

Vrygrond Lavender Hill Child Protection Forum

11th June 2019 @ SOZO Foundation

**­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ATTENDANCE:** Lorraine Moko (Sozo Foundation), Connie Abrahams (Learning in Reach), Prudence Nitshangase (WRB MEET), Chery Abrahams (Learning in Reach), Colleen Brookes-Gain (WCSCF).

**APOLOGIES**: Marion Thomas, Janice King (WCSCF)

1. **Welcome.** Lorraine welcomed everyone.
2. **Looking at Merging with Forums in the community.**

There are many forums in the area such as:

* Vrygrond Lavender Hill Forum (being the oldest)
* Connect Network
* ECD Forum
* Vrygrond Development for women and children

Connect Networks meeting takes place every month, ECD Forum takes place every month, V/LH every 2nd month, the Vrygrond Development Forum hasn’t been having meetings. The objective is to have a representative of each of these forums at the Vrygrond Lavender Hill Forum Meetings so that engagement and dialogues can happen. What can be done on the ground? There are too many gaps; an example being one forum works with children 5-9yrs and the other forum works with children 13 – 18yrs. What happens to the children aged 10-12yrs. That’s a distinct gap. With regards to overlapping; one child can be benefitting from 3 organisations without anyone being aware and that inflates the stats that goes to DSD at the end of the day. So, Communication is key to prevent that from happening.

Another example of **overlapping** is in Health. Living Hope, CoCT, Where Rainbows Meet, TB Care all have TB, Hypertension, HIV, diabetes screening and are dispensing meds. Now it’s good that Capricorn is getting better health care but what happens is that someone can collect meds at more than one organisations and nobody will be the wiser. And that person can in turn use that meds to create drugs. There’s no communication between these 3 groups, so its just duplication with potential threatening results.

Action: Lorraine to invite Captain Knapp SAPS and a representative from each forum to the 13th August 2019 Meeting.

1. **Rene Roman Team – How can they assist this community in finding a missing child swiftly**

They didn’t show up.

1. **Concerns:**

**Lorraine:**

* **New piece of Legislation:**

There’s a piece of legislation that says that everything that is child protection related must be referred to DSD. Once you as a qualified Social worker refers the case to DSD, you have no right to touch that case again. What happens in the interim to that child? What counseling is taking place? Will the case be seen to in the shortest possible time? There’s a case which was seen to after 2.5 years with the result that the child was now an 18-year-old and DSD closed the case. What had happened in that 2.5 years? No apologies. Plus, there’s no record of who had the case.

If this piece of legislation is passed by govt then it’s going to hinder the work that the community development worker and the auxiliary Social worker is doing which will have devastating results because DSD doesn’t have the capacity to take on every case. There are so many Social workers in and out of hospital for exhaustion and feeling overwhelmed.

DSD should give us NGO’s some powers a NGO’s have the capacity which they don’t have. They should be able to say “we (DSD) acknowledge receipt of the case, we have the case but continue with your own counselling with the child. We (DSD) don’t have capacity to counsel right now, but since you are the ones who know the child’s family and history, you can continue working with the case on the ground.” This then means that we free up DSD’s their workload and the case doesn’t lay gathering dust. A win win situation all round.

***We need to prevent this piece of legislation from being passed. We need to be able to say to other ministers in parliament, give us some power because we want to help.***

* **Child commissioner:**

Yesterday Lorraine had a meeting with the child trustee who will be the voice to say we want the child protection commissioner to be appointed as in like yesterday.

The conference is taking place on the **18th July.** Each organisations has to send 4 children, 2 girls, 2 boys between the ages of 13-17yrs.

Keenan has a program to train 11-12year old’s to be Child Protection Leaders /Ambassadors. That’s 6 children per community comprised of 3 girls and 3 boys. The child protection meetings will start to include children in the meetings as its about children and for the children. We need to teach the children the **Children’s Act** since it is about them.

 **Prudence:**

 **SAPS:**

* Two weeks ago, a matriculant who lives with his single Mom, was stabbed multiple times at his school gates because he refused to be recruited by the gang in the area to recruit other Xhosa boys to sell drugs. He was meant to be dead*. The Mom went to report at SAPS and up to date, SAPS has never responded, or shown up.*Whenthe son was discharged from hospital a week later, the Mom now fears for his life as the gang was up and down past their house. The Mom wanted to send her son to the Eastern Cape but he refused as that would mean the gang would kill his Mom for smuggling him out. So, this young man has brazened it out by going back to school to finish his final year. He would rather die going to school than hiding away. *It was reported to SAPS and all the Forums in the area but nothing was done. SAPS failed a child.*
* Another incident is where a woman had an interdict against her husband for physical abuse, he beat her, she called SAPS told them she has an interdict, they promised to send a van. Hours later the woman sees police driving pass and she stopped them. She then showed SAPS the interdict, and all they did was ask her husband what you doing to this woman and he said his wife was just drunk. SAPS told her to sort out her problems and later that day her husband stabbed her twice. Bleeding she walked to Muizenberg SAPS. They took her to FalseBay hospital. When they dropped her, she asked if they were not taking her husband into custody, instead they (SAPS) smacked her around and pepper-sprayed her because she talks too much. Now the woman is too scared to speak to anyone about what happened. **What about the children having to witness this?**
* At 6am an elderly woman whose an asthmatic and lived with her son who’s in matric, called the ambulance to rush her to hospital as she was having an attack. Ambulance service said “soon as SAPS accompanies them, then they will enter the area”. The ambulance never pitched which meant SAPS wasn’t responsive. The woman’s son had to witness his mother dying. **Again, what about the children having to witness this.**
* *Conclusion was that SAPS is unresponsive when you call, they say they have no vans but you see vans parking parked at the smuggler’s houses and shops getting drugs and money in broad daylight. SAPS seem to be ill-equipped and have no skills working with children and victims. The trauma councilors at the SAPS trauma rooms in Muizenberg are not doing their jobs either and lack empathy. They come across as harsh. The community of Capricorn doesn’t want to make cases because someone in SAPS is in cahoots with the gangs in the area so they know who is reporting and where you stay. Thus, people are to scared to come forward. And in the meantime, our children are the ones suffering.*
* *It would be so much easier if people didn’t have to open cases at SAPS in their areas, but able to do it from any SAPS charge office.*

**Community members should start attending their CPF meetings.**

FYI: when you need to call SAPS, RATHER call 10111, tell them what the call is about and they will give you a reference number. That way SAPS can be reported when they don’t respond. And people must continue reporting SAPS for being unresponsive.

**Child protection 365 days:**

**Suggestion:**

As forums we are the voices of the communities and as Forums we need to become popular with the media so that people know that we are being heard. We don’t need to disclose names to the Media. There shouldn’t be a time when the Media is without an article about child protection. There should be something in the Media all the time. Via the Media, communities must know that child protection is 365 days a year.

1. **Other:**

**Points to discuss at the next meeting.**

Directors of child protection organisations in Lavender Hill and Vrygrond should get together to visit SAPS and go and see what’s happening there as our children are crying and dying.

1. **Next meeting: 13th August 2019 @ Sozo Foundation @1pm.**