

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

CHILDREN OF THE STREET

ACCRA- GHANA

Introduction:

In 1992, CAS started its journey to get to know the children who were living on the streets of Accra- Ghana. It has been a real journey because we discovered that different kinds of children are living there and their character and mentality changes according to the circumstances prevailing.

Children in the street are human beings who adapt themselves. The children of 1992 are completely different from the children of today.

These changes are described in this story. CAS as an organisation had to adapt its approach on several occasions to remain effective.

The Rights of the child feature in all our approaches.

The first letters were written on typewriters; later, a desktop computer was used. This was replaced by laptops. This particular story has been adapted so that it can be read on an Ereader or a tablet.

CAS was among the earlier organisations who used a mobile phone. The first mobile phones were very large. Presently, these phones are very cheap and also used by street children. This illustrates that times are changing. Children communicate using these phones. Several are abreast with the use of computers. They have pages on face book and often use the chat programs.

The lives of the street children also changes constantly. For instance, the food sold in the markets some years ago was very expensive and the children could not afford to buy it. Nowadays cookies and cakes are sold often bought by the children themselves which are affordable for them. Of course these are not replacing meals but the children have something to eat.

We discovered that the borderlines between Urban poor children, those born on the streets and the migrant children cannot be easily discerned. A street girl with a baby who lives in a kiosk could be a migrant child or an urban poor child. The mother is not born on the street but her baby is although they live in a kiosk.

The question is: "does it matter". It is definitely a person who is deprived of many things.

It has become clear to CAS that the main reason why children are on the street is because of family breakdown. Many additional reasons could be related to this main reason. Therefore, we encourage churches and the organisation to spend more time on family counselling. Churches should have more attention to families who are in difficulty.

We also call on the media to use their means to strengthen family lives. The media could educate the young people on these issues and we are sure that eventually the number of street children will decrease.

The issue asked for a collective and holistic approach. We, workers of CAS will support all efforts.


 Bro. Jos van Dinther
 (Director CAS)

Our latest newsletter, the 50th edition showed the history of CAS in various ways. This newsletter also talks about the history, the history of three departments but this history points towards the future we plan to go.

We will explain what took place in the field and how we want to continue working in the field. It explains our ultimate goal, offering children a brighter future and it also explains why we run a House of Refuge for them. Enjoy your reading.



visit neighbourhood



FIELDWORK

Before CAS established a House of Refuge, we roamed the streets of Accra and met the street children. We thought, we could do something for them in the streets, soon we discovered that that was not possible. You can tell a street child, I will meet you again tomorrow in front of that shop, you can be sure you will fail because the child has very little notion of time and place. We needed a base. After a long search, we found a suitable place for a start in James Town. Most of the street children were in the central part of the city and our fieldworkers could combine fieldwork with other activities at the Refuge.

The population of street children grew and not all of them could find a "job" in the centre of town. Many moved to the suburbs of the city. Accra was a town and became a city. While the population of street children grew, the city also developed. Our workers followed the children. CAS workers as well as S.AID workers had to choose working areas.

MINI REFUGES.

CAS established four mini refuges in some suburbs of the city. The idea was to take care of the children who lived and worked



around the mini refuges. This has been a solution for a number of years, but street children being street children they moved. They moved because the city developed and markets as well as lorry stations were re-located. Street children want to be in areas where many people gather so that they can find jobs.

MEETING POINTS.

CAS dismantled the mini refuges and created more “Meeting Points”, i.e. places where street children gather. Meeting places are just places in front of shop or at the market where children gather. There the street corner education could take place. Very often the workers had to choose new working areas. During the peak period, CAS had 11 fieldworkers in the streets.

DONOR SUPPORT.

Although, CAS has worked for 18 years in the streets, very little could be shown as successes. The reasons are; every day the workers meet different children and only those who attend the teaching periods benefited from it. However, the fact that so many have found the direction to the Refuge proves to us that we are successful. But who is willing to give money to an activity where no results can be shown? Very few donors. The result was that CAS decided to withdraw many workers from the street.

1. The first reason is lack of financial support and the second is

2. The street children population has grown to such an extent that we cannot oversee it anymore.

You might say, this is a contradiction. It should be more children, more workers. How to solve this dilemma?

PLANS.

The time has come that the work of NGOs cannot be effective any longer in the streets. More hands are needed and the approach should be spread. The Department of Social Welfare has 10 district offices in the ten districts of Greater Accra. The workers of the NGOs could assist the social welfare officers in the various districts and work for the children who are in the streets in that particular area. Other NGOs could assist such as Right to Play which educates children by means of games and play.



OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

We now talk about out of school children because in addition to the thousands of street children many urban poor children as well as working children are in the streets. The fieldwork activities have moved from the centre of the city to the suburbs and now to the Greater Accra Region. Everywhere there are

children who do not go to school but are in the streets.

PRESENT ACTIVITIES.

The four fieldworkers of CAS are presently practicing what they planned to do in the districts. They work as a group, they gather children and educate them. Social Teaching is the main approach. Teach the children how to behave, speak to an adult and take care of themselves.

The teaching aids CAS developed, are very helpful.

However, they should be improved for some groups. It all depends what kind of children you meet. When you deal with mainly migrants the approach is different as when you deal with working children.

CAS has very little knowledge about working children and we hope to study them better in the coming years.

CAS does not want to lose contact with the streets because it is there that the children live and work. Therefore, we hope to be able to maintain this present approach in the coming years.

SPONSORSHIP PREPARATION

In 1995 CAS started a sponsorship program for street children. Children who visit the House of Refuge are “prepared” to listen to a teacher or instructor and behave as expected. The length of this preparation period varies from child to child. Some have had a kind of educational background, many start as stark illiterates. Many learn how to behave properly, others need ample time to do that.

INTRODUCTION OF TRADES.

CAS tries to introduce these children in various trades. Children are encouraged to take part in trades demonstrated, other trades are shown on videos or the child gets an opportunity to go on excursion to one of the workshops or factories. In general, it takes time for a child to make up his or her mind to choose a trade to their liking.

CAS introduced trades such as candle-making and ceramics but noticed that many children did not show interest. No interest was shown for agriculture as well although, CAS started with Hopeland farm project during the same year for that purpose.

EVALUATION.

In 2003, on the occasion of CAS’ ten years existence as an organization, a survey was conducted on children who benefitted from the sponsorship scheme in the past. About, half of the trained youngsters were located, (all over Ghana) and we were happy that all had found jobs and several were married. However, they had not found a job in the trades they were



trained for. In fact, this was logical because unfortunately, there are many unemployed in Ghana.

TRADITIONAL TRADES.

Traditional trades such as carpentry, masonry, hairdressing and sewing are sufficiently taken care of. CAS had to introduce “new” trades such as aluminium fabrication, electronics, sign writing etc.

Doing so also entails that those who are trained can only find jobs in urban centers.

DURATION.

As a technician myself, I know that the training for a trade takes many years. Years of practice and experience. The bases should be good and a training of three years is the barest minimum. However, CAS had no choice because, for the training, financial support is needed. Because of the expenses involved and the number of children who showed interest, CAS chooses for a training of three years. During this three year period the trainee could sit for grade two of NVTI certificate which could be the bases for further training.

SCHOOL

Only a few children of the many who roam the streets are able to go to regular school. The reasons are their behavior, their age and their educational background. Often the children wait until they are 14 or 15 before they decide to follow education.

Children are happy to be free, to play when they want to play. Happy not to have to listen to a teacher and follow the rules. But when they wait until they are 14 or 15 it is too late to start with schooling. At the beginning of the sponsorship scheme, CAS placed children even younger than 14 in regular schools but it was not a success. Teachers stigmatized the children who came from the street and the other children had no mercy on them. CAS now places only one child in one particular school and makes sure that the behavior of the child can be acceptable.

However, CAS had also many successes with children who had dropped out of education and got the opportunity to return. Several completed Poly-tech and some made it to the university. A number of them received scholarships and are now abroad.

KIND OF CHILDREN.

All this has been possible because many of the children were migrants. They came from the rural areas and were eager to go to school or learn a trade. Presently, CAS tries to educate children from the second generation. Some migrant children are still visiting the House of Refuge, but the majority has been born on the streets. This means, the mother is a street woman herself and tries to survive together with her child. The result is that the child had to find his or her way at a very early age. Many are not brought up in the acceptable way. They do not know how to take care of themselves as far as cleanliness and other aspects of hygiene is concerned. They often do not know how to behave well enough to sit in a classroom or to work as an apprentice. In addition, it is with pain that we notice that many children do not have the “stamina” to follow a training of three years. Many simply do not have the patience to learn for a long period of time.

SHORTER SPONSORSHIP SCHEME.

What to do with these children? We have started with a shorter sponsorship program, we teach children skills. This is unfortunate, because we know these children who have skills cannot find jobs to support their lives. But it will give them an income to survive.

We teach them skills such as cooking, taking care of babies, sewing, and hairdressing, bead-making, painting, play volleyball or soccer, become a boxer etc.

In order to learn skills, you need to have some kind of talent. We know some children who are very good in drawing and painting, some are talented footballers, and some easily learn how to cook many different kind of dishes. Unfortunately, only a few have these talents.

The result is that children try one skill after another and cannot make up their mind what they like.

For each skill, CAS has written out three stages which the child has to follow either at the House of Refuge or at Hopeland.

When the three stages have been past successfully, the child is placed on attachment. This can be for instance in small restaurant or at a training school for sports.

The training in these skills is limited to a period of one or one and a half year. The expenses are limited because most of their training is done at CAS premises.

CONCLUSION

We at CAS are not happy that it has come to these developments. You can learn to make soap, but you can never compete with the experts. You can learn to weave a nice basket, but we hope you can find a market for it. You can dream to become a famous soccer player, but often it remains a dream. No, skill training is not solution. We have to brainstorm again and dialogue with others to find solutions for these children. When we ask you, what should be done with the many children who roam the streets and do not go to school? And you answer; they all should go to school. Then you have failed with your answer. It is simply not possible.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING.

Some weeks ago, the awareness group of CAS decided to invite people from the neighborhood to the House of Refuge to explain to them what we do as an organization. It was an interesting meeting because, the assembly man and many others attended, they also asked very interesting questions. Unfortunately, the electricity failed when we started and we could not show the power-point presentation which was prepared. A general explanation about CAS was given after which the visitors were divided into smaller groups so that the premises could be toured. After which they re-assembled in the main hall and the power-point presentation could now be shown.

The visitors were given the opportunity to ask questions. Interestingly many questions referred us back in history.

1. Why don't you give all the children uniforms so that the people in the neighborhood can identify them?
2. Why do we not train the children batch by batch? One group progresses and a new intake is done.
3. Why do we not control the children better outside the premises?
4. Why don't we counsel the children better?
5. Why?

These questions show that the people in the neighborhood did not understand what we are trying to achieve. Many thought that we were running a school. Nobody knew that CAS has many children in schools and workshops.

They only saw and heard the children in and around the Refuge. Many did not understand that the children who visit the Refuge are not "our" children.

These questions bring us back in history. I have explained the history of the fieldwork and that of the sponsorship scheme. Now the history of the Refuge could be explained.

HOUSE OF REFUGE.

CAS wants to be available for all the children who are in the streets. Therefore we do not have a particular period for intake.



Children are welcome any time. Some come for a period of time, and then disappear. Children are invited to take part in the activities. Every hour a different activity is organized, we do not run a school. A child can take part whenever s(he) wants. Now the skills of social work are tested. Try to interest all children. In the past, we organized some sleeping places for them, but these were very difficult to control and they were removed. We offered lockers to the children so that they could keep their belongings. Shoeshine boys have hammers and screwdrivers and no locker was safe. We organized baby cots for babies but they became storing places for clothing. Carpets and curtains were installed to make the Refuge more homely. You can guess what happened with them. Chairs and table do not have to be nice but very strong. In addition we make sure that no one can lock himself in when the Refuge is closed because some try to steal everything.

Some years ago we, managed to obtain a secondhand home-trainer, this could be nice for the children. Within a week all the ball-bearings disappeared. We bought a big dustbin on wheels. Before everybody had seen it the wheels disappeared. In other words, yes we run a home for street children but a home with a difference.

An internal survey conducted some years ago revealed that children were happy to come to the Refuge because they felt free and safe.

Did we not receive the same answer from the women who lived in the mud at Konkomba market who preferred freedom as their main treasure?

If we can provide a safe and free place to the children at the Refuge, then we have done enough. We only hope that the neighbors will understand that as well.

We have invited the neighbors for another time because only when we work together we could do something for all the children who are not in school.

The awareness group has learnt a lot. Our approach has to be explained in detail as if we start our intervention for street children today.

NEWSLETTER NO. 52 DECEMBER 2010
FUTURE PROGRAMS FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

During the past year, we have attended many meetings and reflected a lot on the future work for the 'out of school' children. It is clear that the work cannot continue as it has been carried out in the past. We have reported on it in our newsletters, but today we will try to explain this a bit more. We will compare the behavior of the traditional street child with the out of school child we meet nowadays.

1990 -2000 involved in shoeshine 2000-2010 involved in Patronize video centers, café's and brothels.

Aid to disabled Gang forming, cyber crime (sakawa).

Hawker Pregnancies are an accepted sub-culture. Make their own decisions

Kaya Bola –cleaning of rubbish etc. Abreast with new technologies.

Truck pusher Okada- Drives motorbike taxis

1990 -2000 involved in shoeshine	2000-2010 involved in Patronize video centers, café's and brothels.
Aid to disabled	Gang forming, cyber crime (sakawa).
Hawker	Pregnancies are an accepted sub- culture. Make their own decisions
Kaya Bola –cleaning of rubbish etc.	Abreast with new technologies.
Truck pusher	Okada- Drives motorbike taxis

We have witnessed that the border line between a street child and an urban poor child has diminished. Many are born in the streets and live in wooden kiosks. We have also come in contact with working children and children living on the beaches.

At CAS, we are experiencing that not many children opt for a three year sponsorship package when offered the chance. Most of them are interested in the short sponsorship program. They want to learn skills they like at this moment such playing football, volleyball or boxing.

Girls want to take care of themselves; hairdressing as well as pedicure and manicure are favorite skills. Although, many hairdressing salons with additional services are available in the city, they think they can survive learning these skills.

Are we listening to children? Yes, the children force us to adapt and think of new approaches.

COMPUTER LIBRARY.

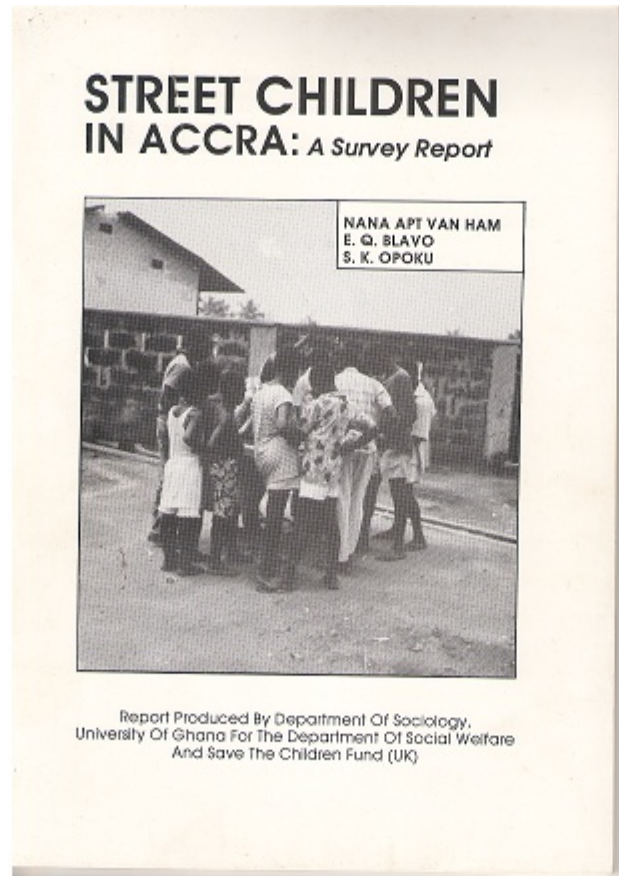
At CAS, we have many documents and reports from researches and workshops on street children issues or related topics. We gathered them during the past 18 years. The main topics are:

1. Street children- exodus, Ghanaian street child, other surveys
2. Child rights and protection policies, children act
3. Child labor and trafficking
4. Child friendly cities
5. Domestic violence
6. Infant feeding and nutrition
7. Juvenile justice act
8. Listening to children in Tamale, Sekondi Takoradi, Kumasi, Obuasi and Upper East
9. Sexual behaviors, HIV/AIDS
10. Youth development, strategy papers, poverty reduction

We have scanned them and placed them in a library on the computers as PDF files. We have done so because often students use them for their studies. Some students are too lazy to copy certain information and instead tear-out pages of the reports. Now we keep the originals and ask them to read the PDF files. In the library we have more than 70 reports.

What have many reports in common? They are time bound. Many reports were only suitable or should be read within a certain time frame. One of the reasons has been described above. The children have changed, their occupation has changed and their mentality has changed. We noticed this in our own reports; the Exodus report from 1999 and the Ghanaian street child from 2003. These reports are out of date. It only gives you a global view. Even some of the legislation has to be up dated from time to time.

We also notice that these changes in the discussions with



donors and donor organizations. The topic street children was very popular in the past, now we talk about vulnerable children or out of school children. In fact, these are the same children but now viewed in a different setting. Reports on HIV/AIDS were acceptable topics but now other sicknesses have to be added such as malaria.

It is also interesting to note the different approaches of city authorities. CAS was highly involved in the discussions about Konkomba market- Sodom and Gomora. We attended monthly meetings with the AMA planners. CAS assisted in organizing the Child Friendly initiative. When reading these reports it becomes clear that these initiatives were suitable during that time. The city has grown and changed. The population of the city has almost doubled. In the beginning, our work concentrated in the centre of the city. Later we moved to the suburbs and the present discussions include the whole of Greater Accra region as a working area.

Still it is good to read these reports but we must admit that they do not describe everything about the present out of school children.

FIELDWORK- DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE MEETING.

As explained in our previous newsletter, we were planning to have a meeting with the district officers of the department of social welfare on the possible cooperation between social welfare and the NGOs. This meeting with the title: "New



approaches to the out of school children issues” took place at the end of last month. Thirty five persons were invited and with the exception of one, it was a full house. After an opening welcome and opening prayer all members were introduced. I was asked to give an overview of the present situation of the out of school children in Accra which included several challenging statements.

