



CATHOLIC ACTION FOR STREET CHILDREN



STREET-CORNER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Newsletter 71

October 2016

Dear Reader,

This October we want to report on the street corner education program. This program is not “new” to CAS workers but could not be carried out for some years because of lack of financial constraints. CAS developed teaching aids for this purpose mainly on health and life skill issues.

SELECTED WORKING AREAS.

Recognizing that the environment and children have changed during the years, we carried out feasibility studies in 2015, in all the 16 social welfare working districts in the Greater Accra Region. This study has not been easy because it involved a lot of travelling and often the size of the district was under estimated. Several districts had to be visited two or three times before an acceptable mapping report could be written.

It became more clear that a selection had to be made to decide where to work. At first we made a selection of five districts which was later reduced to three because of financial difficulties, staff capacity and effectiveness. However, the remaining 13 districts will be involved at a certain point in time.

The criteria for selection was based on the type of children present. We chose the first district where many migrant children were present. Children who had migrated from the rural area and are now living and working in that particular district. These children often sleep on verandas or in buildings which are not completed. In the second district, mainly children who have been born on the street live (Second generation). They often live in a kind of shelter with their mothers. These shelters are wooden sheds or kiosks. It is a typical slum area. In the third district, the majority of the children are urban poor children who live with their parents in houses but are in the streets because their parents are not able to pay their school fees.



Three different settings which require three different approaches. Dealing with street children differs. As soon as a Mother of the child is involved the child takes advice of her first. Children who are on their own decide themselves whether to take part in the training or not. At times, they form a group and the peer pressure changes the whole situation. We witness this often when children were enrolled in the sponsorship scheme. When he/herself wants to continue with the training but the group or the group leader decides differently. Migrant children form a fluid population. They go and come. Children take part in the training and suddenly they disappear surfacing again later. Urban poor children are the most stable group because they remain in the area.

From the onset CAS wanted to work with other partners who are already in the field and carry out fieldwork as well or are willing to improve.

At Kaneshie e.g. CAS made contact with NGOs like Special attention program (SAP), Chance for children (CFC), Methodist street children project, Ghana private Road and Transport Union (GPRTU) and the management of the Kaneshie Market Complex.

The zonal office of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) was also contacted.

STAFF.

CAS has only one permanent follow-up worker. Of course we could employ more fieldworkers but it is difficult to convince donors that field work is a worthwhile exercise. Donors do not pay salaries but they could help finance the activities in the field or the transport costs to travel to the districts. In the past, CAS had fewer donors who were supporting this activity. And they wanted to see results.

Questions were asked; ‘How many children did you train? Or how many have left the streets as a result of your intervention? We could not answer these questions outright because it was not our intention to give each child a sponsorship package. The official headcount of 2008 showed a total of 61.500 “out of school children” who are on the streets in the 16 districts. We now estimate the number to be 90,000. It is an estimate because to organize an official headcount involves many social workers, a lot of money and other logistics.



Our aim in the street is to advise and assist each child on their own merits and only improve the circumstances for them while staying in the street. Even when the government and donors have the means to offer 90,000 children to leave the street, many will not be able because their behavior and sense of freedom are such that they do not belong in a school and are not able to concentrate on learning a trade. We could only try to “rescue” the newcomers.

CAS wants to be realistic and give advice to those we meet.

Staff from other departments were asked of their interest to work in the streets at certain agreed times.

We were able to form two teams at the House of Refuge and one team at Hopeland. This meant, the staff will continue carrying out their normal duties but their timetable will change when needed.

OTHER PARTNERS.

The teams visited the areas in turns. The aim was to select places where street-corner education could be organized and to know which NGOs are active. Also the Office of the DSW was visited to ask their cooperation and involvement. The acting Director of the Department of Social Welfare had already agreed but he explained to us that the structure of the Social Welfare has changed. Each district office has more autonomy than before.

At a later stage, the two teams visited the area together and the meeting points were selected. In one district, two or three of these points could be selected. Street children do not stay at one place for a long time. They move from place to place. Only on the day of the exercise you will know whether enough children are ready to take part.

Official introduction letters were presented to the offices involved as well as to the heads of NGOs and other organizations. In the City of Accra, there are many authorities, such as AMA , transport and market authorities to mention a few. It is time consuming exercise but it is necessary before permissions are obtained from all authorities concerned. Finally, work agreements are signed with the partners involved.

At Adjei Kojo, near Hopeland center, many new houses have been built and the children who do not go to school are increasing. CAS decided to do a feasibility study there as well. Ashaiman and Tema peripherals were included. Two meeting points in addition to Hopeland center were established. After the local authorities gave their permission, several trial street corner education sessions were organized.

At Adjei Kojo, 10 to 20 children take part in every session. Their ages ranges between 10 and 18 years. The additional result is that several girls have been enrolled in the sewing and hairdressing workshop at Hopeland. CAS is inviting children from Accra to stay at Hopeland to prepare themselves either for Functional literacy program or sponsorship. Presently, 25 children are accommodated at Hopeland.

In future, the staff has to be strengthened to carry out the street corner program.

NETWORK MEETINGS.

Some network meetings were organized with the partners and agreed on the following:

1. Agree as how the street corner education program should be organized.
2. To share experiences and knowledge.
3. To have some training in capacity building.

Each NGO has its own method of working and teaching aids. Some teaching aids were chosen and some have to be renewed. Dates had to be agreed upon.



TEACHING MATERIALS.

The life skill syllabus includes skills to develop self-awareness.

Internal skills such as: special Me, identity & inferiority, focus on the future and money management.

External skills, skills in communication; listening, you and I. Skills to recognize and avoid behaviors which hurts. Knowing the Rights and Responsibilities.

For each topic, pamphlets have been made which the children can recognize and can understand.

The health education syllabus is divided into nine modules. Each one can be used independently. The workers do not always meet the same children; therefore, the children can follow the lesson even when they have not attended the other one. These modules are:

1. Personal hygiene, 2. HIV/AIDS, 3. Human Body, 4. Nutrition, 5. Substance abuse, 6. Self-medication, 7. Basic wound care, 8. Sexually transmitted diseases, 9. Some common diseases.

Games. Many different games are described in the syllabus of Right to play. The workers can choose a game which expresses the same or similar topic chosen for the day. For instance, the game “the choice is yours” or protect the ball (your mate) could be used.

In general, the person who teaches street corner education should be very innovative and be able to work in different situation and circumstances. S (he) should prepare the lessons very well together with the other partners.



CO-FOUNDER OF CAS, FR. PATRICK SHANAHAN DIED.

Fr. Patrick Shanahan who worked with us and helped us to establish CAS and Street Girls Aid died on the 8th of August 2016 in the UK. Father Patrick suffered from throat cancer, but while recovering from an operation he had a heart attack. Patrick worked with us officially from 1994 to 1996. In England he setup fundraising NGO-Street Child Africa and later Streetinvest. As Director he visited us several times. May he rest in peace.

You are invited to read a tribute to Fr. Patrick on our website.

[www. Casghana.wix.com/casghana](http://www.Casghana.wix.com/casghana). We thank you all donors, individuals and organizations for the support given to the children. Thank You.


Bro. Jos van Dinther
(Director CAS)

HOPELAND WORKSHOP 2016

