

Northern Suburbs Street Children’s Meeting

Wednesday, 14th October 2020

10:00 until 13:00

Zoom meeting

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Present: Wilma Piek (VRCID), Chris De Beyer (Cape Town Child Welfare) (Board Member), Nadine Samuels (Badisa Bellville), Vanessa Brink (Badisa Bellville), Colleen Brookes-Gain (WCSCF), Janice King (Chairperson) (WCSCF), Glenda Kayster (WCSCF), Lisa Kayster (WCSCF) (Minute-taker).

Apologies: Wendy Bosse (Olympians) and Stacey Doorly-Jones (STAND)

1. **Welcome, introductions and apologies**

Janice welcomed both the old and new forum members and introduced everyone in the room. Special welcome was extended to Chris De Beer (Board member of Child Welfare, and now WCSCF).

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 05th March:**

**Matters arising:**

* 1. Participants raised concern about the general poor attendance of the Northern Suburbs Forum meetings. It was noted that numbers started to drop when we could no longer hold our meeting at the CoCT Durbanville offices. The lack of an attending, local chair/coordinator is a factor. Now that Glenda is to take over the coordination of this sub-forum and lives nearer, it is hoped that this can improve.
  2. Participants discussed the fact that there are not enough Drop-in Centres assisting street based children in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town. The ones that are operating (ElTheos and KRAC) are not registered. It is hoped that the new Homestead Drop-in Centre planned for the area can be successful in its application for funding in the new DSD funding cycle. They will be able to assist children living on the street in the Elsiesriver/ Leonsdale / Parow/ Goodwood areas. Badisa Scottsdene and Bishop Lavis deal with street-based children, as opposed to Badisa Tygerberg who only deals with referrals.
  3. StellCare deals with vulnerable children from Stellenbosch to Wuppertal and Tulbagh. A suggestion was made to expand the geographical area to include them in this forum, but they actually have their own collaborative forum, so would be unlikely to join in Northern Suburbs.

***Action required:*** *To strengthen existing relationships with member organisations and to broaden the network in the Northern Suburbs, as well as, advocate/ lobby for the establishment for more Drop-in Centres as discussed.*

1. **Forum Feedback Matters:**

Janice asked the members to give feedback on how their organisations fared, or responded to the client needs, during the national lock-down crisis, and how many street-based children were on the streets during this period.

1. Chris De Beyer informed the meeting about the Rupert Foundation “restoration of historical homes” project whereby restored facilities would be made available for community programmes. This is an opportunity for the forum to investigate further, especially since there are no Drop-in Centres in the Northern Suburbs and there are children living on the streets.
2. Badisa Trio - Scottsdene:
   1. During level 5 lockdown the mandate issued was to minimise visits and only do so in serious cases. Telephonic interviews were conducted to better comply with social distancing – sanitizing etc. at the offices, however, most social workers were not functioning due to not having laptops or the resources to work from home.
   2. During level 4 lockdown face-to-face home visits started again. But the social distancing requirements meant that Social workers could not properly complete investigations and their work did not comply with regulations. A great demand at the time was for food parcels. Initially Badisa Trio received food parcel donations from churches in the area, which they could redistribute. Thereafter, people were referred to DSD, but they are not aware of any being distributed by DSD. Where referrals were received for further investigation, or where children had to be taken home / removed, social workers had to be accompanied by police escort. This hampered any real service provision.
   3. From Level 3 lockdown, services rendered went back to normal.
   4. The meeting emphasised that many non-DCPO social workers have been doing the work since social work was declared an essential service, but that many designated social workers have not been seeing themselves as an essential service, with many services and programmes cancelled and ineffective.
   5. It was acknowledged that the Badisa Trio (Scottsdene) Social Workers were the only DCPO present at this meeting in this discussion. Their frank, openly sharing about their frustrations around their own service delivery during lockdown was appreciated.
   6. Badisa Tygerberg (in Parow) – a concern was raised by VRCID about the service delivery to clients during this crisis period. Wilma had taken a family there for service and found a sign on the door stating: “Services rendered by appointment only.” Janice undertook to take up the matter with the Head of the institution.
   7. Cape Town Child Welfare’s response was different. Social Worker’s took their work vehicles home, worked from home, did home visits etc. The PPE arrived at an early stage and this created an opportunity to be relevant in the communities, especially as it related to the distribution of masks. There was a willingness on the part of the communities to engage and access the protective gear.
   8. VRCID – Fieldworkers referred vulnerable children to the various Badisa offices, where necessary, or took them home. In one instance, a family was taken to the new Family Shelter in Somerset West. A family living under the Old Paarl bridge was mentioned and Badisa Trio undertook to investigate the case further, although they had responded to a similar/ same case already.

*Action Required by those present:* Janice distributed a document pack to the members. This consisted of the directives from DSD at the beginning of lockdown regarding essential service delivery by all types of orgs (including DCPO’s and DICs). It was clear that many DCPO’s did not carry this out. It was requested that members look at these documents and review their own organisational practices from the mandate to the execution during lockdown. Members are to respond via email.

1. **Next meeting:** To be confirmed.

**Enquiries**: Janice King (WCSCF Coordinator)

Cell: 072 4500 456

Email: wcstreetchild@gmail.com