Mr. Alois Mohl head of the child protection unit in the head quarters of the DSW underlined some of these statements and asked participants to use them during the discussions. The members were divided into 4 discussion groups which brainstormed on some prepared questions which were all directed towards the ten districts. After a lunch break, the findings were presented on flipcharts. At the end of the workshop members expressed the wish to continue the discussions. A report of this meeting has been written and presented. The technical committee will meet early next year to decide as how to continue either to expand the forum or to move it to each district.

PLANS FOR 2011.

On the 8th of December we met for the annual planning meeting. It was a long but successful meeting. We had to re-

define the aim and objectives for each department. Fieldwork is a very important work for CAS. We have to be abreast with the developments in the streets and the changing attitudes of the children. We should not be armchair social workers but be abreast with daily developments on the street. Therefore, the tasks of the fieldworkers are to carry-out fieldwork and research, to do mass education and explore new areas in the city and be abreast with current social issues. To travel to towns and villages where children come from and verify their stories.

House of Refuge. Their task is to coordinate all the activities. They register all children and see to it that they take part. They play a central role in the preparation of the children. The security, hygiene as well as health and care of babies are organized by them.

Demonstration department organizes the short sponsorship training program. They have introduced many trades and skills. The response of the children is key to the success of the training. If children are not interested it is better to stop with a particular trade and pay more attention to another. The introduction of trades is not an end in itself. The child should also fit into the working place and know how to behave. CAS knows that much more has to be done on reshaping the children and making them ready for the society. Social workers of CAS will debate on this.

Education is one of the keys for a successful placement in the future. The department has to keep that in mind. We are preparing children for their future. It is not enough only to instil knowledge. We know that it is essential that a child learns a bit of the English language because without it s(he) cannot find a job. The competition is so great that the best are chosen. Therefore, we have to educate the children during every activity and even have time to educate the child individually. The department has to concentrate on literacy/ sports/ entertainment which include drama and music.

Hopeland department. The main task of members of Hopeland department is to re-shape the children while they are in their care. The education at Hopeland, the rearing of animals and the sports program are organised with this in mind. The education program should be different from the education in the streets and the Refuge. Therefore, the themes used at the Refuge cannot always be used at Hopeland. Because at Hopeland children are in residence, the costs are very high and we have to control the expenses of the running of Hopeland regularly.

Sponsorship. For the past year the three year sponsorship



drama training 2010



program runs hand in hand with the short sponsorship program. The department aims at giving the opportunity to 120 children a year.

This is not always achieved because it takes a lot of time to “prepare” a child. We also noticed that children are hurriedly placed on attachments. Although, they are ready with the trade they are not ready emotionally. For these reasons, workshop agreements are not signed immediately. The workshop at Adjey Kojo is now very useful. Two instructors are employed at that workshop and many more children benefit from the training offered.

RICERCA PROGRAMS.

The census and headcount which were conducted in 2009 had to be corrected. In two areas no distinction were made between urban poor children and street children. The technical committee decided to conduct the exercise in these areas. Social workers from the DSW and the NGOs gathered for one day to plan this additional headcount. The areas were divided into sub-areas so that the headcount could be completed in three days. Again a weekend was chosen because most of counting had to be done in the evening.

The exercise went well and the results can now be included in the report. We hope the final report can be published in March 2011.

In May this year, some members of staff and others went to Italy on invitation of Ricerca for a workshop on drama. Drama is used to create the awareness of street children. The plans are to stage a drama by street children on street children issues in the three northern regions. 10 children were trained at CAS by social workers of S.AID, CAS and DSW. They will travel soon to the regions and will report on this trip in our next newsletter.

What other plans have still to be carried-out? Ricerca will assist the NGOs to upgrade the daycare centers with furniture. Some children on sponsorship will be supported with logistics and Ricerca will also organize some additional training program for some members of staff.

We are happy that they contemplating as to how to support the out of school children program in the future.

CREATING AWARENESS.

During the last general meeting held December 2009, we mooted the idea of intensifying awareness of street children phenomenon. Even though, numerous approaches had been employed over the years, ironically, it did not yield the positive results. Subsequently, a committee was constituted to come out with a new tool which will be appealing to people who would like to know about issues confronting street children. The committee had to work tirelessly for over three months before eventually settled on the best approach i.e. power point presentation and reviewed leaflets, profile and handout on CAS.

Series of presentation strategies were employed first to CAS board of advisors, members of staff and some university students who visited. All these measures were employed to toughen the members for the ensuing task ahead. The first presentation was done in May 2010.



The group during the year was able to make presentation to students from Legon / Regent Universities who were at CAS. The board of CAS, Art centre, Street Academy and some residents of the neighborhood. The rest were some medical students who visited the centre, central university and Methodist University.

At the time of writing this report, contact have been made to make a presentation at Legon, Maritime Academy and Valley View University and hope to do that early next year 2011.

Even though, the group made tremendous success in their work, there were some few hiccups that confronted them. For instance, having difficulties in getting in touch with the right people. There were instances where people thought the group was there to solicit for funds. In the light of these constraints, the group intended to review their introductory letters to clearly spell out their mission.

WEBSITE

Three members of the committee had had training in website designing, they have changed CAS website from www.cas-ghana.com to www.casghana.com. They have also been given the responsibility to update the website to meet the growing demands. In the light of these developments, the awareness group intended to make all information available on the website so that our targeted audience can access our website.

PLANS

The awareness group is considering making new videos about street children and CAS. The making of the video is not so difficult the main work is writing a good script. They have started with this work. They have also contacted a film maker who could assist to making these videos.

As an organization, it will be too expensive to contract services of somebody abroad. Therefore the Director of CAS Bro. Jos is negotiating with the FIC superiors to organize a joint venture.

The awareness group as part of their plans for 2011, are exploring the possibilities of creating awareness in collaboration with the (DSW) department of social welfare at the ten districts of the greater Accra region.

Further, the group also want to present a proposal to Ricerca / DSW on coming out with a video to be shown in other parts of the country on the street children phenomenon, but no definite stance had been taken on this subject.

NEWSLETTER NO. 53 JUNE 2011
EDUCATION FOR "OUT OF SCHOOL" CHILDREN.

For a long time we have not reported to you about the activities

at CAS but a number of events have taken place. In this newsletter we want to report to you about:

- Fieldwork research results
 - Short sponsorship program and education for the children-
- Main topic
- Awareness creation
 - Visits from representatives- donors
 - Transfer of the sewing training to Hopeland

FIELD RESEARCH:

The program of the fieldwork department has been organised differently this year. Three weeks in a month are allocated for research and one week to carry-out the mass education program.

Fieldworkers chose topics for this education program but at times have to adapt them to the situation and the group of children they meet. Topics such as: Personal hygiene, your environment, socialization, child abuse, tolerance, creativity, career counselling, money management etc. Often they meet children between the ages of 11 and 14. Older children are very busy with jobs, which gives them an income. Unfortunately, many are also using drugs and want to disturb those who show interest in learning.

In general, children do not have much time for learning especially when festival or holidays are approaching.



They need money to attend these happenings with the result that prostitution takes place during the night but also during the day because it is an easy way of getting an income.

The workers have to change their “meeting-places” often because of the developments in the city. Lorry parks are re-located, market are closed. The children move to the new places and the workers have to follow them. They also notice that children are attracted to videos centres and are abreast when new games are available.

On an average, workers meet 40 to 60 children at a meeting-place.

RESEARCH AT THE BEACHES:

The workers visited several beaches and the situation is similar everywhere. Fishermen have often large families and their tradition is fishing. Children have to assist. Often parents did not attend school themselves and therefore do not value education. Many “out of school children” can be met at these places. Their ages vary from 3 years to 18 years.

Where they operate, the environment is often very dirty. It is the same place they go to toilet and dump refuse. The chief fishermen are in charge and all are members of associations. Several NGOs have approached them and assured assistance but did not fulfil them. They do not see much improvement in their lives. Therefore, they do not trust persons or NGOs who propose new ideas.

The parent should be educated on the importance of education, before any of these children can be send to a school or to a workshop to learn a trade.

Some churches have made an attempt in the past to educate the children. Even CAS offered the children at Jamestown beach, sponsorship in early nineties, but unfortunately the children did not show any interest.

Some people think the children at the beach should be rescued from “slavery” or forced work, but we think a tradition has to be broken and parents and chiefs should be educated.



RESEARCH IN CYBRE CRIME AND MOTORBIKE TAXIES.

These two researches also started but it is too early for us to draw conclusions. It appears that young boys above eighteen are mainly involved. Children are attracted to the videos centres, as mentioned earlier. They play games and watch videos, but some carry-out additional activities.

Workers also interacted with 23 illegal “commercial motor bike riders”. Some of them presented a case to Parliament to be allowed to operate the motorbike taxis.

They gave good reasons why they should be granted permission to operate legally:

- It makes it very easy for commuters
- There were also some of them who were snatching peoples mobile phones and bags but are now doing genuine business
- They are of the view that when they are given the opportunity it will reduce crime rate since some will be engaged in this business.



computer centre

THE VIEW OF THE POLICE

1. According to them, the police also think otherwise that their operations will rather increase crime
2. The police also indicated that the laws of Ghana does not allow motor bike for commercial purposes.
3. Some of them also do not comply with safety measures in time of accident e.g. wearing of helmet for both riders and passengers.
4. They mentioned that their association is ready to ensure their members comply with the above to convince the law makers to change their mind.

We will report more about these activities later.

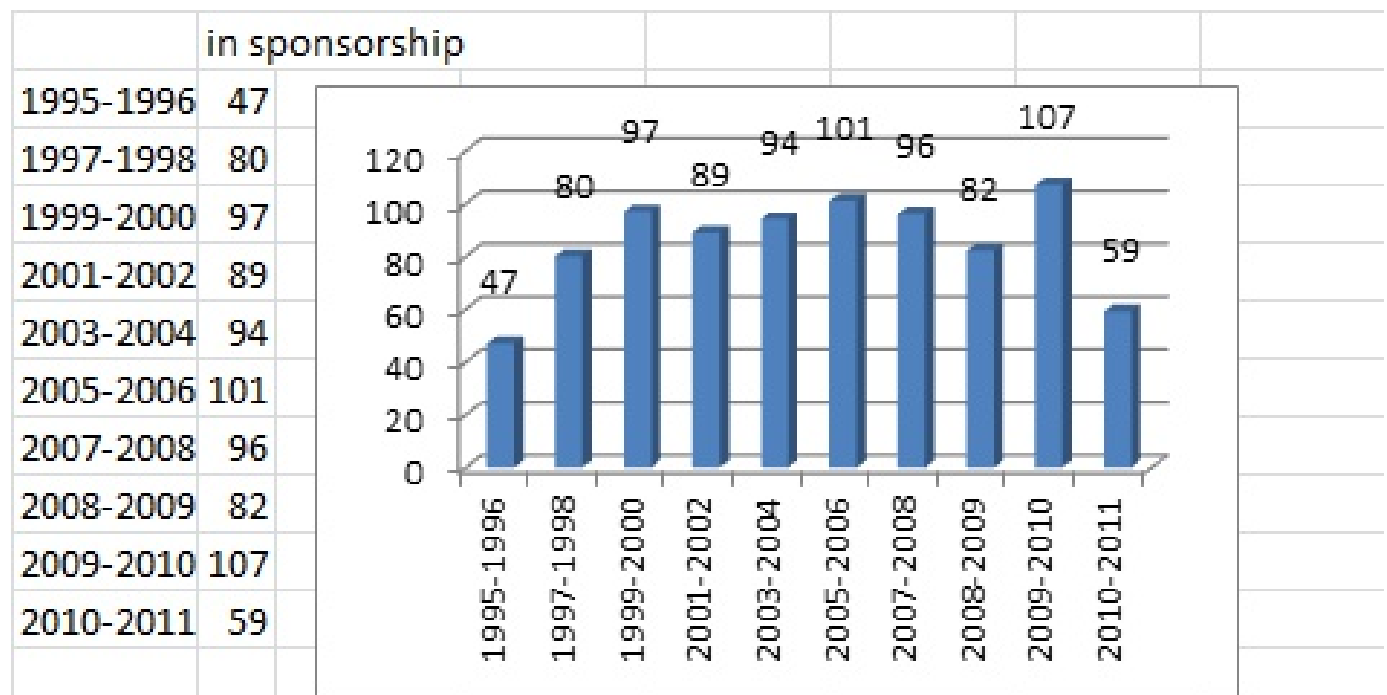
DISTRICTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

Workers also visited several districts of the department of social welfare. This activity is ongoing. CAS hopes that in 2012 the DSW will organize more activities for out of school children in the districts.

Soon the second district meeting will be organized. CAS has officially applied to the Director of Social Welfare for more cooperation between the NGOs and the DSW in this exercise. We will keep you informed about the developments.

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS.

At the end of June, most of the children in the long sponsorship program will complete their training except those in schools. These children will complete in September. But CAS will intensify the shorter sponsorship program since most of the children show interest in them. Street Girls AID, our sister NGO experiences a similar trend. Three year training is unfortunately very long for street children. They cannot concentrate so long. Of course there are exceptions. Many children have completed the three year training which started in 1995, but most of them were migrant children. Those we meet today have been born in the streets and have a different background. Here are the statistics.



Many “out of school children” can be educated but they do not fit into a school system. They can learn to read and write, they can learn to do arithmetic and various skills, but traditional school methods cannot be applied.

The children cannot concentrate for a long time their behaviour is not up to school standards. They say what they like, and do what they like to do at a particular moment. Learning by using games, competition and rewards are often the successful methods.

Often, we have to contradict opinion of others who say all children have to go to school, because our experience is different. These children do not have the basic background needed to go to school. Most of them are older than 10 years. Primary school children start at an age of 6 years.

CAS uses an adapted Montessori Method. Pictures, letters, puppets and other items are used to teach them how to count and write. An 8 year old child sits next to a 17 year old child. It is the skill of the teachers to make this possible. In one classroom often 3 to 4 teachers are teaching at the same time to a different group of children. Volunteers sit between the children to assist them individually. Why are these groups not separated? Out of school children are very curious. They want to know what is going on with the other group. They do not understand why they do not belong to the other group. Only by treating them as equal you will succeed.

Do not think they will all be quiet and attentive. They walk out of the classroom whenever they want. They talk when they want and they follow your instructions when they think it is interesting.

A visiting lady school teacher once remarked that some of the children are in the classroom half naked.

I replied, madam I am already happy that they sit here and show interest. Being half naked means the child has washed his shirt and cannot wear it in class.

AWARENESS CREATION:

The awareness group is very active. Several power-point presentations have been prepared and others have to be adapted. Talking to university students is different than talking to persons of the neighbourhood. The group experienced a lot of difficulties in arranging presentation time in universities. The student groups we want to meet are organised groups who often meet only once a month. They only invite us when there are no exams or preparations for exams. And at times either the students are on strike or the lectures. Because of these difficulties, we have now decided to include students of senior high schools as well. The group has also been invited by some churches.



power-point presentation



The awareness group prepared for the coming of Dutch Theatre teachers called UBUNTU. They will be with us for 4 months to teach the children drama and video the acts which could be used to create the awareness of the plight of the children. CAS has prepared a “message” which could be used as a means. This training will start soon.

VISITS FROM DONORS.

We think it is very important that donors, fundraisers and persons in the field have the same ideas and knowledge about the children we are working for. Donors and fundraisers should know in detail what is going on in the field. The situation with the children changes constantly. CAS therefore writes newsletters, keeps the website up to date and writes reports about the activities.

We are very happy when fundraisers and donors visit us because they can witness what is going on and receive up to date information from the workers.

Representative from Stivosina, Ricerca, Street Child Africa and Street Invest visited us during the previous months. Also teachers of Norway from Harstad University College paid us a visit. Three students from the college completed their attachment recently.

TRANSFER THE SEWING TRADE TO HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE.

The Board of Advisors approved our proposal to move the sewing training to Hopeland training centre. Presently this trade is taught at the House of Refuge. Girls who follow this trade are accommodated in rented rooms they follow the programs at the Refuge and receive some money for food. The initial demonstration of the sewing trade will remain at the Refuge.



Dressmaking centre along the road

We think this training can be done more professionally at Hopeland. The children could be trained for a period of one and half year so that their basic training is completed. No additional attachment will be organised by CAS, the girls will be assisted to find a job instead.

At Hopeland a large room is available where in the past the candle making took place.

There will be accommodation for an instructor as well as for the girls who want to take part. One member of staff who is already working at Hopeland will be the main teacher since she is a professional dressmaker.

However, Hopeland staff have to run the centre as an official training centre with 8 hours training a day. In June we want to move this trade to Hopeland.

You are invited to visit the website for the latest up dates.
www.casghana.com

As mentioned in newsletter 53, the Dutch Theatre group UBUNTU has been with us to teach the children drama for performances, to prepare a video showing the live of the children in the streets, and to prepare a documentary of CAS.

UBUNTU – IMPRESSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

During the last Heads of Dept. meeting held in December 2010, a proposal was made by the Director to make a video to showcase the plight of street children which could be used to facilitate the work of awareness committee subsequently; series of recommendation were brought on board as to how to get an expert to assist in this direction.

Initially, a film maker who had done some work for FIC brothers in the past was preparing to do another work for them and considering the cost involved the Director of CAS Bro. Jos, did mention that he will discuss with FIC brothers if CAS could partner with them and share the cost, unfortunately, the deal could not go through as expected therefore, CAS had to look elsewhere to make this a reality.

Fortunately, after series of contacts bro. Jos met the Director of Ubuntu organization from Holland Marieke De Lange through the net who expressed interest .Ubuntu is an organization



whose specialty is Theatre performance. Consequently, a committee was set up by CAS. Ubuntu was tasked to do the following.

- (a) Documentary on CAS
- (b) A Film on the Plight of street children (non fiction)
- (c) Theatre performance

(1) THEATRE PERFORMANCE

The theatre performance dubbed ‘This is me’ was a great success. The group prepared the children very well. The performance was shown at some selected communities like Chorkor Town council Line, Agege, and Soko all I Accra. In all the performances put up by the children, the audience welcomes it with a thunderous applause which is an indication that it was successful.

The projects CAS doff its hat to the committee, the staff and children who contributed in making it a success.

