

Northern Suburbs Street Children’s Meeting

Thursday 26th April 2016

9:30 - 11:30

Durbanville Council Chambers

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**Present:** Vanessa Brink (BadisaTrio), Elmari Janse van Vuuren (Teahmo), Amber-Rose Canfield (Badisa), Lorraine Waterboer (Badisa Scottsdene), Veronica Geduld (VRCID), Jacque Pietersen (VRCID), Elzanne Basson (Badisa Trio Kraaifontein), Juanita Beukes (Badisa), Colleen Brookes-Gain (WCSCF) and Janice Sparg (WCSCF).

**Apologies:**  Caretha Randall (DCPF), Stacey Doorly-Jones (2nd Chance), Nick van Rooyen (Teahmo), Cassie van Zyl (BBID), Wilma Piek (VRCID), Cynthia Clayton (CoCT Counsellor), Benny Martin (DSD Bellville), Leon Brynard (VCID).

1. **Welcome and introductions**. Janice welcomed everyone; introductions went around the room.

1. **Feedback from other WCSCF meetings**

* A suggestion has been made regarding the frequency of meetings. Now that there are 5 forums in the WCSCF bundle - Northern Suburbs, WCSCF Monthly, Deep South, Hardened, Youth Development, with a number of people wanting to attend more than one of these, it has been suggested the meetings take place every alternate month instead of monthly.
* To make the venue for the WCSCF monthly meeting central to all.

Juanita said for her a meeting for NS every second month sounded fine – She suggested that a representative of a DCPO Regional Office is present at the meetings; if they got stuck with an issue, then they could contact Leana Goosen. The others agreed. *Janice suggested that they continue having smaller meetings amongst themselves.*

1. **Current Issues On The Street**

**Capacity issue:**

**Juanita** felt that it wasn’t transport but **placement** that was an issue because lack of placement options which plays havoc on capacity, especially since SW’s only have 48 hours to get sorted. She said from her experience, children don’t want to go to Homestead because of the lack of structure and the open door policy that exists there. **Vanessa** added that from her knowledge, children mainly go there for food. **Amber-Rose** said that it was found that children smoke more at Homestead than at home. **Lorraine** spoke of a child from Wallacedean; Lindelani couldn’t take him, he was sent to Homestead and subsequently absconded. **Juanita** felt that children shouldn’t be placed into a facility in their own area or close to their area or origin. She felt they should be placed elsewhere –‘otherwise you will find another Homestead’. **Jacque** said that because of lack of placement options, he had housed a child for 3 weeks at his home. **Juanita** felt it wasn’t a resource issue, but that careful strategic planning was lacking.

**Whatsapp Group/ Removing children off the streets**

**Juanita** said they were not really using the Whatsapp Group but that they have a good relationship with Wilma (VRCID) with lots of interventions happening. She said she would however be meeting with Nick to put a strategic plan into action to remove children off the street and BBID identified people who could come on board such as, Aux Workers; also they plan to meet with **Hewlin Compassion** to start an effective Whatsapp group and together work out HOW to remove the children to safety – it is crucial they know what’s happening on the streets over weekends – and she thinks Hewlin knows.

**Jacque** said they would take pics of the children and pass it along on their Whatsapp group so that the relevant people could react quickly. *Janice responded that officially they couldn’t take pics of the children.* **Juanita** stated that in Article 9 it said “if it’s in the best interest of the child” and she felt that taking pics to speed up the process of removal was at times necessary.

**Jacque** said that when they found 5 children at the Parow robots they took them to Wilma (VRCID). **Juanita**suggested that in future they bring the children directly to Bellville Badisa. That the children should be made aware that there are consequences to begging on the streets and that awareness needs to be raised amongst adults begging with their children. She spoke of a chap begging at the robot and when she told him that there are cameras at each robot recording him, he took flight.

**Elmari** said that children are not visible in Brackenfell and that Nick was meeting with the vagrants in that area. **Vanessa** responded that children keep themselves busy during the day looking for/ selling scrap, that’s why they are not as visible. **Veronica** stated that the children in Parow know the SW’s who drive past them and they wave.

**Juanita** responded that many of the children come from Uitsig which is in chaos with the on-going gang violence. These children escape being drawn into the gangs by coming to the streets because they feel unsafe in their area. **Janice** said that this information must be written on the Form 36 so that the Courts are aware of the true situation of the child.

**Transport/ Manpower:**

**Jacque** stated that as soon as Wilma (VRCID) was back from leave, they would be meeting with Badisa Parow and SAPS to get a better relationship going.

**Janice** said that Capt. Niemand seemed to be available to assist – he had been to previous NS forum meetings. **Amber-Rose** responded that she found SAPS unreliable. **Janice** said that unreliable (unlawful) responses or behaviour by SAPS Officers should be reported as they need to be kept accountable. She said that Lesley Ashton (nickash@netpoint.co.za) is the person to contact with regards to reporting SAPS, as she heads up the DCPF (Durbanville Community Policing Forum).

***Feedback on outcome of request for a designated SW Team for street children:***

Janice attended a meeting with Robert Macdonald where the suggestion of a dedicated/ designated team who would work solely with street children be started; for the 3 areas of concern. A team comprising of a SW’s, an Aux Worker/Community Development Worker (one of which is male) equipped with cell phones, tablets and a vehicle. This team to manage a limited number of cases from street, to opening to finalisation, until the child is 18 on all levels of intervention (intake, placement, family strengthening, community programmes, foster care, etc).

The reasoning behind the request for a designated team was that SW’s already had their hands full with other cases and couldn’t give the time to cases of street children (which often required more and repeated attention) (so they usually avoided them). These children also fall through the cracks when too many SW’s are handling their case. The team would then work with the child’s case from start to finish - the child could then actually form a relationship with just one team, not a reem of unconnecting social workers – this would enhance the possibility of a successful outcome.

Also brought up in Robert’s meeting was the capacity issue ie; insufficient spaces in facilities, overcrowding at Lindelani and the impact this is having on the children (removed from a chaotic life to a chaotic system).

The outcome:

Robert Macdonald gave a YES for a designated team for street children and committed his department to confronting the capacity issue. Discussion in the meeting seemed to suugest that a shuffling of existing facilities would result in more bedspace being made available for children with behavioural problems soon, hopefully by the end of the year.

**Juanita** congratulated WCSCF on the great work done, saying that this particular elephant needed to be eaten bit by bit.

1. **Any Other Business**

Elmari (Teahmo) reported back on the Teahmo Substance Abuse Workshop. It was well presented, with flowcharts. There were lots of different role-players. Capt. Niemand had attended, but she said she felt hopeless as nothing seemed to change. They have now established a substance abuse forum, to discuss issues and the way forward as the biggest challenge was finding ways for youngsters to show an interest. Elmari to send Janice the details of the forum.

1. **Next Meeting:** 21 June 2016 - same time and place.