



DECEMBER 2010

NEWSLETTERS 52

FUTURE PROGRAMS FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Dear Reader,

Before we end the year 2010, we want to inform you about the latest developments of CAS. During the past year, we have attended many meetings and reflected a lot on the future work for the 'out of school' children. It is clear that the work cannot continue as it has been carried out in the past. We have reported on it in our newsletters, but today we will try to explain this a bit more. We will compare the behavior of the traditional street child with the out of school child we meet nowadays.

1990 -2000 involved in	2000-2010 involved in
shoeshine	Patronize video centers, café's and brothels.
Aid to disabled	Gang forming, cyber crime (sakawa).
Hawker	Pregnancies are an accepted sub-culture. Make their own decisions
Kaya Bola –cleaning of rubbish etc.	Abreast with new technologies.
Truck pusher	Okada- Drives motorbike taxis

We have witnessed that the border line between a street child and an urban poor child has diminished. Many are born in the streets and live in wooden kiosks. We have also come in contact with working children and children living on the beaches.

At CAS, we are experiencing that not many children opt for a three year sponsorship package when offered the chance. Most of them are interested in the short sponsorship program. They want to learn skills they like at this moment such playing football, volleyball or boxing.

Girls want to take care of themselves; hairdressing as well as pedicure and manicure are favorite skills. Although, many hairdressing salons with additional services are available in the city, they think they can survive learning these skills.

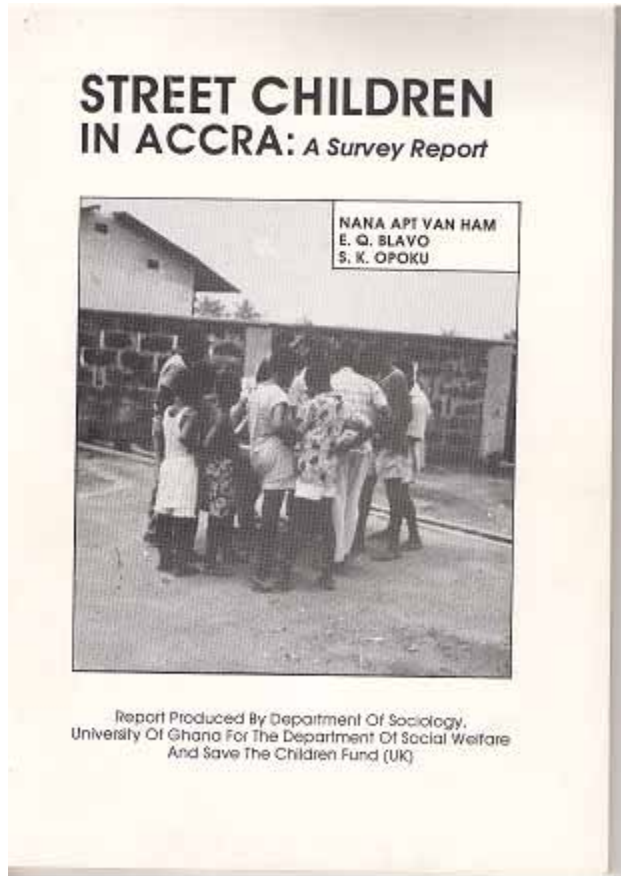
Are we listening to children? Yes, the children force us to adapt and think of new approaches.

COMPUTER LIBRARY.

At CAS, we have many documents and reports from researches and workshops on street children issues or related topics. We gathered them during the past 18 years. The main topics are:

1. Street children- exodus, Ghanaian street child, other surveys
2. Child rights and protection policies, children act
3. Child labor and trafficking
4. Child friendly cities
5. Domestic violence
6. Infant feeding and nutrition
7. Juvenile justice act
8. Listening to children in Tamale, Sekondi Takoradi, Kumasi, Obuasi and Upper East
9. Sexual behaviors, HIV/AIDS
10. Youth development, strategy papers, poverty reduction

We have scanned them and placed them in a library on the computers as PDF files. We have done so because often students use them for their studies. Some students are too lazy to copy certain information and instead tear-out pages of the reports. Now we keep the originals and ask them to read the PDF files. In the library we have more than 70 reports.