(2) FILMING

On the film entitled ‘Ray of Hope’ some of the issues were misplaced as it does not depict the true picture of the calibre of children we support. For example, our children are involved in petty thievery and not armed robbery.

On the whole, it was good and the film could be used to create awareness but there were some few errors and Omissions which needs to be corrected to enable the awareness group use for their presentation.

(3) The Documentary on CAS is yet to be released.

Generally, there were some challenges but in the face of all these, all odds were defied to make it a success. (By Nicholas)

Fieldwork

This year, members of the fieldwork department are carrying out research to complete CAS fieldwork activities in the streets. In December, CAS intends to close this department because, the number of children has increased to such an extent that the effect of our intervention is minimal. Of course, individual children always benefit from the advice they receive. Fieldwork should be re-organized and the approach should be well coordinated.

Our discussions with the Department of Social Welfare are continuing.

But the fieldworkers are still active. The global research in the various districts has been completed. The research reveals that the kind of children in each district varies. In some areas, only urban poor children are on the streets while in others the majority of the children are migrants and those born on the streets.

In addition, in some districts many NGOs are listed which main



concern is street children. However, it is not always clear whether the NGO is registered in the district only but operates somewhere else. Several “homes” for orphans are established in some districts while other districts do not have any. What is clear however is that the fieldwork approach in each district cannot be the same! CAS is still gathering more information on districts where many “working children” are registered. In fact, we do not have sufficient knowledge about these children and their parents. More research has to be done.

CAS also planned to investigate areas and villages where many children leave their homes. The idea behind this research is to know the root causes. A lot of work could be done in the districts to prevent children from migrating to other areas.

One such area we investigated is the Konkomba market where several children and youngsters are involved in the scrap business. Old computers, fridges and car or bicycle parts are collected to retrieve copper, gold, aluminum, bronze etc. Some go from door to door with their push trucks. Persons who have items sell them to these collectors for a small price.

At times these collectors buy the products from each other because one is specialized in car spare parts and the other in wires. These wires can also be stolen from the overhead poles. We experienced several times that the internet does not work anymore because the wires have been cut and stolen.

When retrieved, it is weighed and the owner gets a certain price. But this is the end result what happens to reach it is more dangerous. Children and adults search for these metals with their bare hands. They also burn the items such as wires and plates during which dangerous gases emit. They do not wear any protective clothing or masks.

An article on this issue in a Dutch magazine suggested that every year thousands of children die from cancer. It is obvious that some children get sick but that thousand die is news to us. Girls sometimes, collect plastic waste. This can be broken plastic chairs, cups, plates, toys and bags. These are cut into

pieces by a machine and the pieces are packed into bags. Some people buy these bags with plastic for recycling. The girls receive approximately 5 cedi a day.

HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE.

In July, the sewing trade was transferred to Hopeland. The room which was previously used by the candle making trade is now used for the sewing trade. The tables and cupboards were already present. The sewing machines as well as some of the material had to be transported there.

One of the instructors also moved to Hopeland and she was accommodated in the same building.

The preparation of children in the sewing trade is still done at CAS' house of refuge. Children learn the basic skills such as sewing in line, cutting of fabric and the names of the tools and the equipment. After the initial training the child will receive a certificate as a proof that s(he) has done the basic preparations.

At Hopeland, the trade instructors will continue at this level. The complete course including the preparation will take one and a half year. The plan is to invite the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) to test the children for the practical grade two test in sewing. Those who will be able could also sit for the



theoretical test.

We also prepared a timetable, syllabus as well as jobs descriptions for the teacher and instructor.

As soon as this trade runs successfully we will decide on other trades.

As a consequence we will stop investing in keeping animals which are not profitable such as chicken. Before they start laying eggs they consume a lot of food.

EDUCATION

The street corner education has stopped and Hopeland has become a training center. Therefore, the coordination of the education activities has come to an end.

We can re-organize the education activities at the Refuge. This means we return to the original setup we had at the old Refuge at Adedenkpo. All activities at the Refuge are part of the education of the children. Some skills of the short term sponsorship training are now organized by our staff and we make less use of existing workshops in the city.

The question we asked ourselves was, are we capable to train the children professionally? We think we can, if we pay proper attention to it and put some persons in charge.

Education in the classroom is part of this training. Children cannot find jobs when they cannot write their names and speak a bit of English. During the UBUNTU training we observed that children are capable of speaking English as soon as they are interested in the activity.

Sport, music and drama should be part of it as well and not separate activities.

SPONSORSHIP

The short sponsorship program started two years ago as a result of the responds of the children. We started it but never gave it another thought as how to organize it properly.

At the end of the year we intend to re-assign some members of staff so that we can create a short sponsorship department and a three year sponsorship department.

Staff will restructure these activities, monitor and control them.

They will know which children are involved and on which level.

In general we will try to prevent that children try and re-try various skills. During the preparation period staff will know already the interest and ability of the child. Allowing children to try many skills is very costly.

The three year sponsorship program received less attention because we got involved in the skill training.

RIGHT TO PLAY (RTP)

VARIETY GAMES-2011 @SALVATION SCHOOL PARK

We have known Right To Play, a Canadian Non –Governmental Organization, for many years. Right To Play is an organization which uses games and sport to educate children for instance to be accommodative to each other. As part of the partnership with this organization, staff of CAS have been trained to be coaches so they in turn could train the children (Training of Trainees). A number of our Staff and also the children have benefitted from these training and as an organization, working for or with children, it has contributed a lot to the development of our programs over the past years.

This year, RTP is organizing a Variety Games program involving 8 basic schools and CAS at the Salvation Army School Park at Mamprobi in Accra-Ghana close to CAS Refuge. Also, the RTP among other things organized a special day of games for the children at CAS with the participation of CAS' and RTP staff.



Three Training Workshops involving six CAS coaches have been organized this year alone. We hope to improve upon the collaboration in the coming years.

A DAY OF THE GHANAIAN CHILD-2011 (31ST AUGUST, 2011)

This day of the Ghanaian child is a being set aside to organize various activities with the objective to highlight issues affecting children in Ghana. This year we as an organization celebrated with activities like; sports/games involving staff and children, and poetry recitals by the children. Also included in the activities are music and dance. There was also food and drinks for staff and children of CAS.

The staff took advantage of the situation and organized a group counseling session for the children.

NEWSLETTER NO. 55 JANUARY 2012
Closure of Fieldwork Department-CAS

Yes, we are one month late, but we are aware of it. We were not able to write a newsletter in December 2011 because as mentioned before, we were busy re-constructing CAS. We have indeed closed the fieldwork department and in this issue we will explain more about this decision.

During the month of December, we held many meetings to plan for this new-year. The discussions centred on the children. We noticed that a number of children have visited the Refuge for many years but do not progress. Even some members of staff were content with the children' participation but did not realize that less attention was given to the new-comers. You will understand that this has been a very difficult issue to discuss.

In 2012, we plan to train all the children who visit the Refuge. We offer training, those who are not interested to learn and leave the street should not interfere in the training as well. It is very easy to say we train "out of school" children in skills and trades, but it is very difficult to develop their interest. They are happy with their freedom. When they get something to eat they will forget everything else. It is still surprising to us that



some wait until they are 18 or more, before they take a decision about what to do with their lives. Last December, Fr. Patrick and Mr. Shand come to Ghana to start a pilot research. They questioned why some children succeed in leaving the streets and others do not.

In November, Bridget, who is responsible for volunteers and students together with bro. Jos travelled to Norway, to Harstad University. Here we discussed the same topic; 'do persons with a limited level of education have a chance to survive? Of course, there is a big difference between the European setting and the Ghanaian setting. In Ghana, we have many illiterate persons, people who never had a chance to be educated or they only received a limited level of education. The numbers are not in thousands but in millions persons who live different kinds of life. Without a certificate you can still make it. You can even be a leader of an association or in charge of something.

This explains why so many children are not bothered with their future. In the slums, there is a lively industry in all kind of sectors. Timber, food, metal, cars etc. There is a lot to do. The research conducted by Fr. Patrick and Mr. Shand will reveal some aspects of this different world. We are very interested to cooperate with the researchers to find some answers.

TRAINING.

What kind of training are we planning to give? Let us first look at the skill training. I hope you know the difference between skills and trades? Skills includes not only management skills, organisational skills but also, soap making, laundry, bead-making, cooking food, repairing bicycles, dancing, rapping to mention a few. These abilities can help you to survive. Trades are abilities which need a longer period of learning.

Often trades can be learnt by practicing them. In a year or two you can learn the basics but the main trade you learn by doing it.

In Ghana, you can sit for a National Vocational practical trade test after two years of learning. Again this is the basics.

CAS wants to train all children to this level. Those who are capable can also sit for the theoretical test.

We intend to prepare the children first. Children from the street have still to learn how to behave, how to take care of themselves. Most of them have never gone to school so they have to follow literacy classes.

Drama, music, and computers lessons do game and sport and learn drawing. They also follow counselling periods.

This preparation period is different for each child. Some improve their behaviour very fast, others need more time.

CAS has now 5 departments:



1. The House of refuge Department
2. Demonstration Department
3. Short term sponsorship Department
4. Long term sponsorship Department
5. Hopeland Training Centre

History of the fieldwork activities CAS.

The fieldwork activities started even before CAS was officially registered as an NGO (1993). We met the children in the streets and tried to do something for them. Soon we realised that this could not be done in the streets. We needed a centre where the children could come to and receive education, medical attention and advice. This centre became the House of Refuge.

Fieldwork activities were organised in the centre of the city because most of the children could be found. From there we learnt what to do and how to help them. We shelved all our original plans because they were theoretical ideas. In the centre of the city, we gave advice to children and discovered from them that many had never seen a school from the inside. We started street corner education programmes.

These were organised at so called “meeting-points”, places where street children gathered during their resting time. CAS

developed the education materials which could be understood by the children since nothing was available in the world market. We even improved these lessons by providing foldable stools for the children.

Most of the children we met during the starting period were migrant children who had come from the rural areas. CAS did not want to assist urban poor children because we thought they could be assisted by their own parents or relatives.

The city changed. Lorry-parks and markets were re-located and new roads were made. Also the number of children increased and not enough menial jobs were available for the children.

Many moved to the sub-burbs because new lorry-parks were made there. CAS workers also moved to these suburbs. We decided to start mini refuges in some areas. Wooden kiosks were made. Although, during that time we held monthly meetings with the AMA (Accra-Metropolitan Assembly) planning office, we could not agree with the metro-officials in the particular areas as how to run these mini-refuges. Even some kiosks were destroyed by AMA officials during so called "cleaning exercises". Cleaning exercises are periods when AMA officials try to enforce their laws. No selling on the pavements, removing from un-authorized kiosks etc.

CAS learnt that there are many authorities in the city. We thought that by coming to an agreement with the main planning officers



was sufficient. Not so, other officials have other ideas and implemented their own laws and regulations.

In addition to the AMA officials, there are officials of the transport union, market officials, and officials of associations such as the truck-pushers. Others are in-charge of certain industries in the area. In short, a lot of ground work has to be done before something can be organised.

CAS rented rooms instead and four mini refuges were used for some number of years.

CAS conducted a number of headcounts to get up to date figures of the street children population. We discovered that on an average every five years the number doubled. Street children moved to other areas and we followed. CAS closed all four mini refuges and concentrated on organising the activities at these meetings points.

The number of children increased and so did the number of street workers. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to measure the impact of the work in the streets. CAS had 11 street workers who had to be paid. The donors wanted to see results which we could not give. (period 1992-1999).

Every day the workers meet different children and they received advice from the workers and disappeared. How do you measure the impact of the teaching and interaction?

As a result we lost the donors we needed for this important work. CAS reduced the number of workers to four and conducted a lot of researches instead. There are still many questions we could ask ourselves about the children who do not go to school but are in the streets. We worked with the Department of Social Welfare and met the social welfare officers who are working in the various districts of the Greater Accra Region.

The number of children increased again and it became clear to us that fieldwork activities can only have good results when it is coordinated by one body and carried out by many officers. The "out of school" children are everywhere in the Region. These include migrant children, those born on the street, children from poor families and working children.

There are children on the many beaches of the coast of the region. Others appear in areas where there is a lot of sand winning and stone-quarrying. Children are working on the land; children are in the suburbs and in the centre of the city.

Even when many NGOs contribute, the impact will be minimal. The numbers are too great, the area too vast and the problems too many.

CAS still hopes that the government understands the gravity of the problem and support the work of the Department of Social Welfare which could do a lot of work for the children in the

various districts with the assistance of the NGOs.

NEWSLETTER NO. 56 APRIL 2012
A NEW WAY OF COMMUNICATION

Awareness creation.

The awareness group are still very active. The internet pages are up to date but we can always explain more about the new developments. Two groups of workers visit universities and schools. At the moment, we are concentrating on one particular area in the city. Some schools are very pleased with the presentation and inform other schools to invite us. The presentation includes a film about the lives of the children in the streets and a power-point presentation to explain the work of CAS. These performances are often done outside or in halls with a lot of light. The film is rather dark because, we filmed the lives of the children in the night with the result that not much can be seen. We have now contracted a film crew to film it again using the same actors. It costs quite some money but eventually, we hope to sell the film to schools so that we get some returns. The awareness group is very busy organising this exercise and we hope to complete everything in 6 days.

In addition, we are preparing the International day for street children which will be celebrated on the 12th of April. We intend to celebrate it on the 13th because that falls on a Friday which is our entertainment day.. We are happy that the volunteers are assisting us in the preparation. We intend to play a general game which can be played in groups. Later, we will report on the day.



Children in communication.

For a number of years CAS has two computer centres for the children. One is at Hopeland and the other at the Refuge. At the Refuge the children are introduced to the computer for the first time. We are very grateful to Mr. Hans Gleijm and Co and the University of Rotterdam for all the computers they have given us.

These computers have been used before but are still very useful to us. Because of the instability of the electricity supply, the power units and hard-disks suffer a lot and often develop faults. Most computers have special power supplies which are not available in Ghana. Some time ago I asked five different repairers to examine a unit each but none of them was able to repair it. Therefore, we bought ordinary power supplies and placed them behind the computer unit. For safety reasons, all the computers at the Refuge are locked in the desk and the children can only use the keyboard and the mouse. The power supply and computer are joined together by means of a plywood base and when they are not moved too often they stay well in position. This does not mean that they cannot spoil the computers. As soon as they are not supervised the children try every setting and even enter the bios setup. You can move the toolbar from left to right or from top to bottom. You can change



the desk top and even move it upside down. Then often they do not know how to turn it back in the right position. It becomes a problem when they delete important files and just tell you that the program does not work anymore. Even when they set a password and forget it, we can format the hard-disk and install everything again. It only become a problem when they set a password in the bios setup, this is more difficult to correct. I have made backups of the entire computer so that the installation of the programs is done almost automatically. They are also introduced to the internet. At the Refuge, we have internet connection but yet to have one at Hopeland. There the staff use a wireless internet modem. Some children are very bright and know how to use the internet, Facebook and twitter in no time.

So they can cause some problems for management as well. Some write embarrassing letters to donors, such as, "I am ready to start with the sponsorship but you are delaying with the money. When do you send the money for me"? How they manage to get the donors addresses, I do not know. It is often difficult to find out who has written the letter. CAS never accepts that donors have direct contacts with the children. We treat all children the same and the donors only communicate with management. Of late we experienced another problem. Street children have no money but have mobile phones from somewhere. The chargers are shared but always not in good condition. Often, they try to charge the telephones at the Refuge with the result that they cause a short circuit.

CAS also receives a lot of help from Family Jansen- Scholtes who sent to us a variety of goods including second or third hand sewing machines.

Majority are very good but at times the motors burn or explode. This is again as a result of poor electricity supply. With the introduction of solar power the supply is stabilized but switches off immediately, when a machine gives signs of break down. At times, it takes time to find the fault. But we are very grateful for all the donations.

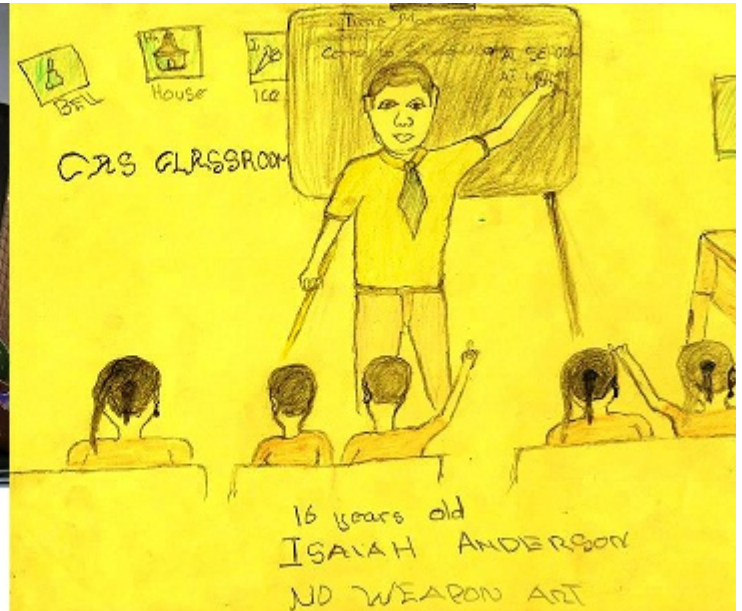
At Hopeland we have many problems with the electricity because originally the centre was a bit isolated in an area meant for agric. Suddenly, many buildings "legal and illegal" were built near Hopeland. These buildings also have legal or illegal electric connections with the result that it is not stable at all. We are now checking all the wiring in the buildings at Hopeland to ensure that everything is correct before we improve the solar system for the centre.

Fieldwork:

Although, we closed the fieldwork department, we are still active



catering exam



in the field. As we reported before, Street Invest is planning to organise a research to find out why some street children manage to leave the streets and others do not. Last month, we signed an agreement with them and CAS will be the host organisation. The Project manager, a member of staff from S.AID will get a desk at CAS so that he can do the administration from there. The members of staff from S.AID and CAS remain employees of their respective organisations, but work for Street Invest.

The workers will follow selected children for a period of three years which does not mean that they meet the child every day. There are periods that they can continue with their normal work. In May, another training session will be organised. We also held another discussion with the director of Social Welfare. Mr. Adongo and Mr. Aloys visited us and the Department is ready to write an official application to Street Invest to train some of the social workers in fieldwork. Eventually, we hope we can all work in the various districts of the Greater Accra Region. Because of the general registration of all citizens and political elections in Ghana, we aim at starting the first training session early June.

