



CATHOLIC ACTION FOR STREET CHILDREN

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Newsletter 83

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Support group (CASAS) 1994

Dear Reader,

Of late, CAS members of staff have been discussing issues about street children which also came to the fore in 1992 during the start of the CAS project. (See History of RESPONSE at www.casghana.org- for students. Under the previous Newsletters).

In 1991/2 a committee was formed by persons of various background who were interested to do something for the street children. These persons came from various embassies, donor organizations and other civil societies.

The basic questions were asked. Who are street children, where do they come from, why can they not go to school?

Almost thirty years later we are asking the same question but with knowledge and experience working with the children. Although we offer free education to any child who wants to help him/her self, many are not interested to learn.

This means we agree that all street children should have the opportunity to go be educated, but many show that they are not interested.

Related to this fact, another question can be asked, why do street girls choose to become pregnant even during the time they follow a training program?

This is completely different from the statement: Many streets girls get pregnant because they are raped. It is true, several are raped but there are also many who take the decision themselves to become pregnant even during the time of training.

We still do not know the answers to these questions but we made some attempts.

1. A number of children are satisfied with the life in the streets. They buy the food they want and are ready to carry out jobs to earn enough money to do so. They want to be free and decide for themselves what to do every day.
2. Several experience learning difficulties. We notice this during the functional literacy training. They experienced problems at their first attempt in school and have decided not to return. The educational system is not attractive to them.
3. Peer pressure is also a factor. Children do not decide themselves, but their friends give them advice.



We also examined CAS' setup, procedures and regulations.

Do we have the correct approach when carrying out the street corner education? Should more workers be involved?

Of late we see a decline in street children visit to the House of Refuge. One of the reasons is, there are more NGOs' springing up in the city.

But that cannot be the main reason because we estimate that there are approximately 100,000 children in the Greater Accra Region who do go to school but are in the street.

We have members of staff who carry-out street corner educational sessions in the street. They only operate in a few areas. In order to have an up to date understanding of the situation in the city, we have decided that more members of staff will visit the street in small groups and report on what they witness.



Children who visit the House of Refuge at the first time are registered. They are encouraged to take part in all the activities organized for them. They take part in the various skill training activities and social workers talk with them.

Group Counseling sessions are organized but we have to see to it that the topics vary.

In order to assist children travelling to the Refuge we will reintroduce the one cedi a day system. This means that, each child will receive a cedi for each day s(he) visits CAS. We also will improve the menu or food they will receive during the day. As mentioned before, in the street they buy the food they like.

At CAS we do not want to create a “soap kitchen” for the street children. I think it is the wrong way of attracting children, but we should give them enough food so that they can take part in all the activities. The food should be a motivation for taking part.

Those members of staff who train children in cooking and catering could plan as how to achieve this.

During the preparation period, children should constantly receive encouragements to learn, not only at the beginning. All staff should be involved.

Not all questions are answered. It is clear that we still have to learn more from the dynamics in the streets. We should take more time to get to know the children well. They are all individuals who should be treated as such. There is no solution for the ‘group’ street children.

The research as to how to prevent “new children” entering the streets should be intensified. This could be done by improving the social survey reports. In the reports we should be able to read why the child landed in the streets. Care should be taken that no general conclusions are made.

We are also discussing how we can use social media to inform parents and children of the dangers of the street. It is real that the streets are a dead end because there is no future. The group of illiterate people who live in the streets is growing to an alarming proportions that we need re-awakening to find immediate answers.

What we, the government and the larger society should do is preventing “new children entering this mini society without any hope.

We will keep you informed.



Needlework and Craft grade one exam.

National Vocation Training Institute exams.

In March 2019 several apprentices took part in the NVTI exams with very good results. All passed. Congratulations!

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|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| • General electrical | grade one | one passed |
| • Bead Designing | grade one | two passed |
| • Needlework & craft | grade one | one passed |
| • Dressmaking | grade one | two passed |
| • Hairdressing | grade one | one passed |
| • Hairdressing | grade two | one passed |
| • Motor vehicle mechanics | grade two | one passed |

This September another five will take part in the exams.

These are all practical tests. We receive cutting lists from the examiners. These lists indicate what materials should be prepared.

During the actual exam, the examiner will question the candidate. This is called an oral test. Therefore, for the grade one proficiency exam the candidate does not have to write and answer any question, but the grade two exams are more advanced and the candidate has to answer written questions.

At times the candidate can do the tests at CAS' house of Refuge, but for some exams for instance Motor vehicle mechanics, the candidates will be asked either to come to a school or other workshop.

SECURITY AT HOPELAND.

Presently, 25 children are accommodated at Hopeland. The compound has been fenced, but the fence wall is not strong enough. Unfortunately, the neighbors use the compound to dump rubbish, steal the fish and some wee smokers find their hideouts near the dam.

The only way to secure the compound is building a stronger fence and fix permanent gates. In 2017 we decided to rebuild the fence in parts. So far the backwall as well as the wall on the left is almost completed. The wall at the right borders have several families and we have asked them to build their own walls to close the compound on that site.

The remaining site is the front wall. Soon we hope to start this front wall. The new gates are already made but not yet fixed.

As soon as the compound is enclosed with a solid fence wall we will be able to secure it well and so keep away the intruders.

As part of the wider fieldwork activities, we invite more children from the neighborhood to visit Hopeland center. Many more activities can be organized at the center once we are sure the place is secured.

Up to date news:

1. Unfortunately, a former member of staff of CAS and director of UPCO (a community based NGO) Gideon Markin died recently after a short illness. May he rest in peace. We will continue our support to UPCO, an organization which takes care of urban poor children.
2. During my leave, I was fortunate to meet some new donors to CAS. We ensure them that we will use their money well.
3. Fr. Joseph Aurthur, who was the Archdiocesan administrator has been transferred and is now the parish priest of St. Dominic' parish at Taifa. We thank Fr. Joseph for the many years he was a member of the Board of CAS.
The new administrator is Fr. John Neumann Tettehfiio.
4. Chance for Children, a sister NGO exists 20 years. Congratulation and we hope to work more closely with your members of staff.



Fr. John Authur




Bro. Jos van Dinther
(Director CAS)

Too young to be in the streets.