is said that you are dead but I know that you have just migrated into an invisible apartment of our maker.

Looking back, our relationship was certainly sweet but not without the normal ups and downs.

We are missing you greatly but we know God needs you more and thankful to him for having sent you to us all this time. We are always proud of you for your love for the street children who visit us daily at the refuge and for those you meet daily in the streets.

Theodora Ntumy joined CAS in 1994 as a fieldworker.

The unit she worked with for many years until re-assigned to CAS Hopeland training centre at Adjei Kojo –Ashiaman.

Theo played a very strong role in helping build good street programs for the field department. She was with the children every day in the street. To the children, her departure is still a dream.

She was a good organizer and a strong Team player but occasionally could be very difficult. She was an achiever. She rose through the system to become a Professional social worker after taking a certificate in social work.



She was one person who built surprises when least expected. Though, very soft spoken but could be very 'uncompromising' occasionally.

It was sad losing her when she was needed most by all. But who can overturn God's wishes decisions and instructions. From our belief, we saw her situation as a preventable one but it is God who disposes.

She is gone and we hope the good Lord keep her safe. We will celebrate your life and dry each other's tears knowing that you have gone to a better place.

May her soul have perpetual Peace and Rest. Fare thee well Theodora. All will miss you.

Good bye

We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Bro. Jos van Dinther

(Director CAS)