Launch of Census Report:

On the 21st of March 2012, the census report on street children in the Greater Accra region was officially presented to the press. All partners were present. The Department of Social Welfare, Ricerca, SAID and CAS and several other representatives of other organisations listened to the various speakers. Many journalists from TV and radio stations as well as other media were present and were allowed to ask questions. However, after this presentation they remained silent. Only a few reported on it.

Officially the number of street children is now 61.492 in the

Greater Accra region alone. No official numbers are available for the other regions. We hope these headcounts can be organised later, however, a lot of money is needed to plan. Already a lot of money has been spent on the census organised in the Greater Accra Region.

We are happy that now an official document is available and can be referred to. We have scanned it and if you are interested to receive a copy as an attachment please send to us your email address.

N.V.T.I.EXAM

Some of the girls who are trained in catering sat for the N.V.T.I. exam. The word sat is not correct because they have to prepare dishes and answer questions orally. We do not know the results as yet but the dishes looked nice. We also do not know what happened with the dishes afterwards but the girls looked satisfied.

The first part of catering course can be completed in six months or a year. Later follow up courses can be organised. In the past, we attached girls to kitchens in the large hotels, but that was not successful. The main problem was the English language which they did not master sufficiently. Another observation was that the girls were not enough trained in ethics.

We have designed a training program which includes all these aspects. It is too early to say that it is successful but time will tell.

Volunteers and students:

As you know, CAS allows volunteers to assist provided they are ready to stay for a period of six months. CAS has made agreements with various universities and volunteer organisations. Presently, three students are here from Norway, three from Denmark, one from the Netherlands and the other is from Poland who assists at Hopeland.

After a period of orientation, the volunteer has to choose where to work. We are not able to tell the volunteer precisely what to do but the children are always there and that means they can take care of the children. Especially, individual training is very helpful. Teaching children to read and write and work on the computer.

Last month, we allowed for the first time a group of Ghanaian students to assist us for a few days a week. We quickly discovered that we had not prepared well for these students. We have written out behaviour rules for foreign students but not for Ghanaian students. Some problems came up when these students lectured the children how to dress and how to talk.

They clearly had not accepted the children as they are. When a girl dresses in a mini skirt or a boy keeps his trousers half way his buttocks then that is how they wish to dress. The Refuge is

their home. So we should respect it. We ourselves dress carelessly at times in our own homes. We do not expect that visitors make remarks about that. I still remember the incident that happened in the other Refuge.

A respectful woman of the parliament visited us and she asked a young girl who was doing her laundry why she was not in the classroom. The girl reply came swiftly, "mind your own business". The woman was shocked and could not understand that a very young child replied like that. Of course the reply is wrong but in principle.....

We discussed the issue of new rules during the board of advisors meeting and the awareness group has drafted some which will be discussed and approved at another meeting.

Applications:

CAS depends on donor support. All the income generating activities did not work. Therefore, we will continue to present proposals to donors. This is not easy because, often we do not know what donors actually want to finance.

All donors who assist us finance a particular activity. It is at times confusing to know what information we can give about the other donors in particular when two donors contribute to one activity. For instance, one donor assists with the payment of salaries in one department, while the other assist in financing



the activity. I used the word assist because, very often the activities are supported by several donors either in kind or in cash. In addition, CAS often has to pre-finance the activities because the donor examines the reports before continuing with the payment.

We are happy that donors are still willing to finance but at times their requirement and control levels are out of proportion. We have to be diplomatic and control our patience because after all it is meant for the benefit of the children.

NEWSLETTER NO. 57 JUNE 2012
TRAINING OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

The Refuge and the education department have merged; the sponsorship department has been split into two; a short and a long sponsorship department. At the Refuge, Hopeland and in the demonstration departments the training for the short sponsorship skills takes place. Hopeland has become a training centre.

We are not saying that we achieved everything without any problem! Some department merged and one was divided into two. This means that members of staff have to work with different members and form new teams. As you know this can be very difficult because many members of staff are already



working for years at CAS and know what they are about. Now, they have to listen to somebody who has a different experience. In short, management had to arrange a few reconciliation meetings to cool down tempers and search for a way forward.

We also experienced that the director received anonymous text messages from children as well as staff. All of them were related to money matters. CAS has grown over the years with expansion in structures, programs and activities but not without their challenges relating to personnel, relationship and transparency. As a solution to this, CAS financial issues and internal control measures have been put in place to meet the challenges. With department impresses, more transparency and participatory measures have been put into place whereby members of departments have roles to play with respect to how monies are disbursed and reported to administration and to donors. More staff have access to Tally the bookkeeping program now and to see how monies for children are used.

Children also have access to information about their training and remittances due them. For the coming days, CAS shall see how these measures would be working to avoid suspicions and mistrust.

We also discussed with some donors that they have to be careful with text messages and emails they receive from children. CAS trains children computer knowledge and how to write an email and work with internet. At times, we are paid back because the messages we receives are not always nice. This brings us to the topic child participation.

What is child participation? At CAS, children decide to visit the Refuge whenever they want to they also decide to leave at any time. Children decide what to learn and which school they want to go to. In fact, they decide about their own future. They also decide which programs we carry out and which ones we have to stop. But we do not allow them to decide how to behave or when to disturb. I am sure parents with children do not allow their children to dance on the table. That is to say if they have a table.

Child participation is good to a certain extend but please let us not exaggerate. CAS staff is still in charge and at times several members of staff have to work together to keep law and order. We notice this especially when we organise special feast days. On these days many children attend and there are always children who have not learnt to listen.

When “new” children come to CAS then they have to go through a process of getting quite, learn how to behave and to listen. For this reason, CAS has two welfare units in place one at Hopeland

and one in the Refuge.



WELFARE UNITS:

In each department some members of staff form the welfare team. They receive the children, register, and introduce the children into the programs offered.

The team also appoints supervisors to the children so that these supervisors know everything about the children. The welfare team at the Refuge also sees to it that one of the social workers investigates into the back ground of the child.

Social workers visit the family or close relatives and write social survey reports. Majority of these reports show that most of the children come from unstable families.

This information was not contained in the census report published in 2011 because children do not reveal this information to those who conducted the headcount or census. A social worker has to build up a relationship with the child before the child reveals what has happened at home.

Members of the welfare team also advice the children and guide them through the process of leaving the streets.

MOUs:

Recently we came to an agreement with Street Child Africa, an English fundraising body and partner to CAS, as to how to continue with the partnership. CAS and S.AID were the first partners to SCA and as such know the organisation well.

However, SCA has many new workers and that means that this relationship has to be renewed from time to time. Soon we sign the Memorandum of Understanding, MOU. SCA has decided to follow the financial year of the UK and that means that it does not correspond any longer with the financial year of Ghana. Both parties have to find ways of integrating this in the administration.

Soon we also hope to sign an MOU with the DSW. As you know the DSW has invited Street Invest another English NGO to come to Ghana and train their workers in the fieldwork activities.

CAS workers will be highly involved and therefore a MOU is needed. A draft has been made and CAS members of the Board are studying it.

CAS workers are already cooperating with Street Invest in a research which will start in July. We will keep you informed.

AWARENESS:

Three members of the awareness group left CAS and are now employed elsewhere. Three other interested members have joined the group. Every Monday afternoon the group meets and decides on the weekly activities. Once a week the group visits one of the universities or Senior High schools to create awareness about the plight of "out of school children". At times students of these schools decide to do Community Service at CAS. At the moment 10 students of one of the universities are with us for one month. We are happy to arrange these exercises because now students come in direct contact with the children. However, CAS had to make some regulations concerning the students approach because, too often they want to correct the



children too quickly and do not accept their appearance or behaviour.

The awareness group has recently completed the production of a new film showing the lives of Out of School Children. This is shown together with a Power-point presentation during a visit to a school. The whole exercise is very interesting but costs a lot of money. Therefore, CAS has applied to a donor for financial assistance. We hope that it will be approved so that more activities can be organised.

The awareness group also organises special days for children such as the International day for street children and the Day of the African child. This last day is celebrated on the 16 of June, but CAS celebrated it on Friday the 15th.

THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD:

About eighty children attended. Instead of games and sports the awareness group prepared a Day of Education.

Bro. Patrick started by showing some videos explaining various trades. These videos were made by CAS some time ago.

Trades are explained in detail and we asked the children who were divided into 4 groups to be very attentive because at the end of the day a quiz was organised and prizes were awarded to deserving winners.

After the videos, Mr. Aloys Mohl from the child protection unit of the department of Social Welfare gave a talk on rights and advantages of learning trades. The children learnt a lot. The talk was given using two languages Twi and English.

In between the program, we organised snacks for the children. Bro. Jos continued with an explanation of the Carpenters trade. The carpenter, carver, door maker, coffin maker, upholstery work, furniture work and Interior decorations were explained using a power-point presentation. Kweku, the carver at CAS, showed the various tools used for the various trades.

A quiz followed using questions concerning what had been shown and explained. Children were very exciting because they could win a hush cake made by the children who learn cooking and baking.

During the meal, which followed, the judges had time to go through the quiz results. They were surprised by the many correct answers given.

One group shared the cake. The day closed with some dance music and all were happy the program was successful.

HAIRDRESSING:

As explained before, CAS prepares children in various trades at the House of Refuge. The children, who are ready with the preparation after six months, continue with their training in

workshops. Those learning sewing will now learn it at Hopeland. Recently, we moved the training of hairdressing to Hopeland. We have done so because a member of staff is a trained hairdresser and now we can accommodate the children there. The staff is in control of the training, which makes matters easier. We prepare all the children in training to the Grade two level in practical work. This means they have to be disciplined, be in time and work a certain number of hours a day. We have designed three “steps” of each trade to follow during the preparation period. At the end of the period, they are tested by staff to assess their abilities and capabilities.



Presently, eight members of staff are working at Hopeland and we are still improving the accommodation for several of them. At a later stage, we intend to add the carving trade as well, but this can only be done when these two trades are well established.

Volunteers:

In addition to the students, CAS still allows volunteers Ghanaian as well as foreigners to work with the children. You could think that too many helpers are with the children, but there is always something to do at CAS. The children are always present and after the general activities need individual attention. Private education is key because, the educational back ground of most children is very poor.

Recently, three students from Harstad university of Norway completed their stay as well as one from the Netherlands. Three students from Denmark, one from Poland and one Ghanaian student are still with us. CAS receives many requests for placements but does not allow those who want to come for a very short time.

It takes time to get to know the children and for the children to know the volunteer. It is different for students because they are mainly there for their own benefit.

NEWSLETTER NO. 58 OCTOBER 1992- 2012
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAS.
MISSION Accomplished.

CAS is 20 years old and because of this occasion we look back to history to see what we have achieved. In October 1992, we asked our superiors permission to;

1. Find out why children were in the streets?
2. Where they came from?
3. And why they could not return to their home and parents?

In fact, it was a bold decision to do so, because nobody could give us answers or advice. We were happy that we could convince some of our donors to support us on this mission.

In order to find the answers, we kept records of all the children we met. We recorded their basic information and conducted special researches in places where they came from. During the first ten years we exclusively dealt with migrant children. We did not assist any child who had parents or relatives in the city. This approach changed gradually.

Reports published by CAS:

1. The Exodus report -1999
2. The Ghanaian street child – 2003
3. The state of the Ghanaian street child, CAS' perspective-2004
4. Together with The Department of Social Welfare, Ricerca, Said and CAS, the Census report -2011



urban poor and life in the village

For those children who wanted to leave the streets and be educated, we conducted social surveys. What are social surveys?

As mentioned earlier, the basic information on children was recorded of all the children. Of those who wanted to be educated we needed more information and even permission of the parents or relatives to educate them.

Social workers interviewed the children on several occasions to establish important records of the child. The three main questions are included. Still we can never be sure that the child has told the truth until it is verified. The social workers travelled with or without the child to the village or town where the child came from and interviewed the parents or relatives. This is a difficult and expensive task especially when the child had not spoken the truth.

As such, in depth information on children is recorded which is of course confidential because of its sensitivity.

The report includes: family background, living conditions, reasons of the problem and recommendation by the social worker.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary, we re-analyzed 499 social survey reports of the period January 1998 till December 2011 and we are ready to share the results.

The 499 social surveys, 284 boys and 215 girls are from children who enjoyed support from the sponsorship program. In addition to these, CAS assisted our colleagues of Street Girls Aid, to sponsor 112 girls in various trades. This means that more girls than boys benefitted from the sponsorship scheme.

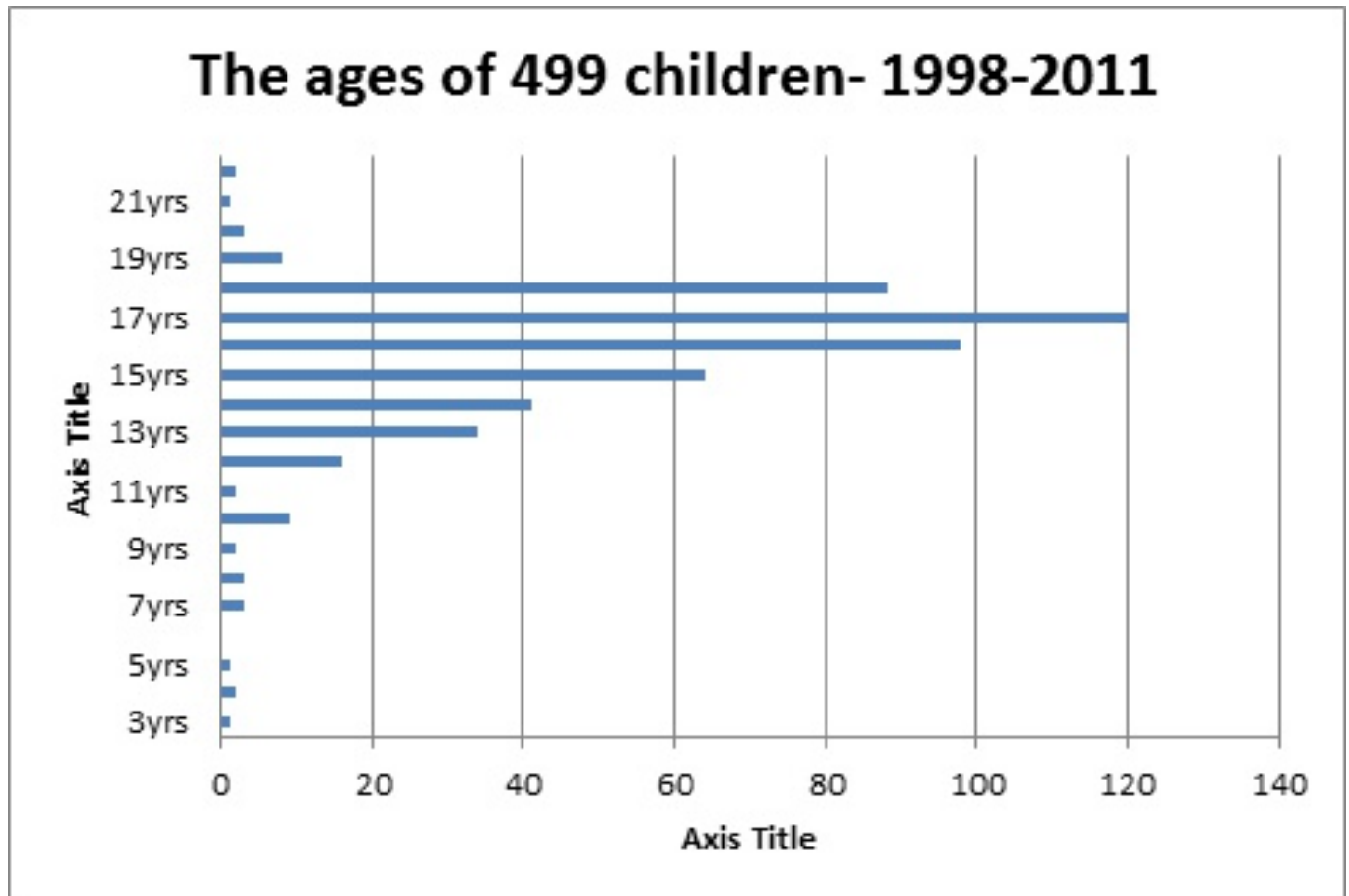
130 parents of the 499 children are divorced and 49 were born out of wedlock (extramarital).

The age group is as follows:

The mothers of the children age 3-4-5 were assisted to educate the child and the ages of those above 18 were only discovered during the interview. Some of them had also changed their name entirely and the parents did not recognize them.

Most of them were between the ages of 15 to 18 and these children followed the apprenticeship system in learning trades.

During our Heads of Departments meeting in September 2012, we realized that many of the children we are dealing with today are much younger. This is a challenging problem because these children are too young for the apprenticeship training and too old for basic education. What can be done? The only answer is that we educate the children ourselves.



Where did they come from?

Surprisingly, many are from foreign countries (8%) such as Nigeria, Togo, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. Relatives of these children live in Ghana and this explains why some are sent to aunts and uncles in Ghana.

These figures are different from those of the Census report of which 43.41% are from the northern regions and 55.86% from the southern regions and remaining are foreigners. The reasons are, the difficulties of languages. Most children from the northern regions do not visit CAS because they do not speak Twi, Ewe or English.

