

Northern Suburbs Street Children’s Meeting

23 April 2015

9:00 - 12:00

Durbanville Council Chambers

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Present: Jantjie Booysen (Ubuntu), Nick van Rooyen (Teahmo), Lucinda Valentine (WCSCF), Theresa Uys (CoCT), Jaylene Jemane (CoCT – SDECD), Hewitt de Jager (HewLin Compassion), Lee-Ann Alexander (TASP), Wilma Piek (VRCID), Crystal Fielding (Durbanville Kinder Huis), Morne Joseph (Durbanville SAPS), Nomathamsanga Lusu (Communicare), Vanessa Brink (Badisa), Caretha Randall (Badisa), Leon Brynard (Vredekloof CID), Cassie van Zyl (BBID), Thembani Guzela (Communicare) and Fundiswa Phillips-Mdini (CoCT-Street people program), Janice Sparg (WCSCF),

Apologies: Juanita Beukes (Badisa); Peter Lourens (Law enforcement)

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Current Issues
3. Public Awareness Campaigns
4. Meetings for the year
5. **Welcome and introductions**

Janice welcomed all present and thanked them for coming. Introductions went around the room.

Minutes of last meeting proposed by Jantjie Booysen and seconded by Nick Van Rooyen.

1. **Current Issues**

Janice recapped the flow chart from the last meeting, relating to Hardened Street Children. The main issue stemming from the flow chart was the lack of secure care facilities, so a broad discussion was had in this regard. The need for a serious lobbying process, motivating and calling for this issue to be addressed by DSD was discussed - items shown below:

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| Issues affecting Secure Care Facilities:* Current Facilities
* Under severe pressure, putting other services under pressure
* How many facilities are there, where and the statistics around them (Being researched by Leana Goosen –DSD facilities program)
* How many social workers and probation officers?
* Criteria for entry (do they only take “Angels”)
* Other sectors influencing facilities (in Metro)

Education - insufficient space in schoolsschool dropout statsCrime statsFoster care - recruitment of foster parents cluster foster homesKinCultureFamily +1* Lobbying Process (needs to be aggressively pursued)

DSD - ProvincialNationalShow them stats & trends* Media – what they can do - Procedures (highlight problems)

Success stories - Marc Buhrer (stay on street)Hewitt (Video’s and Ctv)Jip Burger Mika at The Northern Desiree Rourke at Tygerburger (write editorial responses to neg. media) |

**Discussion: Procedures for the placement of ‘Hardened’ children**

Janice mentioned that Robert McDonald had formed a (temporary?) “response team” which comprises of a Social Worker, by the name of Lucinda, based at DSD CT Local Office. Apparently she reports to Mr MacDonald.

Janice mentioned that 8 children had been removed from the street through the process being run by Mr MacDonald (DSD Province HOD) and that mostly the children had settled in at Lindelani. Four of these children were taken to Court for their hearing, by the Social Worker and while there, absconded (“need to go to the toilet”). This is a typical ‘slipping through the cracks ‘ scenario, but Mr MacDonald was apparently on it straight away and instituted new ‘rule’ that, in these circumstances, the children going to court need to be escorted by a Child and Youth Care Worker from the CYCCentre. Amusingly, when the CCID fieldworkers came upon the child in the street again, the child laughingly and willingly submitted to being taken back to Lindelani, saying something like: “I knew I would be found and returned. Let’s go.” It is great that a concerted effort is being made to identify and address these types of gaps. The consensus was that these types of procedures will be rolled-out Metro-wide and not just the City Centre. Janice said that surely Mr MacDonald would be aware of this and the DSD ‘pilot’ project is necessary to gain insight into what the issues and challenges are.

Vanessa from Badisa told us about their success story of a street child that was integrated off the streets by working closely with the family of the child. The family support made the difference to this success story (which was noted to be rare) as well as consistent following up of the case. The child was 16yrs old.

Vanessa from Badisa told us about a child gang leader in Durbanville that was successfully placed in the BOSASA programme. It was also mentioned by Vanessa, that they have a good probation officer connection and will share the contact details with the forum.

Wilma Piek from VRCID told us about 5 children on the street who were from Uitsig (living nearby each other). Home visits and follow up home visits were conducted so as to prevent them from coming back on the streets. She also mentioned that she has met children who have run away from Lindalani and then realised how good it was and wanted to go back. Few NGO’s operate on a Friday afternoon. Tygervalley beggars are from Uitsig.