What have many reports in common? They are time bound. Many reports were only suitable or should be read within a certain time frame. One of the reasons has been described above. The children have changed, their occupation has changed and their mentality has changed. We noticed this in our own reports; the Exodus report from 1999 and the Ghanaian street child from 2003. These reports are out of date. It only gives you a global view. Even some of the legislation has to be up dated from time to time.

We also notice that these changes in the discussions with donors and donor organizations. The topic street children was very popular in the past, now we talk about vulnerable children or out of school children. In fact, these are the same children but now viewed in a different setting. Reports on HIV/AIDS were acceptable topics but now other sicknesses have to be added such as malaria.

It is also interesting to note the different approaches of city authorities. CAS was highly involved in the discussions about Konkomba market- Sodom and Gomora. We attended monthly meetings with the AMA planners. CAS assisted in organizing the Child Friendly initiative. When reading these reports it becomes clear that these initiatives were suitable during that time. The city has grown and changed. The population of the city has almost doubled. In the beginning, our work concentrated in the centre of the city. Later we moved to the suburbs and the present discussions include the whole of Greater Accra region as a working area.

Still it is good to read these reports but we must admit that they do not describe everything about the present out of school children.

FIELDWORK- DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE MEETING.

As explained in our previous newsletter, we were planning to have a meeting with the district officers of the department of social welfare on the possible cooperation between social welfare and the NGOs. This meeting with the title: "New approaches to the out of school children issues" took place at the end of last month. Thirty five persons were invited and with the exception of one, it was a full house. After an opening welcome and opening prayer all members were introduced. I was asked to give an overview of the present situation of the out of school children in Accra which included several challenging statements.

Mr. Alois Mohl head of the child protection unit in the head quarters of the DSW underlined some of these statements and asked participants to use them during the discussions. The members were divided into 4 discussion groups which brainstormed on some prepared questions which were all directed towards the ten districts. After a lunch break, the findings were presented on flipcharts. At the end of the workshop members expressed the wish to continue the discussions. A report of this meeting has been written and presented. The technical committee will meet early next year to decide as how to continue either to expand the forum or to move it to each district.



PLANS FOR 2011.

On the 8th of December we met for the annual planning meeting. It was a long but successful meeting. We had to re-define the aim and objectives for each department.

Fieldwork is a very important work for CAS. We have to be abreast with the developments in the streets and the changing attitudes of the children. We should not be armchair social workers but be abreast with daily developments on the street. Therefore, the tasks of the fieldworkers are to carry-out fieldwork and research, to do mass education and explore new areas in the city and be abreast with current social issues. To travel to towns and villages where children come from and verify their stories.



House of Refuge. Their task is to coordinate all the activities. They register all children and see to it that they take part.

They play a central role in the preparation of the children. The security, hygiene as well as health and care of babies are organized by them.

Demonstration department organizes the short sponsorship training program. They have introduced many trades and skills. The responds of the children is key to the success of the training. If children are not interested it is better to stop with a particular trade and pay more

attention to another. The introduction of trades is not an end in itself. The child should also fit into the working place and know how to behave. CAS knows that much more has to be done on reshaping the children and making them ready for the society. Social workers of CAS will debate on this.

Education is one of the keys for a successful placement in the future. The department has to keep that in mind. We are preparing children for their future. It is not enough only to instil knowledge. We know that it is essential that a child learns a bit of the English language because without it s(he) cannot find a job. The competition is so great that the best are chosen. Therefore, we have to educate the children during every activity and even have time to educate the child individually.

The department has to concentrate on literacy/ sports/ entertainment which include drama and music.

Hopeland department. The main task of members of Hopeland department is to re-shape the children while they are in their care. The education at Hopeland, the rearing of animals and the sports program are organised with this in mind. The education program should be different from the education in the streets and the Refuge. Therefore, the themes used at the Refuge cannot always be used at Hopeland. Because at Hopeland children are in residence, the costs are very high and we have to control the expenses of the running of Hopeland regularly.

