

Northern Suburbs Street Children’s Meeting

29th October 2015

9:30 - 11:30

Durbanville Council Chambers

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Present: Amber Confield (Badisa Scottsdene), Vanessa Brink (Badisa Fisantekraal), Cassie van Zyl (BBID), Leon Brynard (VCID), Emma de Villiers (DSD Lindelani), Nick van Rooyen (Teahmo), Lorraine Waterboer (Badisa Scottsdene), Wilma Piek (VRCID), Benny Martin (DSD), Juanita Beukes (Badisa Trio), Janice Sparg (WCSCF) and Lucinda Valentine (WCSCF).

Apologies: Ruth Tshabangu (Private), Crystal Fielding (Durbanville Children’s Home), Wendy Bosse (The Olympians)

AGENDA

1. Feedback from other WCSCF meetings
2. Current issues on the street
3. Upcoming events
4. Future meetings
5. **Welcome and introductions**

Janice welcomed everyone and introductions went around the room. There are no minutes from the previous Northern Suburbs meeting but the minutes to the Robert MacDonald meeting from the 16th September were handed out for discussion purposes.

Janice asked if there was anyone present willing to do the Northern Suburbs sub-forums minutes from now on, but there was no one able to do so.

Lucinda added the hotspot issue at Cool Runnings in Bellville and Kalkfontein in Kuilsriver to the Agenda under “Any other business”.

1. **Feedback from other WCSCF meetings**

Janice gave feedback on meeting her and Pat Eddy had about the SOP. She read out of Robert Macdonald meeting minutes about government funding and caution to approaching prevention. These minutes will be attached.

1. **Current issues on the street**

Janice gave feedback about 31 children that were removed from the CT CBD streets on the SOP and placed at various places of safety. Of these 31, 8 absconded, mostly from first Court appearance. Janice didn’t realise that that many children had absconded. Out of the children who were placed 14 of the children are now back on the street – a large number of these are whom the court discharged and placed back with their families (on the recommendation of the Social Worker?). So this makes 14 out of 31 back on street. DSD HOD is investigating the circumstances of the individual cases, with his regional offices, as he is not impressed with these outcomes.

Janice gave feedback on the update given two days prior regarding DSD only funding ‘occupied beds’. Emma (Social Worker at Lindelani) said that organisations there are many organisations with bed space available, but who do not take ‘certain’ children in. Juanita said that the services need to be re-evaluated. Emma spoke about the difficulty of referring a “level 3” child to a “level 2” (typical) Children’s home, but also says that there is currently no “Level 3” facility with bed space. More “Level 3” space would make a healthy ‘flow’ at Lindelani possible. She thinks the restriction on funding for bed space only might help with this.

Juanita said “we need to duplicate Lindelani for the longer term cases”. **She is concerned that in three months’ time some of these children may have died!! It may be too late. The situation is very serious.** Janice mentioned the concern is more for boys; that girls can be taken to Ons Plek. (Ons Plek will be moving premises to Mowbray in the next 3 months, allowing for more capacity and a more conducive environment.)

Juanita mentioned that government appreciate the relationships they have with NGO’s. They realise we create funding/social capital. She also mentioned that the bursaries handed out by DSD are a good thing, due to Social Work being a scarce skill, but reiterated the lack of supervisors.

There will be a **CYCC meeting** for historically specialised Street Children facilities at Lindelani on the 26th November with Leana Goosen. Juanita wants to attend if possible. Emma mentioned that the DSD local offices are meant to be there too. It was considered good that everyone will be in the same room to talk. Emma mentioned that she is the person who would be doing the invites to the Lindelani meeting. Emma gave a suggestion for the meeting on the 26th November. That together a short list of 5 urgent questions are decided upon and brought to that meeting. Then action steps need to be put to them. Juanita suggested we use the questions we came up with from the previous NS meeting.

Juanita talked about how a wrong placement of a child is dramatic for the child. Wilma suggested that maybe each CYCC should be able to handle one specific level of child. Juanita said that, that is possible only with funding. Not sufficient amounts are given. Janice agreed that each facility needs the correct programs to handle specific levels of children. The involvement of business/corporates getting more involved in funding was raised but that it must be sustainable (long term, not short bursts of funding). Wilma suggested that government who has the structure (like Lindelani model) but not funding need to partner with other projects or organisations that are funded.