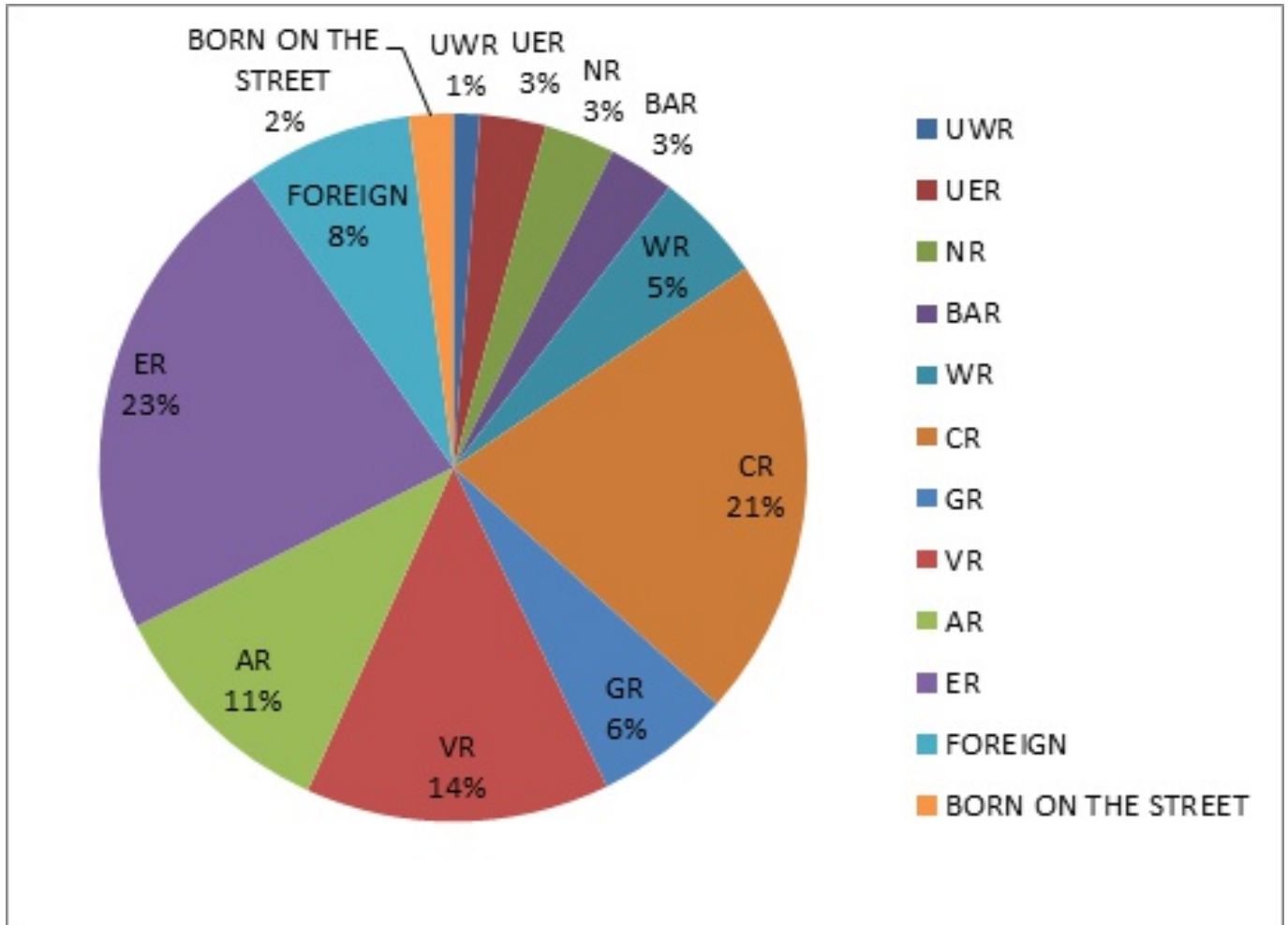
What is the educational background of the 499 children?

Many of these children have not been educated at all. Most of them dropped out of primary school. 64 children completed JHS and a few had the chance to continue. 3 of them entered SHS1 but left the school to find a job to support the family.

But what were the reasons which brought these children on the street?

EXPLANATION:

The parents of children in broken homes are not yet divorced. The death of a relative is vital because the child received



support from them.

The child who grew up in Nigeria did not feel at home in Ghana.

Too many children at home' are children from fathers with many wives.

130 children parents divorced, but this was not for all of them the reason to be on the street.

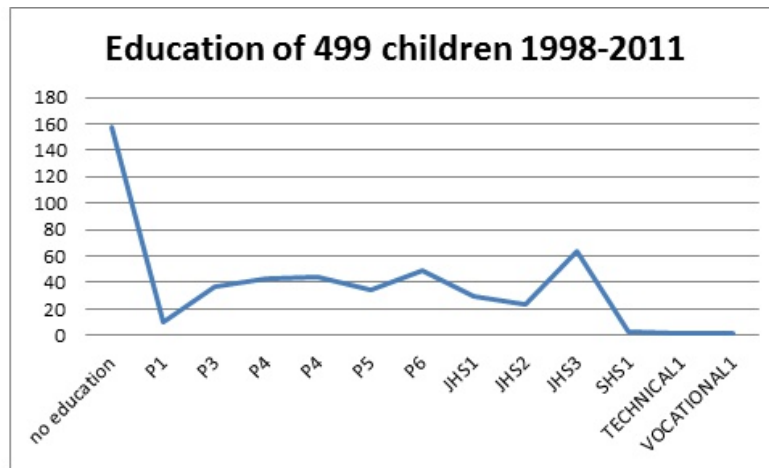
The three main reasons are:

- 1 Death of parent(s) or relative = 106
- 2 Divorce = 73
- 3 Neglect = 154

As you can read, the report gives answers to the three questions asked. Most problems are related to social issues. Problems we cannot solve, problems which cannot be solved by government either. The only answer is to strengthen the department of social welfare so that trained social workers can assist families in all the regions of Ghana.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

Therefore, we dare to say that our Mission is accomplished within the context of the objectives that started CAS. CAS during



the past 20 years assisted many individual children and in addition found answers to the questions asked.

1. We will not be able to solve the problems in the families.
2. We will not be able to prevent more children coming to the street.
3. We will not be able to re-integrate children back in their families.

CAS was bold enough to start and work in an unknown area. It is now time to leave this behind and take another bold step.

OUR NEW MISSION:

CAS is ready to support the government, the Department of Social Welfare to solve the many issues of the “Out of School children”. We are also ready to spend more time and energy on creating the awareness of these problems.

In 2009 we started to change our approach. Unfortunately it is not yet understood by many. Questions are asked, why did CAS stop working in the streets? And why does CAS train the children themselves?

Now CAS is preparing for these new tasks.

1. CAS still assists individual children by continuing the sponsorship scheme.
2. By teaching several skills and trades at the Refuge.
3. By changing Hopeland into a full training centre.

A.

Training young children is a very difficult task. Often they are not ready for it. The children like to play and are not used to following regulations. The Refuge is not a school and the children decide when to come and when not. At times we meet large groups of boys and a few weeks later, the refuge receives more girls than boys. Only a few are faithful to their training.

The instructors CAS has employed are not trained teachers.

REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE IN THE STREETS- SOCIAL SURVEYS			
		JANUARY 1998- DECEMBER 2011	
ARRESTED	2	MALTREATED AT HOME	3
BLINDNESS MOTHER	1	PARENTS MIGRATED	11
BORN ON THE STREET	10	MISUNDERSTANDING WITH FATHER	1
BROKEN HOME	11	NEGLECT	154
DEATH FATHER	56	CHILD WAS NOT ACCEPTED	3
DEATH GRANTMOTHER	2	PARENTS UNKNOWN	1
DEATH MOTHER	21	POVERTY	29
DEATH PARENTS	26	SEARCH FOR MOTHER	1
DEATH STEPFATHER	1	SENT TO CARETAKER	2
DIVORCE	73	SEPARATED FROM FATHER	1
ALCOHOLIC FATHER	1	SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT HOME	1
FATHER IN PRISON	1	SICKNESS FATHER	3
FATHER MENTAL ILLNESS	1	STEPFATHER REMARRIED	1
DID NOT AGREE WITH ABORTION	1	TOO MANY CHILDREN AT HOME	16
GOT PREGNANT	5	TRUANCY	34
GREW UP IN NIGERIA	1	VIOLENCE AT HOME	17
HANDICAPT	1	VIOLENCE TEACHER	1
THE CHILD ILLNESS WAS TOO	1	WAR VICTIM (NORTH)	2
EXPENSIVE			
INLAW ALSO IN THE STREET	1		
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	2		
EXPLANATION:			
The parents of children in broken homes are not yet divorced.			
The death of a relative is vital because the child received support from them.			
The child who grew up in Nigeria did not feel at home in Ghana.			
Too many children at home are children from fathers with many wives.			
130 children parents divorced, but this was not for all of them the reason to be on the street.			
The three main reasons are:	1	Death of parent(s) or relative =	106
	2	Divorce =	73
	3	Neglect =	154

They have to be instructed and guided as how to deal with the children. In the past it was easy because the children just took part in making craft items. Now the children have to follow three steps in training to a certain level before the actual skill training starts.

B.
Six workers have received in-house expose' and tutorials as how to create awareness in universities and Senior High Schools. We have applied to donors to assist us to carry out this task and we hope that in January 2013 it can start officially.

C.
CAS is hosting a research conducted by Streetinvest a UK based organization. One of the workers is fully engaged by them

in this exercise.

D.

CAS has invited Streetinvest to train social workers of the department of social welfare in the art of dealing with “out of school children”. We are happy to let you know that the first training workshop has taken place from the 24th to the 27th of September 2012 at Osu children’s home, Accra.

Here follows a report.

Mr. Ross Duncan the Executive Director of Street Invest, Jacinta head of training and two trainers Mr. George Quaker and Mr. Tijani from Sierra Leone and Ghana respectively facilitated the training program.

Participants were drawn from CAS, S’AID (NGOs) and the department of social welfare. The training program which was supposed to be a four day program had to be carried out in three days due to some miss communication between the organizers and the Director of social welfare.

The training program was a follow up of recommendations from the report of the census on street children in the Greater Accra region.

Further the aim of the training program is to develop further skills of participants to reach out to street children and also for the trainees to become trainers in the near future.

The participants were taken through

- Definition of a street children
- Perceptions of street children in general
- Street mapping
- Stages of street work

At the end of the training program participants were awarded a certificate of Introduction to street work.

Generally the training program was good and we are looking forward to more of such programs to really equip us in our work.

CONCLUSION:

Children are the victim of family breakdown and other family problems. NGOs cannot solve these problems, but all of us can contribute to improve the rights of the children.

Therefore, CAS encourages all churches to intensify the teaching on family values and increase family counseling sessions. We in turn will improve the awareness programs. We count on donors to assist us in these efforts.

Following our publications of our findings of reasons why children are in the streets of our cities, (newsletter 58), we have

received several reactions. The most obvious reaction is that it is difficult for many people to comprehend that poverty is not the main factor. We mentioned many reasons why children are in the street, but the reasons showing family structures and other family issues appeared to be outstanding.

- Breakdown of families
- Divorce
- Neglect.

It is not the first time we publish these findings, but we are convinced that children who do not experience support from the family are prone to move to the streets. A daughter or son who is moved by the parent(s) to an uncle or grandmother sooner or later runs into trouble.

The dignity of the family is very important there should be solidarity and unity. If this is not available, the family will fall apart. Teachers and others continue with the upbringing what has been started in the family.

An example.

Mary. That is what I call her is the second child of her parents who had three other children. Mary is 15 years old. The father left the house eight years ago when he fell ill and told them that



he was going to search for herbal treatment. He never returned ever since. Mary was brought up by her grandmother and occasionally by her mum. Later they discovered that her father lives in another village and is married to another woman and has two children.

Mary started her basic education after her father neglected her. She dropped out of P2 because of truancy. Subsequently she was given to a woman who used her in the household. The woman took her to Lagos (Nigeria). Mary disappeared from that place and could not be traced. In 2011 she resurfaced in Accra. She lives on the street near CMB building and assists a visually impaired woman to earn her daily bread. A social worker of CAS met her at this place. She is now following the preparation period at CAS Refuge.

Because of the elections in Ghana, many people are debating whether free education up to senior high school is a solution, because several political parties offer this. We know that, although free primary education is in place already for a number of years, not all children make use of it. Our sponsorship scheme also includes the opportunity to attend school instead of learning a trade as an apprentice. We are very careful of allowing children to attend school because of the high costs involved. Yes, we do not have to pay for the school-fee but we have to dress children, provide several kinds of shoes for sports and Sundays, pay for books, stationary, PTA and watchman as well as excursions when they are organised.

The child needs money for food and pocket money. More importantly, the child needs a place of rest and an opportunity to study. During the early years of CAS, we placed a number of children in the same school. Soon we discovered that, that was not the right approach. The other children knew where they came from and had no mercy for them in calling them names and excluding them from their group. We quickly changed the strategy and placed children individually in school without informing the authorities of where they came from. Several entered the school through the “window”. But as mentioned before, the high costs involved compelled us to limit the training to apprenticeship training.

Preparing children for the future.

This is another interesting topic. Do “out of school” children think about their future. I think some do but very limited. Many have a very poor educational background and simply cannot imagine what a pilot, engineer a secretary or any other profession entails. We noticed this, when we give power-point presentations about different trades or ask professionals to come and talk about their trade or skills. After the talk, every



child wants to learn that particular trade. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for them to choose what to learn. A preparation period of one year is very short. Too often we prepare children for a trade in a particular workshop and pay for all the costs, only to discover that the child wants something different.

During the preparation period, the child still lives in the street. He or she has to decide to attend the classes. They do not understand that it is important to learn the basics in the classroom because they live day by day.

Out of school children are survivors. They experience so many difficulties in the streets and are not sure when they will eat their next meal and that is the only problem they think of. All other things are not important for them.

Outsiders, at times, want to “romanticise” the lives of these children and ask them what their dreams are. They do not dream because they lack the ability to think about the future. On the other hand this could be a blessing as well. We are often worried about many things which are yet to come but these children live day by day. I know that the street is a dangerous and dirty place especially at night. There is nothing romantic about it.

When I hear people say; “all children should have the opportunity to go to school”. Then my answer is; “please come and try to get them in our class room”. Therefore, we have to be realistic. We have to listen to them and learn more from them before we can assist them and prepare them for a better future.

Relationships in the streets.

There are not many children who are completely alone in the streets. The migrant children look for friends of their own ethnic group. Those born on the streets get friends of children they get to know. When you read the social survey reports, the friend is often mentioned. This could be the person they are staying with or the person who directed them to CAS.

Some, especially girls, are looking for protection. Of late, we see more and more that, close relationships grow from it. Or should I say, it is now that we discover these close relationships. We observe boys and girls, who stay together and have a child, and take care for it as well. They try to survive in the environment they find themselves in, which is a hostile environment.

We studied these surviving techniques. Accra city is growing and changing. More people stay in the urban sector. Unfortunately, more people live in the slums and try to survive. In the past many shoeshine boys operated in the city. These numbers have been reduced may be because there is not enough income. New roads have been built and more buses/coaches and trotros move through the traffic. Children serve as driver mates or as cleaners. They work at washing bays or clean car windscreens at the traffic-lights.

One activity has increased tremendously, the scrap collectors. Boys with pushtrucks walk through the streets and collect broken computers, typewriter, fridges, keyboards etc. In fact, they collect everything people throw away. All these items are dismantled; Copper, zinc, lead and components are separated and sold to persons who trade in these items. The method of separating is very simple. They burn or heat-up the items. Of course, dangerous fumes emit. This is done in the open and the persons know where the wind is coming from. I never heard that these persons got sick but it could be dangerous to their health.

The environment suffer most, the soil is saturated with all kind of chemicals and oil. It is not a good place to be.

Developments at CAS

Children are prepared at the Refuge and some are invited to move to Hopeland either for preparation to go to workshops or



for training at Hopeland. Eight members of staff are working at Hopeland. The problem we are facing at the moment is continuity and of availability of children to be trained.

At the refuge, several girls opt to learn the trade of hairdressing. They do not choose the sewing trade. They argue as follows, when I make a dress for somebody then they pay me when it is ready. They often pay in instalments. But when I am a hairdresser they pay me instantly.

The result is that not enough candidates are available for the sewing trade. We are now debating as to how we can make the sewing trade more attractive. May be by helping them to make their own dresses?

Another problem is that the children are not consistent. This happens more than in the past. Some children come for months in succession and then disappear. A half year later they appear again.

Plans for 2013

At the end of every year we evaluate the work done and we also make new plans for the newyear. In December 2012 several meetings will take place with the main aim to plan for the future.

1. Each department meets separately.
2. The Board of Advisors will meet.

3. All members of staff will meet during annual planning meetings. This year, management has written down some observations which will be discussed. During the second half of the meeting the departments will explain their plans. We will also discuss some general observations.

4. The second meeting for a “New UrbanChildhood” will take place at Gimpa. During this meeting we will be able to share our findings with other stakeholders.

Finally, we are very grateful for all our fundraisers who are assisting us to raise funds to carry-out the activities. In the 60th newsletter more details will be revealed.

NEWSLETTER NO. 60 MARCH 2013
FOLLOW-UP WORK

Although, the activities are in progress as planned, we are sad to let you know that we have lost another member of staff. Mr. John Fosu has been a member of CAS for the past 19 years and unfortunately he passed away after a short illness. May his Soul rest in peace!

John has been the head for the education activities. These include literacy, drama, library, computers and sports. We have re-organized these activities by adding to the timetable a staff/volunteer list. Every week, we assign members of staff and volunteers who are available to carry-out an activity.

Of course you might question whether all these persons are trained teachers? The answer is simple, none of them. Educating street children is different from educating school children. Most staff have acquired the skill of teaching street children over the years through in house training and practical involvement in the teaching process.

As we explained before, CAS is now dealing with migrant children (street children), those born on the street, Urban poor children and working children. We group them under one common name “out of school” children. This name explains it all.



They are not in school in fact, most of them have never seen a school from the inside. And most of them will never go to school because, they do not fit in these institutions because of their behavior, age and back ground.

At CAS, all staff and volunteers have to act as fathers and mothers to the children. We have to educate them on good behavior, self care, and to how listen to adults and treat fellow children. In fact, in the past, they have learnt everything by themselves because there was nobody available to advice or correct them in the proper way or manner.

To re-educate a child, the basic principle of life is very difficult. You need to have a lot of patience and determination. But everybody who loves children can do it.

The teaching at CAS is very basic. CAS has developed teaching aids for that purpose but here again a lot depends on the skills of the “teacher” as how to communicate with the children.

In the classroom, children are divided into four groups according to their abilities. These abilities are soon discovered by the “teachers” through simple exercises and daily communication with the child. Each group is directed by a member of staff or volunteer. This means, there is always noise and movement of children. Visitors often ask, “Can’t you separate them?” We have tried it, but it does not work. These children are very curious. They want to know what the other group is learning. They do not agree with the selection the “teacher” has made. Some want to be part of the group because their close friend belongs to that group.

The age group is also interesting. In the past the average age was 14 years. Now it is lower. In order to get their attention, you have to create something new every time. Therefore, CAS allows volunteers and students to assist them. These assistants can introduce new methods or approaches.