Sponsorship. For the past year the three year sponsorship program runs hand in hand with the short sponsorship program. The department aims at giving the opportunity to 120 children a year.

This is not always achieved because it takes a lot of time to “prepare” a child. We also noticed that children are hurriedly placed on attachments. Although, they are ready with the trade they are not ready emotionally. For these reasons, workshop agreements are not signed immediately. The workshop at Adjei Kojo is now very useful. Two instructors are employed at that workshop and many more children benefit from the training offered.

RICERCA PROGRAMS.

The census and headcount which were conducted in 2009 had to be corrected. In two areas no distinction were made between urban poor children and street children. The technical committee decided to conduct the exercise in these areas. Social workers from the DSW and the NGOs gathered for one day to plan this additional headcount. The areas were divided into sub-areas so that the headcount could be completed in three days. Again a weekend was chosen because most of counting had to be done in the evening.

The exercise went well and the results can now be included in the report. We hope the final report can be published in March 2011.

In May this year, some members of staff and others went to Italy on invitation of Ricerca for a workshop on drama. Drama is used to create the awareness of street children. The plans are to stage a drama by street children on street children issues in the three northern regions. 10 children were trained at CAS by social workers of S.AID, CAS and DSW. They will travel soon to the regions and will report on this trip in our next newsletter.

What other plans have still to be carried-out? Ricerca will assist the NGOs to upgrade the daycare centers with furniture.

Some children on sponsorship will be supported with logistics and Ricerca will also organize some additional training program for some members of staff.



drama training 2010



We are happy that they contemplating as to how to support the out of school children program in the future.

CREATING AWARENESS.

During the last general meeting held December 2009, we mooted the idea of intensifying awareness of street children phenomenon. Even though, numerous approaches had been employed over the years, ironically, it did not yield the positive results. Subsequently, a committee was constituted to come out with a new tool which will be appealing to people who would like to know about issues confronting street children. The committee had to work tirelessly for over three months before eventually settled on the best approach i.e. power point presentation and reviewed leaflets, profile and handout on CAS.

Series of presentation strategies were employed first to CAS board of advisors, members of staff and some university students who visited. All these measures were employed to toughen the members for the ensuing task ahead. The first presentation was done in May 2010.

The group during the year was able to make presentation to students from Legon / Regent Universities who were at CAS. The board of CAS, Art centre, Street Academy and some residents of the neighborhood. The rest were some medical students who visited the centre, central university and Methodist University.

At the time of writing this report, contact have been made to make a presentation at Legon, Maritime Academy and Valley View University and hope to do that early next year 2011.

Even though, the group made tremendous success in their work, there were some few hiccups that confronted them. For instance, having difficulties in getting in touch with the right people. There were instances where people thought the group was there to solicit for funds. In the light of these constraints, the group intended to review their introductory letters to clearly spell out their mission.

WEBSITE

Three members of the committee had had training in website designing, they have changed CAS website from www.cas-ghana.com to www.casghana.com. They have also been given the responsibility to update the website to meet the growing demands. In the light of these developments, the awareness group intended to make all information available on the website so that our targeted audience can access our website.

PLANS

The awareness group is considering making new videos about street children and CAS. The making of the video is not so difficult the main work is writing a good script. They have started with this work. They have also contacted a film maker who could assist to making these videos.

As an organization, it will be too expensive to contract services of somebody abroad. Therefore the Director of CAS Bro. Jos is negotiating with the FIC superiors to organize a joint venture.

The awareness group as part of their plans for 2011, are exploring the possibilities of creating awareness in collaboration with the (DSW) department of social welfare at the ten districts of the greater Accra region.

Further, the group also want to present a proposal to Ricerca / DSW on coming out with a video to be shown in other parts of the country on the street children phenomenon, but no definite stance had been taken on this subject.



Finally we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bro. Jos van Dinther

(Director CAS)