Janice mentioned that Pat Eddy from CCID had been in a meeting with the heads/social workers at Lindelani who had said they were full (72 children) and that in future all Secure Care Facility placements need to be directed through the central processing office run by Charlotte September. Fundiswa Phillips-Mdini, the newly appointed Supervisor of the City’s Reintegration Officers (021-444 0705), told about a meeting on the 15th April that Robert MacDonald heldwith the COCT Departments, in which he gave a mandate to all relevant stakeholders to make emergency afterhours placements of children at Lindelani. Fundiswa also mentioned that he had said that when necessary, in the best interests of the child, that the policy on not putting a child in a marked police vehicle should be done away with. The Lindelani ‘procedure’ is clearly currently contradictory, but Janice would look into this.

Issue of charging parents who use their children for child labour or who are neglectful in that they do not know that their children are out begging on the streets – Janice told story of kids in Camps Bay, sleeping on the rocks, having been sent their by parents with instructions to only come home once they had ‘four handbags’. Also told story of 3 drunk moms begging in Camps Bay with 8 kids (u8). Police and social workers are loathe to charge parents, as this seems to be not in the best interests of the child to ‘fine the parents, who already can’t feed their children. Questions posed: Surely us intelligent people can come up with an alternative / diversion consequence to negatively reinforce this parental behaviour / to address the need. Currently, there are no consequences to child labour being inflicted by parents. We need to move on this.

Communicare attendees were asked to clarify the rumour that Communicare is closing down their children section of their organisation. It was confirmed that they are returning to their original focus on providing housing, but it was not yet official.

It was suggested that if roleplayers needed assistance with a ‘hardened’ street child, then all should write to Robert McDonald to ask what procedure to follow. Charles Jordan could also be contacted. A letter from DSD gave new Call Centre contact number as – 082 227 0478.

**Discussion: Procedures for Children (ab)using substances**

Wilma posed the question: “What do facilities do for glue and tik addicted children? What does BOSASA provide in that situation?” A discussion in answer to this was had in which it was said that Bosasa is an “awaiting trial” facility which does have a drug rehab process (cold turkey!). Probation Officers can lead a process using the new Substance Abuse Act, involving involuntary committal (Section 21)- this was discussed. Warren Smith, a Probation Officer at Cape Town Local Office (based at CT Magistrates Court – Court 19), specialises is this and has assisted a lot in the past.

**Discussion: Emptying current Centres through other means (eg Foster Care)**

It was mentioned once again in this meeting and many others, the need for more foster parents. Wilma shared that Leana Goosen is busy gathering stats on secure care facilities and she is developing a system to specifically address the street child that is difficult to place in foster care or youth care centres. Wilma mentioned she had met with Charles Jordan to discuss a new initiative called Kin Culture –a foster village concept.

**Discussion: creating positive and informative Media coverage**

Hewitt de Jager emphasised the need for more media coverage on this issue, using media to our advantage - to spread a more positive light on what is happening in our city, instead of always focusing on what is ‘not’ happening. Hewitt has footage of street children and the process successes, and of operations they have done in Durbanville. They work with 40-60 individuals in one evening. Hewitt suggested that forum members do a ‘night op’ with them soon. Nick van Rooyen supports the video idea. Many in the meeting were keen for a night op.

Theresa Uys suggested a few contacts for Hewitt to follow up with e.g. Vanessa at C.TV and Hyde Miller at RSG. She also suggested he get into contact with Mark Beure, who did an amazing documentary on street people and went undercover himself, as a homeless person.

Wilma mentioned that the coupons that MES is provide are working and that it seemed the city are coming on board with organisations to spread more awareness.

WCSCF “Think before you give” flyers have been printed with Northern Suburbs Roleplayers on the back. This will be put on the Facebook page and Roleplayers can disseminate the during local awareness campaigns. Contact Lucinda on wcscfassistant1@gmail.com in order to access them. Janice mentioned that the WCSCF usually tries to see if a local business in the community will fund the flyers. Theresa Uys said she should send the bill to her and she would see what she could organise.