However, the “teachers” have to work as a team. Work has to be discussed and planned even the games and sports activities have to be prepared in advanced.

In Ghana, many “teachers” have been brought up during the time that the cane was generally accepted! At CAS we do not agree with these methods, but unfortunately some “teachers” are of the opinion that the cane is part of the educational tools. Children are living in a violent world. We have to try to reduce this violence. Therefore, we do not want to use games which include knocking and pushing. The makers of the games are surprised when we explain to them the reasons.

Despite some of the measures put in place to reduce the rate at which children abscond during the preparation period , still



children abscond. Some abscond during the initial preparation time, others during the introduction of the trades/skills and others when they are at Hopeland or in workshops. It is our task to find out the reasons and correct the mistakes made.

FOLLOW-UP WORK.

An investment in a child starts as soon as a child takes part in any of the activities at CAS. Initially, in time and availability of staff, later when enrolled in training money is added.

Unfortunately, staff can spend a lot of time on preparing a child, but s(he) take the decision to stay or to leave. CAS is not run as a school, we do not enroll children and they do not pay fees. We invite them to take part.

The child decides to come to CAS' House of Refuge, the child decides to take part in the activities. Even, when the child is at Hopeland s(he) is free to go and come. Hopeland is the extension of the street. Often we are asked why we do not run it as an institute or a school. We do not want to run it that way because, we are not yet sure that the child is serious of leaving the street.

But I can assure you that it is often frustrating for the staff when children run away. We often ask the question, "where and when did we make the mistake?"

Is it our approach, our treatment, or don't we want to see the problem, and what can be done?

First of all, we have to understand the problem. Discussions between members of staff in departments are very useful. At times, some of these problems are highlighted in monthly departmental reports. At times, these absconding cases come up during Head of departments meetings, although, these meetings are not meant for discussing individual case studies.

One thing is very clear. It is very difficult to penetrate the minds of the children. After so many years, we are still not sure how children react and respond to assistance we offer them. The fact

that we do not run CAS as an institution is a result of the original setup. We do gather the children but we go to them.

In order not to lose the investments we have to trace those children who abscond and find out the reasons. There are many reasons:

- A child does not agree with the treatment at CAS
- A child wants to be in charge of others and does not get that chance.
- A child cannot do without his/her friends.
- A child has chosen the wrong skill or trade and is afraid to admit that.
- A child steals something and runs away.
- A girl can be pregnant before starting and does not know how to handle the situation.
- A child is too used to the freedom.
- A child refuses to take his/her bath and take care of his/herself.
- A child is not ready to follow instructions.
- Peer pressure, the child has to listen to older children.
- And there are many other reasons.

Therefore, we at CAS have decided to attach supervisors to regular children. The supervisor has to try to become a friend of the child so that s(he) can advise and counsel the child. The supervisor gets to know the background of the child. At any time in the preparation or in training the supervisor can assist the other staff and take decisions for the child's future.

During the preparation period, social survey reports are written. These reports are confidential. The report explains the life of a person and we do not want to publish them. But the supervisor knows the details.

Follow-up workers are asked to trace the child. This is more difficult than it sounds, because at times the child does not want to be seen.

WORKERS:

The follow-up workers of CAS have already a job in one of the departments. This work is done in addition to their main job. A special schedule has been made so that at all times management can see where the person is operating.

There are six main areas in the city where children can be found namely; CMB, Railways, Circle, Kaneshie, Agbogbloshie and Konkomba.

95 % of the children in these areas know about CAS and know some of the workers. Most children in these areas survive there because they carry out small jobs as porters, driver-mates, sweep markets, or are involved in the scrap (iron) trade.

They earn 8 to 10 cedi a day which they use for their survival. Interestingly, many are between 11 and 13 years of age.

Unfortunately, some practice child prostitution and 'wee' smoking.

During the day they move from place to place but at night they often sleep at the same place.

There are other NGOs working in these areas. Chance for children and Children with difficulties are two other NGO working for street children.

When an absconded child is located, the supervisor is informed and together they try to persuade the child to continue with the training. Of course, the final decision is with the child.



fieldwork training- streetinvest uk

Follow-up workers always meet "new" children. These children are invited to come to the refuge. Presently, 50 to 60 children visit the Refuge every day. Sometimes attendance is high, and other times it is low. On their movements we know that when something is happening in town. Sometimes, it is because the AMA (City Authority) officers are conducting a "cleaning" or a demolishing exercise. It can also be other reasons such as festivities or political party rallies.

DSW

DSW which was formerly a department under the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare now comes under the new Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. With this change, DSW is now getting itself in order to get activities going. Interestingly, DSW has also a new National Director. This explains why we have not started with the districts work as planned. We hope by the end of this month (March) everything will be in place to start this exercise. We will keep you informed.

OTHER NEWS:

- We are happy to let you know that we have re-employed two members of staff who either went on studies or were offered

a contract. Another member of the staff is now employed by the Department of Social Welfare.

- Some volunteers who are presently with us have donated some needed items to CAS. With their assistance we were able to buy a new photocopier, a water tank and a new table football game for the children. Many thanks.

- CAS received other donations, food items, clothing and games. At times persons drive into the yard, present their items and disappear again. Others stop and enquire what we are doing with the children. It proves that we are not working in isolation but others are showing concern.

- We can also report to you that the research Streetinvest in conducting is going on well. They only experience, just as we do, the many power cuts (electricity). The reporting is not up to date. When there is electricity work should be carried-out immediately without delay.



TRIBUTE TO MR. JOHN FOSU

John Fosu popularly known among his working colleagues and the street children he works with as Teacher Fosu joined CAS in 1994 as a Teacher to the children.

The unit he headed was built around his personality and for so many years assisted to grow this unit- we called it the education department of CAS.

John Fosu played a very strong role in helping build good educational programmes for the department. He was with the children every day. To the children, his departure is still a dream. He was a good organizer and a strong Team player but occasionally could be very "difficult". He was an achiever. He was one person who built surprises when least expected. When all says yes, he still will say no and has never turned against this belief all these years.

He got sick in September 2012. His health deteriorated rapidly and in January responded to new treatments. He was assisted to go for treatment by CAS which he responded poorly.

It was sad losing him when he was needed most. But who can overturn God's wishes and decisions. From our belief, we saw

his situation as a preventable one but it is God who disposes. He is gone and we hope the Good Lord keep him safe. May his soul have perpetual peace and rest. Fare thee well Teacher Fosu. All will miss you.
Good Bye

NEWSLETTER NO. 61 JUNE 2013
DISCOVERING THEIR WAY OF LIFE.

During the past Heads of Department meetings as well as Board of Advisors meetings, members have discussed the responds of the children towards education.

Presently, many children visit the House of Refuge. Several young ones take part in the activities for a number of months and then suddenly disappear. These children are of the age group 8 to 14 years. Most probably, they are born on the streets, but we are not sure.

When a child wants to be educated we prepare that child and conduct a social investigation. A social survey report is written. Often these children are of the age group 14 to 18.

Therefore, CAS has very little information on children of this age group. During the discussions, various suggestions were made as how to involve the children. The most obvious suggestion is to give them more food. CAS already provides snacks and simple meals to the children every day as part of the preparation.

We started this some years ago. But we have increased the support during the last 6 months.

Children are happy with this support, but it does not change their attitude towards education. Some take part and chose to learn a trade. After a few months they tell us that they do not like to continue but learn something else. Of course, when a child is placed in a workshop it becomes a problem because the agreement fees paid are not refundable.

Usually, a child gets a preparation of one year, but we know that some of them need more time to make up their mind and decide what to learn.

The heads of departments as well as the Board members wonder why this preparation period is becoming longer and longer. What is changing?

THE CHANGE.

1. During the first fifteen years of CAS' existence, we were dealing mainly with migrant children of the age group 14 to 18 years. Many were eager to learn and the step by step process worked very well.

1. Workers visited children in the streets.
2. During the Street corner education periods, many children

came into contact with learning the first time.

3. Those interested were invited to visit the House of Refuge, and the process continued.

4. Children were prepared and invited to stay at Hopeland training centre for further preparation.

5. Workshops and schools were located, and many children followed training at these places for a period of 3 years.

2. More and more children absconded. Some during the preparation at the Refuge, some at Hopeland, and others while in workshops and schools.

CAS investigated the problems and concluded that the type of children had changed. The age group has reduced, and many children are second generation children of which many are born on the streets.



Fieldworkers were reassigned. Some at the Refuge and others at Hopeland. More hands were needed with the preparation because of the caliber of children visiting daily.

Still, the responds of the children did not improve and CAS decided to appoint some ex-fieldworkers as follow-up workers. These workers try to locate the children who have absconded and as such get to know the reasons why they have decided not to continue.

And here we are. We are ready to prepare the children and send them for training, but their responds is as if they are indifferent.

A NEW INVESTIGATION.

Let us re-examine of what we know and investigate more of what we do not know.

From the age group 14 to 18 we have many social survey reports. Different categories of situations are described in it.

A. Children who have both their parents alive and shown caring are ready to pay for the school fees of their child, feed

and clothe the child, but the child become a truant and runs to the streets.

Why the child does reacts in this way? It can be peer pressure, or the child as a teenager cannot cope, or it can be adventure. Psychologists know more about this behavior and even could be of assistance to the family.

B. Some families of the children are divided into two groups who live in different countries. One part lives in Ghana and the other part either in Togo, Ivory Coast or Burkina Faso.

Surprisingly, a large group of children we meet have parents or relatives who live in different countries. Children grow-up in one country and are sent to relatives in the other country. Often the child cannot cope with the changes and does not feel happy with the situation. The result is that the child runs to the streets. These children do not grow up in a stable family and do not feel supported.

C. Sadly, there is a group of children who are mistreated at home. Some are beaten or are sexually mistreated by family members. It is clear why these children escape home and run to the street.

Often the social survey reports only describe a bit of the situation at home because the child does not want to talk about it. Only when a social-worker becomes their friend, then more and more information are revealed. At times it takes more than a year before we know what really happened at home.

D. The largest group are children of which one of the parents died or the parents are divorced. Often, Step fathers or mothers or grandmothers come into the picture. These children are not accepted by their "new" parent or are not cared for.

Unfortunately, this is the main reason why so many children are in the streets and do not go to school.

E. Some children are miss-treated by parents and used as bread-winners. The child has to work. These children do not get a chance to be educated and as soon as they get an opportunity to escape they land in the streets.

F. Of course, there are children who do not fit into any of the above mentioned categories and are also in the streets.

YOUNGER GENERATION:

In order to get to know more about the children of the younger age group, CAS asked all its workers to interview children. The reports written are not full social survey reports, but they reveal a little bit. It was a sample research.

The workers were cautioned to be very careful as how to ask the questions because if the first answer of the child is accepted as the true answer, the results will reveal a distorted picture.

For instance; If the worker asked the child where s(he) was born, the child will never tell that s(he) was born on the street, rather s(he) will give the name of the village of town where the

mother comes from.



not interested in education



The children interviewed were between 12 and 15 years of age. Most of them were girls. They have various interests. Few of them were very honest and told us that they did not have interest except to get some money or watch videos. However, some wanted to learn how to play soccer or to be a musician. Except one, most of them have only a mother and several admitted they did not know their father. Two of them were born outside Accra, the remaining mentioned parts of Accra as their hometown.

Almost all are not assisted by anyone and they take care of themselves. Only few are supported by their mothers, aunties or sisters. They sell water or carry loads for passengers but they do have official jobs to survive. Unfortunately, all the girls talked to, except the one staying with her parents, are sexually abuse regularly.

The boys complain that the older ones steal their money or insult them. But they are happy in the streets because they can decide for themselves what to do. These findings confirm what we already know. The fact is that, they do not grow up in a stable environment as well as the freedom they have are main factors why they are not interested in learning a trade or going to school. However, some expressed the wish to go to school or become fashion designers but in their hearts they know this can never be achieved.

“ Today I need money to eat, so let me try to get it” . Recently I met a boy I know in the streets selling coconut fruits. I ask him why he does not come to CAS again, he told me, “brother, when I come to CAS I do not get money, I have to sell these fruits to get money to eat”.

In other words, we have to be realistic and offer them things they can comprehend and achieve.

NEWSLETTER NO. 62 OCTOBER 2013 EXPERIENCES AND PLANS

Before we give you an update of the activities of CAS, we want to sincerely apologize to all those who received an alarming email from bro. Jos who was assumed robbed in the Philippines. He was not in the Philippines but he was enjoying his holidays in the Netherlands. Our email address was hacked into and all the email addresses of those who receive our newsletter were used.

PLEASE DELETE FROM YOUR COMPUTERS THE EMAIL ADDRESS casfic@live.com This is not our address.
CAS uses casfic@yahoo.com

During his leave bro. Jos visited a number of donors in The Netherlands and Germany and together with the Mission and Development group of his parish did some fundraising in schools.

The work at CAS continued and therefore we will give an update and explain the plans we have for 2014.

In Newsletter 61 we explained the back ground of the different types of children and why they abscond during the preparation or training period. We are trying to understand how they live and what they think. In short, we are not deciding for them, rather they decide themselves what they do with their lives.

Nobody can change this. Our programs have to be tailored accordingly. The children are free to take part in the activities at the Refuge but also at Hopeland. We invite them to take part, but when they decide to return to the streets at any time, we have to respect that.

However, this is difficult to understand by donors because they want to see results.

You (CAS) have enrolled many children, how many did complete the training? You (CAS) visit the streets daily, how many have left the streets and are following training?

These questions are difficult to answer. In fact, our method of measuring is different. For instance, when we see 15 half naked children, or should we say partly dressed children, in the classroom then we are happy that they have come and are willing to listen to us. We are again happy when in the middle of the day a group of dirty children enters the compound or when



the follow up workers manage to locate one of the absconded children and succeed to convince him or her to continue with the training.

The question is, should we measure in this way or should we use the rule of value for money principle?

Some years ago, during the time when 11 fieldworkers worked on daily basis in the street, we experienced similar problems. Every day, the workers met different children and they organized street corner activities and invited children to visit the Refuge. The direct impact could not be measured but the fact that many children visited the Refuge freely was and is for us a sign that all this work and approach was important and successful. But we could not give the requested figures.

Some children were very young when we met them the first time. They had no time for us, and no time for education. They were happy to be free. They did not come to CAS again but grew up in the streets. Now, that they are older they realized what they had missed and visited the Refuge again. At times they come and tell us that they understood that they have had one chance already, but they beg for another opportunity.

For students in a school situation it is easy to give progress

reports, but for those who do not go to school it is difficult. We should not forget that we do social work.

OUR PLANS.

Our plans to work in the social welfare districts, is still on course. The DSW is ready to cooperate with us and organize more training workshops for social workers. In addition, CAS/DSW workers are ready to educate out of school children in all districts. However, some money is needed to carry out this task. The DSW could not raise the money. Therefore, we are preparing an application for support to 100% for children a Danish partner who will present the application to CISU. Two students from Denmark are with us to assist us to draft this proposal in the right format. Of course, the students should first understand our history and what we want to achieve.

Presently, they are interviewing members of staff and visiting other NGOs to get a better understanding of what is happening with children who are on the street.

We have based our proposal on past experiences in the street. We have done Fieldwork, organized mini refuges in various suburbs of Accra, organized street corner education sessions, do street mapping, conduct head counts and training.

CAS has gone through many experiences, and at times we forget that not everybody understands what we write. Therefore, it is good that the students in universities and other higher institutions ask questions and we have to explain it in more details.

The main idea is to educate with the assistance of DSW officers, many children in the streets. This education will take place during counseling sessions where children will be advised on life skills, health and best behavioral practices. The aim is not to enroll all these children in the sponsorship program because that cannot be achieved. CAS and others do not have the financial means to do so. But of course, if a few will visit the Refuge regularly afterwards and follow the process of preparation then this will be an indirect result.

If this proposal is approved, then this network of district officers would be setup during the first part of the year. During the second half some educational sessions would be organized and children would be registered.

REGISTRATION OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

The aim is to register all children who attend the educational sessions regularly. With this, we hope to give the children an identity. Many of the migrant children do not have a birth certificate or they do not know how to obtain it. This registration is a first step. When the child is registered his name, age and place of birth could be known. Some of the children could also



be registered for the National health insurance through this registration process.

All this information would be entered into the data base which was set up by the DSW during the Ricerca project in 2009. Eventually, the authorities will get to know who lives and works in the streets.

Out of school children who follow the educational sessions in the street will be invited on excursions. They will be taken to the Refuges of various NGOs or to other places of interest. Special days have to be organized with presentations either with the use of videos or films.

Resource persons could be invited to speak about specific topics and counseling sessions could take place. Definitely, it should not be a day of entertainment only. We also envisage that ex-fieldworkers who are now stationed at Hopeland could do follow-up work in Ashaiman and Tema. They could contact the district officers in the neighborhood and work with them in that area.

AWARENESS.

The Awareness group of CAS is visiting universities and other higher institutions to present a power-point presentation and a film about street children and also create the awareness about their plight.

We managed to visit more other higher institutions than universities because our experience is that it is difficult to make the right contacts. We followed the following procedures in establishing contact at the universities; an introductory letter is written and presented to the management of the school. A member of the awareness group followed up. At times s(he) is directed to contact a student leader, other times contact numbers are exchanged. However, often students are preparing for exams or are on vacation and this often affects our arrangements. In general, school authorities are skeptical to give permission because they think we come for fundraising event. CAS has not been very successful to enter these universities. Now we try to enter from below. A student or a chaplain we know or a known student group can be the “entry” point. This person can be the link to the next contact.

Higher institutions which are senior high schools and the Technical institutions, are easier to enter because they often have specific periods for religion or life skills lessons which could be substituted for the presentation. The school decides and not the students. The aim is to set up a dialogue with the students. Questions they asked have helped us to improve the presentations.

Groups of students have also visited CAS Refuge and interacted with the children directly. Others came to donate items. We hope that more interactions will take place in the future.



CAS' HOUSE OF REFUGE

In fact, our main aim is to have a dialogue and interactions among students and children who do not go to school. Some success has been chalked with this exercise.

In future, we are sure that we have to do presentations to stakeholders in the various districts. Of course, these interactions will be different from those with the students. People who are already in the field can make use of their own experiences and have a better input.

