

Northern Suburbs Street Children’s Meeting

2 August 2018

9:00 – 12:00

Uitsig NG Kerk, Ridgeworth

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Present: Nick Van Rooyen (TEAHMO), Vanessa Brink (Badiso Trio Bellville), Evelyn Le Roux (Badiso Trio Bellville), Charne Plaatjies (Badiso Trio Bellville), Riverne Walker (Badiso Trio Bellville), Amber-Rose Potter (Badiso Trio Scottsdene), Roxanne Langley (Badiso Trio Scottsdene), Colleen Brookes-Gain (WCSCF) and Janice King (WCSCF)

Apologies: Miemie Kristoffel (Belhar), Diana Berends (Badisa Kraaifontein)

1. **Welcome and introductions**. Janice welcomed those present and introduction went round the room.
2. **Attendance Discussion**:

For the last few months, notices for Northern Suburbs Street Children Forum meetings have been sent only to the full database, and not uniquely to the Northern Suburbs list. It has come to our attention that NS roleplayers are not receiving info of the meetings, so we will revert back to sending meeting notices specifially to the NS database, to ensure that everyone gets the notices and knows the meetings are happening. So sorry about this lapse. We are considering sending roleplayers a bulk sms, as those attending use their phones more than they have email connections. If you have a problem with receiving an sms regarding meetings, please let us know and we will exclude you from the sms list. Please pass notices on to anyone you think may be interested in attending.

1. **Feedback from Designated Social Workers &** **Current Issues On The Street**

Badisa will be ceasing their services to Fisantekraal as of the 1 October 2018 and transferring all their services to Scottsdene. For a long time now, Badisa have been asking for funds to pay the salaries of more Social Workers to manage the amount of work and cases in Fisantekraal, as there is so much need there. After years, Badisa finally decided to close their Fisantekraal Office in order to consolidate their Social Workers into one office and do a full, better job in one area, instead of half jobs. So they are leaving the work in Fisantekraal to DSD, who will hopefully start up an office there soon.

**Excessive Caseloads.** Many Xhosa speaking clients coming from the Eastern Cape are utilizing Badisa’s services. A lot of the walk-in client’s queries are SASSA-related - they serve these people as there is nowhere else for them to go. They also get many referrals from farms, SANCA and the Hospitals, etc. Aside from this work, they get many background reports referred from DSD, where they have to do home visits, arrange inter-disciplinary consultations, etc. They find they rarely get to focus sufficiently on their own the existing caseloads, which are very high in number. And every day new cases are added. In many ways, it’s quite an impossible job. At the skills training centre in Fisantekraal, they let the people talk, because they need to – “*We can’t just brush them off. Deep inside you know that you are not really helping /reaching the people as you should be, due to the huge limitations of the system*”. Rose has over 200 cases and is covering all areas of intervention (statutory, reunification, fostercare, intake). She is concerned that at the rate Fisantekraal is expanding, it will only get worse. She hopes DSD will be quick in setting up a full office there, as the situation is dire. **According to the regulations of the Children’s Act (Norms and Standards) Designated Social Workers are only supposed to have 60 cases**. But in practice this is not implemented. It is way, way more than that.

**Parent’s Accountability.** It is felt by Social Workers in the field that parents/ caregivers should be held accountable for their children being on the street. A lot of the time, it is simply neglect of their children. As long as parents are not held accountable, they will continue the same pattern of dysfunction and neglect. The lack of parental guidance and responsibility is huge and parents run to the Social Workers expecting their problems to be solved for them.

**Lack of Birth Certificates.** This is a huge problem, which results in further problems for clients. It is a root and a symptom of other problems. An example was given of a 20yr old with no birth certificate who now has her own child also without a birth certificate. Some Principals accept children without birth certificates as a favour to Social Workers, but this is only a short term solution, as the children are not registered on Semis. The children then get promoted to the next grade based on their performance, but cannot pass matric without an ID number. *Janice suggested that the Social Workers get in touch with Bettie Niewoudt (Child Welfare Stellenbosch) who has been asked by DHA to make a list of the children who need Birth Certificates. The longer the list, the greater likelihood that DHA will assign more people to address the issue.*

1. **Gerrie Smit Videos: Clip 5:**
* Clip 5 is a Community Based Approach to learning behavior. And its barriers are:
* Time
* Money
* Effort
* Non-focused thinking – mind are consumed by thoughts of survival.
* Social deviance

There’s a distinct lack of joy and motivation. And the practical implications of this is: Accessibility and Flexibility. Prof Gerrie Smit has 13 You-Tube clips. He has shared his research across the world.

Vanessa: because of the limitations of the system you cant do the person centered approach as they know what they need etc and the children are like the parents.

**Finding solutions:**

**What they need is a community forum**. Who better than the community who knows their needs. Problem is that their voices are not heard because we don’t have the time.

So create a platform allowing the people to be heard, people such as their churches in the area and other key role-player’s that’s acknowledged by the community. These people know what their needs are in the community…not some outsiders. They need to be brought around the table with SAPS,DSD, Badisa, Health Dept, COCT to collaborate.

This community forum can then address the issue of children without documents. That would be coming from another angle. Use poverty stoplight metaphorically.

**Get THINK TANK involved**. Contact Lucinda and brainstorm

**The walking bus project** could be started in Fisantekraal, that way many people can assist getting children who don’t want to go to school….to school.

**Poverty Spotlight** to speak to Badisa SWorkers and as many other people as possible to use it as a guide, to put things into perspective.

**Questions asked of the students present:**

**As students, what are your impressions…… does the system seem to be working?**

**Response:** Foster-care is an issue as Forms 36 sent in the beginning of the year still hasn’t returned. This causes a halt as prospective foster-parents firstly need a name clearance before finalization can take place. This results in the child being in limbo. The child then needs to be placed in a safe place which is difficult. Its in the pipeline for the procedure to be speeded up. They only discovered recently that there were 2 people that they could send their form 36 to, to speed up the process.

**Fisantekraal children can be placed in Fisantekraal but people there don’t have the necessary safety clearance, so children are being placed with safety parents in Durbanville.** If it’s a small child then its not a problem but if it’s a scholar then it becomes extremely difficult. Children are only left with safety parents for 3 months as stipulated by the court however it can be renewed every 3 months. What has happened is that in some cases the safety parents was the foster parents so it made things easier.

What also happens at times is that some safety parents cannot have the child longer than 3 months and when that happens then the SWorkers have to find someone who has safety clearance for a night or so or take the child home with them until placement is found.

There is currently a lady begging with her 7th child. She is well known to the magistrates. 3 of her children had been removed. This lady uses children as a means of an income.

**Janice suggested that the students use this particular case as a research case study as the system allows this to happen.**

1. **Any other business:**

To send Bettie Niewoudt’s email address to all.

**Any events would be added to our campaigns**

1. **Next meeting**: 11 October 2018

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