**Discussion: Lobbying**

Lobbying for more Secure Care Facilities was discussed at length around the table and emphasised as a desperate need. Theresa Uys gave input this and the need to compile a good report to present to council which emphasised how the services in the sector are under severe pressure due to this lack. She suggested we include Education statistics on the increase on school intakes but low school capacity, as well as relevant child-related/juvenile Crime stats, and Foster Care stats. Mr Booysen suggested building stronger relationships in the community to gain the information needed.

The Form 22 was discussed. Apparently Uhambu have developed an improved form that allows for more information, specifically for disabled clients, but which can be used for any children. This was spoken about during one of the Provincial Child Protection Meetings last year, but it was unknown whether this new form has been incorporated in practice.

We all agreed that we need to move towards ‘prevention’ services and family intervention services should be the number One focus, but apparently this priority is being forced aside as social service professionals spend 85% of their time running after children who they have nowhere to place.

Wilma agreed to set up a separate meeting for Designated Social Workers in the area, to gather names of children currently at risk on the street, to see where cases overlap and how to improve service delivery through collaboration. It was remembered with concern that Badisa Trio lost the funding and therefore the services of their amazing fieldworker, Claude Phyfer, which will be felt as a great loss to street work in the area, as there are now no child-specific fieldworkers.

Fundiwa Phillips-Mdini (CoCT Supervisor of the Reintegration Officers) mentioned a meeting that Robert McDonald held in April in which he trained them on the latest Standard Operating Procedure for the removal and placement of a street child. At this meeting, he mandated all relevant stakeholders to place children at Lindelani. Permission will be sought to distribute these documents to the sector.

Jaylene from CoCT said she would send us the latest list of DSD contact numbers for Metro North.

The SAPS Officer present (who arrived after the main discussion) mentioned that there is a gap with regards to awareness of SAPS Officers, that they don’t know what to do with children who are found / brought in off the street. He said they usually just take them home, which he realised accomplishes nothing. The Homestead (Woodstock) was mentioned, but he said it was too far away and he would never get permission from his Station Commander to drive so far. He asked for training on the form 22 and 36 and also asked for a list of secure care facilities or safe houses where children at risk can be taken. The room emphasised that no one knew of any, which is what we had been discussing. Janice referred him to the SAPS National Instruction which clearly lays out the responsibilities of the SAPS Station Commanders when dealing with street children.

Theresa Uys informed us that she was going to be meeting with the Executive at CoCT, Mr Sass, to discuss the new database EPIC at 4pm that very day. She also informed us of a research meeting she was going to be having with the City of Cape Town. But this Database will not be used for children, only adults.

1. **WCSCF Membership**

The membership forms were handed out for potential members.

The Western Cape Street Children's Forum (WCSCF) is a network of organisations working in partnership to develop services to street-affected children and youth in the Western Cape through networking, capacity building, awareness-raising and lobbying. We aim to represent and develop ***ALL*** organisations and initiatives, who either entirely or partially focus on children living, working or begging on the street. We coordinate regional forums in different areas and on different topics, such as our Camps Bay Forum, Eden Karoo Forum, Northern Suburbs Forum, Drop-In-Centre Forum and the Hardened Kids Forum. We also have a sub-forum, the Western Cape Youth Development Forum (WCYDF), established in 2011 to improve collaboration between organisations serving youth.

We welcome and consider all representation, opinion, participation and input. Organisations and individuals wanting to have a formal voice and vote within the Forum need to pay their membership fees**by the end of June**. We do urge everyone to take up formal membership, as this gives you full representation but also empowers the forum in that the more voice we have, the more we can do for and with you. **Benefits of being a member include:**

* Exclusive training for members only
* Collaboration and capacity building to support your organisation
* Knowledge and experience sharing, to broaden your scope and increase your skill
* Great networking opportunities at our collaborative meetings

Membership forms were handed out at the meetings and are in the email attached to these minutes.

1. **Meetings for the rest of the year - see dates and venue below**

Meetings from 9-12.

Thursday, 25th June - RSC Durbanville Committee Room A&B in admin building

30th July - Durbanville Council Chambers

 27th August - RSC Durbanville Committee Room A&B in admin building

 1st October - Durbanville Council Chambers

 29th October - Durbanville Council Chambers

 26th November - Durbanville Council Chambers

Please diarise and set aside. We need your partnership in this process.

1. **Next Meeting: 28th May 2015** 9am-12noon

RSC Durbanville Committee Room A&B in admin building - ask Security to direct you to exact venue

 Enquiries: Janice Sparg (WCSCF Coordinator)

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