STREETINVEST

The research “why some children leave the streets and others do not” is still going on. Focus group discussions are organized regularly to obtain detailed information from the children.

During their field work, the workers meet many children who have never visited any of the NGOs. Often they are new comers who are still finding their way in the city. This proves that a lot could be organized for them in the field. The research of Streetinvest continues for another two years. We will keep you informed.

CONCLUSION

As you can read, our plans are ready. Let us hope donors will understand and support them.

NEWSLETTER NO. 63 DECEMBER 2013 EVALUATION

During the months of October and November, CAS evaluated its performances with the assistance of a Misereor representatives Mrs. Heidi Theimann from Germany and Dr. Joe Tabazuing from Gimpa-Ghana. The Heads and one member of the departments as well as members of the management team took part. Several members of the Board of Advisors came to join us during the discussions. The organizers visited and interviewed members of other NGOs as well as the Director and a member of the child protection unit of the Department of Social Welfare.

Of course, these evaluators were not with us during the preparation period of two months, but we at CAS were busy with this exercise during this time. We were also busy with other things because we drafted a proposal for “100 % for children”, a donor from Denmark. “100 %” sent two volunteers to CAS to assist in drafting this proposal. The two volunteers, Camilla and Nina have since returned home.

In our previous newsletter, we explained our plans and we had these in mind when we evaluated the various activities.

CHILDREN VISITING CAS.

Although, we have not intensified our fieldwork activities, we experience an increase in children visiting the Refuge. We almost reached the previous level of 50 to 60 children a day. What are the reasons for this response of the children? It is difficult to explain. At times, large groups of girls appear in the



Refuge. At other times, more boys than girls are present. Peer pressure or peer initiative could be a factor. Children do not come alone but with friends. From the group who visit us presently, many children are scrap collectors at Konkomba market. Their ages are between 12 years and 18 years. In fact it is at times very difficult to know the age of the child because of lack of nutritious food. Many are stunted and appear younger than they are.

They are all survivors and are hardened. Do not make the mistake and consider them as young children. Because of their survival instinct, they can be smart and easily mislead you.

THE PROBLEM.

Many children we meet are too old to attend primary school and too young to follow apprenticeship training. You have to be 15 years or above to be allowed to follow apprenticeship training. In fact, this is not the main problem. Children who are born in the street do not behave well.

Many do not know how to take care of themselves. They have learnt how it should be done by their understanding but do not know the correct way. Our skill is to reform them. Most of them have to be reformed either during the time they are at the

Refuge or at Hopeland. Many of them have not followed education as well and to do see education as a necessity. In addition, several children have learning difficulties. In fact, the decision to take better care of children we meet these days is the main resolution of the evaluation. In addition, to improve our awareness, Lobbying and fundraising programs, is another resolution.

The sponsorship programs could be organized differently. More intensive preparation followed by longer period of introduction of skills. Although, we do not know the background of the children as yet, members of staff will prepare the children to a certain level.

This is of course risky because money will be used on children we do not know very well.

Those who are capable to go to school will be assisted provided CAS can find donors who are willing to finance this schooling program.

There are many ideas of improving our performances. However, we have to choose what to do first.

What should CAS do with these kinds of children?

Do we (CAS) show the correct skills and trades? Are the methods we use effective? Are we capable of handling such a



large group of children?

Some years ago we started teaching skills at the Refuge and Hopeland because of this dilemma. Introducing children in skills and trades is different from teaching them.

For sure in addition, we have to improve the literacy training. This should be done more intensively. To do this, we need the assistance of experts.

The variety of skills and trades shown at CAS should be increased. At Hopeland this will be possible, because space is available but then we have to employ more staff. But should it become an official Training Centre?

INSTITUTE:

There is a big danger to run an official school or training centre. As soon as it becomes official, I can assure you that not a single street child will be able to enter that place again. We know the regulations of running a school or a training centre.

Yes, the child does not have an appropriate dress.

Yes, s(he) does not behave according to standard.

Yes, s(he) is not punctual.

Yes, s(he) talks before the teacher does.

Yes, s(he) has no past records.

But we at CAS want to train him/her anyway so that they get back their dignity. If they want, they can live as if we have not known them without an identity or label.

This reasoning is difficult to understand, but this is the fundamentals of CAS.

In order to work more effectively, we will need the help of others.

This could be teachers who can give these literacy lessons. We are also hopeful that we can work with officers of the Department of Social Welfare in the streets. We also want to highlight more on the problem and find common solutions. "Out of school children" do not appear only in the centre of the city, but are everywhere. As explained before, in one part of the City many Migrant children operate. In another part, many Urban Poor live.

In other parts, the majority are working children. Therefore, we have to assist these children at various locations.

CAS will not be able to solve these problems alone, but we can be instrumental to involve other NGOs and organizations.

DISTRICT WORK.

Let us start working together with the officers of the DSW. The plans are:

1. CAS staff intends to visit all social welfare districts and do some town mapping together with the officers of the DSW.
2. The second training session for officers of the DSW will be organized. The aim is to have 32 officers, two from each district



under DSW trained.

3. The CAS awareness group will organize presentations in the districts and schools.

4. Daily street corner education will be organized in 5 districts during the first year. NGOs and other organizations in the various districts will be invited to collaborate.

5. Street children will be registered and receive an identity.

6. Excursions for these children will be organized. They will visit the Houses of Refuge of the various NGOs and Hopeland and visit other places of interest. Special programs will be organized during these excursions so that these children will be better informed.

7. The programs will be evaluated.

CAS also wants to improve our services at Hopeland. The present preparation program is as follows:

- Children visit the House of Refuge regularly.
- They take part in all the activities organized.
- The children are assessed and receive advice from the welfare committee.
- Usually, after 8 to 12 months social surveys are conducted and some are invited to go the Hopeland for a period of six months. Others start their training either at the Refuge or in workshops.

The plans are in place to change it as follows:

- Children visit the House of Refuge regularly.
- They take part in all the activities.
- After a few months, the children are invited to stay at Hopeland.
- They stay for two months and return to the Refuge and “new” children go to Hopeland.
- The literacy program at the Refuge and at Hopeland will be improved.
- Social Surveys will be completed before any child starts his/her training.

If possible, CAS will introduce another trade/skill at Hopeland. This can only be done when the existing skills are functioning well. For approximately one and a half years, Hopeland staff are running the training of sewing and hairdressing as an official training program. Basically, it means that children and staff should be much more disciplined to make the program work. Hours of training, as well as the training program should be adhered to strictly.

Skill training and trade training requires a lot of materials and tools. Fortunately, we have received several tools from donors. Some tools we do not need at this moment or at times we have too many of one kind. We are trying to exchange them for tools we need. Some workshop managers are ready for these exchanges.

COMMUNICATION

Communication remains a great skill. CAS has a website which we try to keep up to date. CAS also writes quarterly newsletters. Approximately, 500 persons and organizations receive these newsletters.

During the evaluation we were confronted with NGOs who claimed not to know CAS, although members of these NGOs met us during coalition meetings. Many Parishioners of the Catholic Church do not know us, although, the parishes received newsletters during the past twenty years.

We have to examine what is wrong. Is it because they are not interested or are too many needs presented to the society?

We have to close with another sad news. Another long serving member of staff Theodora Ntumy, passed away after a short illness. She was the mother of three small children.

TRIBUTE TO THEODORA NTUMY

Theo, we write this tribute with our eyes full of tears and heavy hearts saying farewell to Part Company with you after almost 19 years. It is said that you are dead but I know that you have just migrated into an invisible apartment of our maker.

Looking back, our relationship was certainly sweet but not without the normal ups and downs.

We are missing you greatly but we know God needs you more and thankful to him for having sent you to us all this time. We are always proud of you for your love for the street children who visit us daily at the refuge and for those you meet daily in the streets.

Theodora Ntummy joined CAS in 1994 as a fieldworker. The unit she worked with for many years until re-assigned to CAS Hopeland training centre at Adjei Kojo –Ashiaman. Theo played a very strong role in helping build good street programs for the field department. She was with the children every day in the street. To the children, her departure is still a dream.



She was a good organizer and a strong Team player but occasionally could be very difficult. She was an achiever. She rose through the system to become a Professional social worker after taking a certificate in social work.

She was one person who built surprises when least expected. Though, very soft spoken but could be very 'uncompromising' occasionally.

It was sad losing her when she was needed most by all. But who can overturn God's wishes decisions and instructions. From our belief, we saw her situation as a preventable one but it is God who disposes.

She is gone and we hope the good Lord keep her safe. We will

celebrate your life and dry each other's tears knowing that you have gone to a better place.
 May her soul have perpetual Peace and Rest. Fare thee well Theodora. All will miss you.
 Good bye

NEWSLETTER NO. 64 MARCH 2013
 INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES OF CAS

We want to share our experiences of income generating activities involving street children in order to make CAS self-reliant. We want to share this knowledge because other NGOs and charities could use these experiences.

CAS started its income generating activities in 1995. Hopeland was established as a farm. Chicken as well as pigs were reared and dry-season garden started. CAS continued with the farm because we thought street children could learn the farming methods or animal husbandry for their future. As explained before in previous newsletters, not many children showed interest. After investigating the reasons it became clearer that children did not want to live the same kind of lives as their parents did in the villages, work in the farm in order to survive. There is no gain or profit but the work is difficult.

After we discovered this, we decided to continue the farm as an income generating activity in order to be able to pay the salaries of the employees as well as maintaining the buildings. At Hopeland, we tried the following:

- Chicken (2000 layers), eggs were sold regularly.
- Chicken -broilers and sold the meat.
- Pigs (40 at a time). We had to build a new pigsty in order to house them well.
- Ducks. We changed the old pigsty into a house for ducks.
- And other animals.

What are the experiences?

Rearing chicken is a very delicate business. The chicken easily get sick. The place should be kept clean and when entering you have to dip your feet (fumigate) into a bath which kills all bacteria. These dipping baths are constructed at the entrances of the chicken houses.

Not all children showed this care and walked in anyhow. Day old chicks do need even more care and before you realize it, many can die. However, the sales of eggs was no problem. Often the eggs were sold before they were laid.

Rearing Broilers is another story. They are kept until they get a certain weight. In other words you have to buy a lot of feed for them and provide the right kind of feed.

At Hopeland we milled and mixed the feed ourselves. We had to do this in order to cut down costs. Of course, more hands are needed to prepare the feed. The investments are very high and



we had to stop this activity when the feed became too expensive.

We stopped with the layers recently in December 2013 when the costs became too high.

Rearing chicken can be an income generating activities, but we advise do not rely on the children only. Chicken are delicate birds but street children are stronger. Employ professionals and don't start on a small scale. The investment you have to make are very high anyway. We also advise to study the market well, because the feeding costs often exceeds the income.

Unfortunately, even though Hopeland did not experience the swine as well as the bird flu which affected other farms near Hopeland, Hopeland experienced major financial loses because no animal or birds were permitted to be slaughtered or transported for sale during this period.

What else did we try at Hopeland? Ducks. As mentioned earlier we reared ducks at Hopeland. They multiply very fast but the cases have to be kept very clean. The same applied for the Rabbits.

Restaurants were willing to buy them from us, provided we



could supply them an agreed number every month. This requirement could not be fulfilled because we did not have the capacity and experience to meet the dead lines.

Unfortunately, the ducks also suffered from the appearance of monitor-lizard who came from the surrounding bush. Monitor-lizards are as large as alligators and have a similar appearance. We did not know they could climb a two meter wire fence, but they did. The lizard came to eat the eggs and in the process killed all the ducks. In addition to the many animal diseases we experienced made us decide to discontinue rearing them.

OTHER ANIMALS:

Snails. They grow easily, but the marketing is very difficult.

Grass-cutters. These animals live in quiet and dark places. They eat vegetables and grass. They can become very large and heavy.

The grass-cutters are not used to noise. In other words, grass-cutters and street children do not go together. We tried to rear several but they did not multiply.

We also kept bees and have a fishpond.

At Hopeland, we still rear pigs and goats. All other animals have stopped.



ITEMS WHICH CAN BE RECYCLED. GLASS AND PLASTIC SACHETS.

In 1997, a retired owner of a glass factory phoned us. He was willing to assist us in organizing broken glass collection by the street children. We visited his house several times to learn from him as how to go about it.

Broken glass is dangerous. He advised us to collect it in sacks made of jute. Glass is also very heavy. The factory buys it per lorry load not per kilogram. This meant that we had to collect a full lorry load. He gave us the price we could get and we figured out how much we could give to the children per kilogram.

Glasses has to be sorted out in different colors. Green, red (brown) and white glass. There are still more colors but the use is limited.

We instructed the children and arranged certain times of buying it from them. Where to store it? We decided to keep it on the flat roof of the House of Refuge where we could keep it safely. The disadvantage of this place was that it had to be carried up and brought down later. Street children are very clever. At times, we were overwhelmed with bags and paid twice for the same bag.

Also, rubbish was between the pieces of glass so that the weight could increase. Anyway, this was our own fault of not organizing it well. We were inexperienced.

After a few months the children had collected enough to fill a lorry. The glass factory is in Tarkwa in the western region of Ghana. Tarkwa is 287 km from Accra. In order to be able to return the same day everything had to be organized early. Some staff volunteered to accompany the truck.

To make a long story short, the factory cheated us and we received far less than agreed before. It was a big loss because the staff and children had to be compensated as well. This was the end of the glass collection.

Plastic sachets.

In Ghana, pure water is sold in plastic bottles but also in sachets. Street girls and boys sell them near traffic-lights and in other places. The idea came up to use the sachets to make small bags which can be used as pen holders etc. Street girls



who learn the trade of sewing will learn and the income could be used in the department to buy other materials. The activity was organized by the demonstration department.

Plastic sachets have to be collected. We asked school headmasters to organize the collection of sachets which were used by their children. The headmasters did not know why we needed these sachets until we showed them the products. The sachets have to be washed, dried and later sorted out.

Plastic pen holders, shopping bags as well as skirts were sewn. Soon other people took over the jobs and started small factories which produced better quality items than what street children can make. The children are still at a learning stage.

The main problem is that we did not have a patent on the products we make. Others are free to copy the item and produce them as well. We witnessed this with several items invented. Ceramics items as well as candles and carvings. As soon as the item is successful and liked by customers, you lose it because professionals take over the production.

CERAMICS.

Before CAS started ceramics production, a study was conducted. We asked some people with knowledge of this industry to assist us in this research. Many ceramic items are imported to Ghana. Especially, plates, cups and saucers. But clay is available in areas close to Accra.

Many artisans who manufacture ceramic items are based in Accra. Street children could learn this trade but have to form small firms in order to earn enough to pay for the investments. Baking ovens are very expensive. They are not really necessary because the items could be transported to places where they could be baked.

This is the method we used at the House of Refuge. Children

made the items and we transported them for baking. At a certain time we decided to expand the workplace and most of the time the main production was done at Hopeland where we had space. Two ovens were built and many items made.

In this trade, we experienced the same difficulties as described above. There are many pots makers and several locations where the products are sold. CAS cannot compete with these tradesmen. We choose art designs which were not common but again we noticed that others duplicated them.

Also, not many children showed interest in this trade and after five years of experimenting, we decided to stop it.

CANDLE-MAKING

We were assisted by several donors to establish this trade. We visited candle making factories in the Netherlands and England and several artisans gave us advice. Candles can be made in different ways. Beeswax candles are expensive because the



wax is pure.

Commercial wax can be bought at the market. You have the choice of coloring them thoroughly or only the outer layer.

Plastic Molds are used to manufacture the candle using different shapes. The skills is to use the correct size of wick to produce slow burning candles. We tried many different kinds, but discovered that the plastic molds are not made for the tropics. They have to be replaced often.

Another method are the so called drip candles. We tried them as well. Even very large candles were made which are often used in churches. Competition is great. The people who sell the candles determine the price.

They do not calculate the amount of wax or other materials used but simply tell you that they can obtain these candles cheaper from other suppliers. Quality is not the measure, only the

appearance.

Making candles is not a good trade to involve children. The wax has to be heated and the work has to be carefully done. It is a dangerous job for children.

We also had to stop with this trade after some time.

CONCLUSION.

You may conclude that all what CAS tried failed, this was partly because we tried to involve the children who have no experience at all or they just do not have interest in the projects. However, we did not fail in everything because we still make artifacts and rear the mentioned pigs and goats, and have gained a lot of experiences.

Our advice is as follows:

1. Do not try to compete with others, if you don't have the expertise, the capacity and adequate funding base.
2. Study the market well. Often the investments are more than the profit of the end products.
3. Do not start vegetable gardens when the rain pattern is not predictable. Irrigation is an expensive investment.
4. Most animals are not used to the rough handling by children.
5. Start income generating on commercial bases and employ professionals. Do not solely rely on the children.
6. Be aware that from the twelve products children attempt to make, only one or two can be sold.

We are aware that where CAS has failed others could succeed. It all depends on where your place is located and the circumstances.

We still have many ideas how CAS could continue, but we want to base them on the experiences we gained in the past. We hope you will support us.

NEWSLETTER NO. 65 JUNE 2014 RESEARCH

Members of staff held various meetings in order to improve the attendance of the children at the refuge and get them interested in education.

Children are interested in particular activities such as dancing, sports and games as well as activities which are competitive.

Many children come to see what is happening at CAS but they do not stay. We debated on these facts and decided to organize the following: "New" children will be registered after which a member of the welfare committee will introduce and explain to

them what they should expect at CAS. This member will be at hand during the day to advice and encourage them to take part in the activities. In order words, the “new” children receive more attention than the regular ones.

We also decided to let them try certain skills and trades at an earlier time. In the past we observed them for one month which has proven to be too long.

RIGHT TO PLAY:

Because children like games and sport, we have signed another agreement of cooperation with “Right to Play” a Canadian organization. We have been working with them since 2007.

More members of staff will be trained to become coaches so that they will be able to teach the children.

Volleyball, basket ball and soccer are popular sports, but only selected children can take part. The coaches will see to it that children who are not involved in these games will have the opportunity to play table-tennis, table football or indoor games.

The motto is; “get them all involved”. Fortunately, we have received a lot of support from Stichting Songzel- The Netherlands, Aid World-Italie, and Stichting-Stivosina- The Netherlands who assisted us to re-construct the courtyard at the Refuge. Many thanks for all the assistance. Now with the support of Right to Play we will be able to organize these activities well.