Leon suggested we share more **success stories** with the public and business and many are then more likely to come on board. Janice asked Emma if she is able to give us success stories. Emma mentioned that this is difficult as once the child moves on from their short term facility, they rarely get any feedback about a child (unless they specifically seek it out – which they do rarely as this is impossible with their workload). Janice mentioned the changing of hands through sometimes 16 Social Workers on one case and that there is no feedback in between. The group noted that this points to a complete lack of monitoring and evaluation of the system as a whole. **Who is testing whether the system is working long term for the children???**

Juanita brought up the frustration of children being placed back with parents or back at home without a court order. Wilma suggested we see what we currently have and make recommendations.

**SOP** (Standard Operatinng Procedure for the removal of Children to a place of safety). Emma mentioned that we need to **emphasise basic steps of SOP**. Social Workers are not doing their reports when bringing a child to Lindelani is a big issue. Lindelani provided Social Workers with an area at Lindelani to do proper assessments. Emma highlighted the gap in communication. There are successful placements when the procedure is followed correctly. She expressed concern regarding the fact that many children have had many interventions before even arriving at Lindelani. These children are hardened and should then go to Ottery or somewhere. **Where ???**

**Relationships and communication**….. Emma says that assessments are done much quicker when there is a relationship between the Social Workers from different Local Offices. Janice brought up again that, in the same way, the CID’s, Fieldworkers and Social Workers need to speak more and share their information to lighten the load and overlap of work.

Emma mentioned again that the admin officer at central admissions is the one to place a street child at Lindelani - even if there is no bed space, they will make a plan. Emma reiterated that they MUST take the street children. Mandi Madi and Charlotte September are at Central Admissions; otherwise call Leana Goosen. Referrers should make sure they say that the child is a street child. Janice took down the question that needs to be posed to Robert, about why the communication is so bad within the department and with other DCPOs. Janice asked for any other recommendations or questions for the 26th meeting or to Robert. Wilma said that Lindelani should be used as a practical model of what is needed, or what other organisations should become. Janice mentioned that Robert said what happens after Lindelani is his issue to deal with.

The group was asked where street children have been seen lately? Nick & Vanessa mentioned the few around Cape Gate and Emma, the ones on Old Paarl (La Belle). The current number of street children needing to go to Lindelani **is +16 street children from the Northern Suburbs.**

Nick set up the Whatsapp group for a limited group of Roleplayers and rules about its use were discussed. Janice suggested that Nick or Juanita initiate an operations meeting for any hotspot cases that come up. The issue of actually getting help over the weekends is still a problem (brought up by Wilma) – it is supposed to be DSD. The Whatsapp Roleplayers are not available over weekends.

**Substance Abuse cases**: Emma suggested that the court sends them to a secure care rehab program. Janice suggested as an alternative - after rehab, or for lower risk youth, send them to Beth Uriel (Obs).

Wilma gave feedback on her meeting with Badisa Tygerberg and Dick Smith. With regards to her 5 hardened street children that she has been trying for months to place. Dick Smith was going to assist her in getting them a placement. Nothing effective has happened so far. It is very frustrating. Wilma added that Rene from Badisa Tygerberg had mentioned their “quota” of assessments for the year is 200 and in the first quarter of the year they have done 102 already.

1. **Upcoming events**

Nick van Rooyen mentioned their Give Responsibly campaign Teahmo was having on 30th October at Cape Gate.

1. **Any other business**

Wilma gave her feedback on the Cool Runnings children that she has been dealing with. She is dealing with a hardened street child from that group of people there, but struggling to find him place.

Lucinda gave background on her experience with the children from Cool Runnings and its exact location. An operation is soon to be put together to rectify that problem. More feedback on this case at the next meeting.

Wilma mentioned that her guys from the VRCID will start the operation for the Cool Runnings case. More follow up at the next meeting.

1. **Last meeting of the year**

To Be Confirmed. The CYCC Meeting at Lindelani is scheduled for 26th November 2015, which was our next meeting date.

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