TRAINING:

Another improvement is the decision to let the children rotate between Hopeland and the Refuge. Some will be invited to stay at Hopeland for a period of two or three months and others can stay longer. We no longer wait for the child to decide to stay or to leave, we monitor them better and decide with them how to continue.

The welfare committee at the Refuge remains in charge and decides who will supervise a particular child during the various stages of training. In addition, some staff will rotate as well and either assist at the Refuge or work at Hopeland.

DATABASE AND PRICES:

The database of the children has been improved and at regular intervals we can see where the children are trained and the period involved. Of course, the child does not benefit from this alone but also CAS as an organization can better monitor the costs involved. When a child overstays his or her time at a particular place, CAS loses money because for each child a particular amount is allocated. Now with the increase in inflation in Ghana it becomes more and more difficult to monitor this. The prices of goods and items do not follow the same rate as the inflation. At times some of the prices are doubled overnight. Everything is included, with the result that the living cost are much higher than in the beginning of the year.

In the past, we looked for the best solution for the child in training, now we decide what we can manage financially.

COMPUTERS:

Of late, we repaired and changed all the computers at the Refuge and at Hopeland. Windows XP can still be used but we changed most computers and installed Linux operating system. Many staff-computers were changed to the Windows seven system. Both operating systems are new to us and staff needs time to get acquainted with them. Some year ago Mr. Hans Gleijm helped us to obtain many computers from the Rotterdam university. We managed to keep them running by repairing them with parts from similar computers but now the monitors are spoiling one after the one. The life span is three years, but that was the age of the computers when they arrived at CAS.

WORKING CHILDREN

During the years, CAS has come in contact with different kinds of children. We worked a lot with migrant children, and learn more and more about children who are born in the streets.

We know a bit about urban poor children, but we must admit we do not know much about working children in Ghana.

However, we have heard many stories about these working children who help fishermen, those working in the farms (cocoa



industry), and the children who do the stone crushing. Unfortunately, these stories we heard about 20 years ago are still the same. Either there are no improvements in the situation or the stories will remain there forever.

This made us decide to conduct a research ourselves. The research is not yet completed but we can give you an update.

1. Children working with the fishing communities. Completed.
2. Children working in the sand and stone winning industry. Completed.
3. Children working with the farming communities. Not yet started.
4. Children working in town as porters and hawkers. Not yet started.

WHY THE RESEARCH

- To find out more about children working in the fishing communities at the beaches of the Greater Accra Region.
- To find out whether children engaged in this activities are either in school or are not schooling at all.
- The research is to also find out the health hazards associated with these activities.
- How much they earn, what they use their money for.
- It is to find out if these categories of out of school youth are migrant or living with their parents.

1. Fishing communities.

This research was conducted during the months of February and March 2014, by six members of staff.

- a) They conducted a mapping and introduction exercise by meeting the chiefs and government officials in the area.
- b) They also mapped out the area.
- c) Interviewed children, parents, guardians, fisherman and traditional leaders.

Areas covered:

- Chorkor, James town, Chemuenaa, Korle-Gonno, Glefe. Observation:

1. During the research we observed that most of the parents could not cater for their children because of financial problems. Some children also feel comfortable with their current situation are not going to school and working or helping at the beaches. Some children are forced to work at the beaches in a form of inheritance because the family tradition should continue. We also realized that some of them have lost interest in schooling because they observe what their friends have been earning at the beaches which clearly states that peer pressure is also a factor.



2. The children who help at the beach to sort the fish earn between two and five Ghana cedis a day. Those who work offshore, and accompany the fishermen in the boats earn between 20 and 50 Ghana cedis a day.

3. Majority of the children met at the beaches were indigenes with few coming from the other parts of the country. Further, the children met there were either dropped out from school or are in school. Generally, these fisher folks have large families which suggest why their children cannot be catered for in school. Further, apart from children who are working, there are others who idle around either to play, do their own fishing or gamble.

4. Glefe : our visit to Gbegbeyesie beach revealed alot about the children who work on the beach. The environment is not healthy for these children since the beach served as a place of convenience for some households in the community. Further, some part also served as a refuse dump for the people around. Another observation made in this area was that there are a lot of children who come to the beaches to work for the fishermen, play around or swim in the sea. There are others too who come with their mothers to buy fish and these are between the ages of 2 to 13 years old and have to be in school. Further, irresponsibility on the part of the fathers has led to most of the children working at the beaches instead of being in school. Most fathers have two or more wives and a lot of children hence their

inability to send them to school. There are no serious economic activities going on at the beach, it's just some few hawkers and a few drinking bars in operation.



Chokor : the Chorkor beach has been divided into four namely: Chemuenaa, Lantey Maami, Galilee and Mantsulu Mli. The environment at the beaches is very bad and poses a lot of health hazards to the people living there. Most of the beaches has been used as refuse dump and public place of convenience where people defaecate indiscriminately. The economic activities there is also very low and just like Glefe beach with some few food vendors.

The environment at James town beach is a bit better than the other beaches. Economic activities there are high, there is a market center and other food vendors and a workshop for working on the canoes. The office of the national fishermen association is also located there. Another observation made is that there are some squatters there and according to investigation we had, they run brothels there where prostitution and smoking of weed goes on. During our visits we came across some teenage mothers among the squatters there.

CONCLUSION:

Majority of the children met at the beaches are indigences and live with the parents. These children are not "street children" neither are they born on the street. They are working at the beach to assist their parents.

RESEARCH WORK ON STONE QUARRY AND SAND WINNING IN GA WEST AND SOUTH MUNICIPALITIES

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Geographically, Ga west lies in the Eastern corner of the Greater Accra region. The District capital is Amasaman. The area is also bounded on the North by the Eastern region, on the East by Ga East, the west by Ga central and Ga south

municipalities. The above mentioned towns (ref GA WEST) are all located in the area where sand activities goes on there. The researches were conducted in April 2014.

CHILDREN IDENTIFIED

Many of the children met claimed to be in school. Some were helping their parents either before going to school or go to school in the afternoons. Several of the children were full-time workers.

OBSERVATION:

Places visited. DOME ABRA: It is a well organized stone and sand quarry with all the earth moving equipment at site. During our time of visit we counted 100 children, 20 of them girls all below the ages of 19years. Many of them come to support their parents either to help pay their school fees or for the upkeep of the family. Some of the children said they were attending school, others are drop outs and others have completed JHS. Almost all of them at the time of visit were working without protection.

KATAPOR. This place is not as organize as Dome Abra however during our time of visit we counted 30 children 10 of them girls below the ages of 18years. They also come there to supports their parents pay schools fees and the upkeep of the family.

At Katapor some of the children do not go to school some were also drop outs. We also realized that most of the children refused to go to school because they make money at the quarry which is also a major concern of some of the parents.

JOHN TEYE DOWN

Another place visited was John Teye. We did not see many children, only 25 children were working there of which 6 were girls. Many of the children were there to sell items to the workers. They were also some parents with toddlers. Also at this place the children were working without protection. Land owners give the lands to them with the reason to level the lands for them. Some give the land out for free but others too takes some amount of money. After the land is leveled they move to other places. Some of the children also come together in a group of about five to crack stones, gather it and sell it together and share the money. According to them they earn more in this way than working alone. Most of them complained that the truck owners don't pay them in full when they come for the stones. To

be continued

NEWSLETTER NO. 66 OCTOBER 2014
WORKING CHILDREN PART TWO

In Newsletter 65 we described the first part of our research on working children. In this edition, we will explain how we continued this research. The research in farming communities is more complicated because we have to travel a lot. Therefore,

we decided to postpone it until a more appropriate time. This time, we concentrated on porters and hawkers.

- The porters are the children who either carry items for traders on their heads or use push-carts to transport them.
- The hawkers are children who sell items to customers on the road, often near traffic lights to drivers and passengers in cars.

It has been an interesting research. The workers visited 14 different areas in Accra. Some in the centre of the city but also some in the suburbs. In total 190 children were interviewed of which 101 are males and 89 are females. Often, we hear that there are more female porters (Kakayees) in the city, but we know that this is related to particular areas.

Their ages vary. 4 are above 18 years, but 186 are children of 18 years and below. In fact, these children are officially not allowed to "work". We know we can debate this issue by stressing on the fact that these children are trying to survive. Moreover, we discovered that 17 children belong to an union or are working for a firm. This means they are "officially employed". There are persons who "employ" several children who work for the same individual. This could be questionable.

Still the question arises, "are these children involved in child labor"? Our answer is, definitely not, although some are clearly forced to "work" but that are only a few. Majority are trying to survive or raise their school fees.

Let us first take a look at where these children come from. In this research, we observed that 43 children are born in one of



the four northern regions:

(Upper West= 3x, Upper East = 8x, Northern region = 18x and the Brong Ahafo region 4x)

The remaining children (147) are from the southern sector. Even at particular places in the street, all children working in that area are from the same region.

The "northern" children are operating at Agbogbloshie and Konkomba, while children at Kasoa Barrier are all from the Central region.

Although they are working, most of them take a free day on Sundays (165). They rest on that day and 22 said they attend church. Few of them (4) assist their parents or their employer in cleaning and washing.

We also asked who they are working for? 41 are working for a Madam and 47 for a Master, 55 said that they are working for themselves and interestingly, 47 children are "working" for a relative. This relative could be a brother, a sister or an aunty or uncle, but most of them are "working for their own mothers. Officially, a working day is 8 hours. Of the 190 children, 165 work 8 or more hours a day. Even some said (12) that they do not have any rest-day but only rest when they are very tired or



sick. Those who chose to work more than 8 hours a day do it for themselves, but those who are "employed" and have to work more than 8 hours could be considered as being exploitation. 26 of them work every day for more than 12 hours which is of course not very healthy.

What kind of "work" are they involved in? Of the 190 children, 130 are hawkers. They sell items in the street. These could be food items or drinks. Others sell handkerchiefs, refreshers, soap or shaving items. Especially the younger children sell purified water.

19 children are either male or female porters and 9 transport items on trucks. In addition, 17 male children are working as driver mate. The remaining children (9) collect scrap items (4) or work in a chop-bar, a place where they sell food and (2) or work as an assistant in a shop.

Several are working on commission basis. This means they are working for somebody. They "buy" the items for a certain price and sell it slightly more expensive. Some receive their "wages" according to the items sold, but they do not earn a lot.

137 children earn between 4 and 20 Ghana Cedi a day. 31 children earn slightly more 20 to 40 Ghana Cedi. 13 of them said they do not earn anything because their Mothers take care of them. Of course, these are very young children below 15 years of age.

However, many children have attended school before. Only 23 children have never been to school while 88 children attended one or two classes in the primary school.

But 77 children continued their education after primary school. 55 children dropped out of JHS (Junior High School) and 16 completed JHS school. 4 children are still in SHS (Senior High School) and 2 completed.

Some of them claimed they were working to earn enough to pay their fees and are now on vacation. This is difficult to verify. In the past, children when interviewed claim to be in the afternoon or morning shift. This we even heard when this system was abolished.

But we can conclude that many are educated to a certain level. This Mini research gives a gist of what prevails in the City of Accra but it does not provide a total picture.

ANOTHER CHANGE IN APPROACH.

CAS has changed its approach several times but all these changes came about as a result of the responds of the children, and recommendations from well wishers.

- The first change happened when instead of "Migrant children" more children who were born on the street visited the Refuge. This took place about 10 years ago. CAS withdrew members of staff from the street and strengthened the staff at the Refuge and at Hopeland. More hands were needed to take

care during the preparation.

- The second change happened when the visiting children showed little interest in education and sponsorship. We improved the lessons and instituted a shorter sponsorship program of 18 months. Several children did not have the stamina to learn a trade in three years. They wanted to see instant results and money. CAS started the introduction of skill training in several skills such as hairdressing, cooking and catering in general.

- Also we made videos of different skills which could not be done at the Refuge but could be shown. At times, children were taken on excursion to workshops where some skills were practiced. On few occasions, CAS invited entrepreneurs of various skills to give talks at the Refuge.

Still the responds of the children is not what we expected. In general, they showed very little interest in education. (The explanation is given above). Children get involved in all kind of "work" during which they can earn a few cedi so that they can survive.

During several Heads of Department meetings these problems were discussed. The Board of Advisors gave their opinion and last year during an evaluation organized by one of the donor organizations, Misereor of Germany, these problems were highlighted. We are in consultation with Misereor to take care of more children in the coming years.



What has to be done?

Before we could answer this question we observed something else.

- Several children who visit the Refuge at this moment are very young. They are between 10 and 15 years of age while some are even younger. What can CAS do for these children?

You might say, send them to school. The donors say, send them to school. But we are of the opinion that, that is impossible. Let us analyze this in detail. Most of these children have been born in poor families or are born in the street. This "street" could be a wooden kiosk or somewhere else in the slums. Mother is also often living in the street or is trying to survive in another way. The fact is, she did not have much time to bring-up her child properly.

These children have missed a lot. They do not know the basic essentials of life, for instance, how to take care of themselves. Why should I take a bath, going to toilet can be done anywhere.

Keeping their clothing clean or the environment is foreign to them. Most of them have a poor educational background. In the findings of the research of one particular kind of children, the working children (see above), we observe that about half of those interviewed could not go through the primary school stage.

Their behavior has to be changed before they can be placed in any school. Our opinion is that, majority of the children do not fit into a school environment. These include migrant children, those born on the street and the urban poor children.

Also, when we take the responsibility to let them start or continue primary education we (the donors) have to pay for many years to keep them in school. In reality, this cannot be done.

These children are below 15 years of age. In Ghana, and in many other countries you have to be 15 years before you are allowed to start apprenticeship training. They cannot be placed in workshops under the age of 15.

The only thing we can do is to make them literate.

In order to do so, we have decided to lengthen the "preparation" period. CAS has to take longer care of the children who visit the Refuge.

This decision involves a lot. First of all, we have to convince the donors that this is necessary. Without financial support it will remain a dream.

We need a good plan to take care of these children. Since their concentration span is very short, we have decided to shorten the lessons and activities and offer more variety. We try to make the activities more attractive.

What do these children who want to learn a skill have to learn:

- They have to improve their behavior.
- In the trades and skills we offer children have to learn how to measure.
- In addition, they have to learn how to draw and sketch. The children who learn dressmaking and carving in particular have to know all these.
- We could introduce them in skills such as sign writing, bookbinding and interior decoration. Those who learn catering have to know how to decorate, work with paper, flowers, ribbon and cloth.
- General skills in handicraft could be very helpful for all.
- And of course, they should be able to read and write a bit in the English language.

By offering more interesting lessons the younger children could learn while playing. As soon as we have their interest we will be able to teach them something. But we should not aim too high.

Once again,

The only thing we can do is to make them literate.

Fewer children will make use of the opportunity to learn a trade. We have decided that the child can either be trained in the Refuge or at Hopeland. We are of the opinion that Hopeland centre is a better place to keep the children for a longer period. Experience has shown that it is very difficult to move girls from one centre to another.



The reasons are:

- Their boyfriends have to agree.
- Peer pressure is a high factor.
- Often they want to have a baby.
- And at times they are involved in child sex work.

The welfare committee at the Refuge will decide with them the best place of training. The training is done in several stages and

after each stage, changes can be made.
CAS has started implementing these changes and approach.
We will evaluate them regularly.

Donor 100% for Children.

CAS is still in consultation with the above mentioned donor to do more advocacy work in the various social welfare districts. The organizers visited us recently. We are aiming to complete our application in December this year.

We want to carry out this advocacy work together with various partner organizations. This means that all should have the same vision of what we want to achieve. We will keep you informed of the progress.

Cholera.

Unfortunately, of late several children got sick with Cholera. Considering the places they eat and sleep, it is not surprising. Fortunately, we managed to save them in time and sent them to the hospital. The education on health issues has been intensified and children have to wash their hands before they go to the classroom or get something to eat.

We try to keep our website up to date for your information:
www.casghana.com Our new email address is:
casghana@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER NO. 67 JANUARY 2015 FUNCTIONAL LITERATES

We are late to wish you a happy new year because we did not manage to publish the December 2014 issue. We were busy writing and re-writing proposals to the donors. Proposal writing is a skill, but you need to have more skill to understand the requirements of a donor. Unfortunately, the activities are explained well on paper but are not always very practical because they are not in relation with the reality on the ground. What could work in one country is not appropriate to be applied in another.

Because, we were not sure of the outcome of our proposals, we “slowed down” our activities. For instance, we did not enroll “new” children in the sponsorship scheme and we suspended the skill and trade trainings.

Staff and children were fully informed about the developments, but it took time for some staff to understand the consequences. During the evaluation meetings we have come to the decision to lower the standard of education and aim at involving many more children.

Previously we aimed at educating children in skills and trades up to the grade two NVTI practical levels. This has proved to be too high for many children and often they feared to take part. We



should not forget that many have no educational background whatsoever. They have never been in school. They did not learn basic issues such as punctuality, working together, discipline, etc. What children learn normally in kindergarten schools or from their parents is lacking. Often, their parents are trying to survive in the streets and have no time to educate the child. As soon as the child can walk properly it is more or less on his/her own. Parents have no money to pay for the child's education or parents do not see the need of educating their child.

When these children visit the House of Refuge we notice it very soon that they are different and our task as “parents” starts. We have to reform the child step by step. It is very difficult to change habits which you have learned wrongly.

Because, we aimed too high, many did not take part or stopped taking part.

We have now decided to educate the majority to become functional literates.

What does that mean in reality? It means that we try to educate the child wherever s(he) is and in every circumstance they are. In the street, during street corner education, at the Refuge either in class or during entertainment, as well as when in Hopeland.

This is nicely said, but we still have to learn how to do it. In particular, how do we measure the results?

This problem we met in the past, how do you measure the work we do in the streets? Children come and go, but they have learned something. Some visit the Refuge for some time and then disappear only to resurface months later.

In December 2014, we introduced additional lessons in the Refuge and at Hopeland. These lessons include measuring, drawing, working with paper, plastic and other materials which could be recycled. We introduced more counseling sessions and individual training. We selected games which could be very educative, etc.

All these lessons have proved to be helpful already, but we are thinking of additional lessons.

We are only able to introduce these with the participation of the children. This is another word which people like to hear, but what does it mean?

“Out of school” children like to do everything for food. They like to be free, but do not ask too much. But where is the discipline? Where is the cooperation with others?

First of all it means that we have to understand the children properly. It is only when you deal with the child for a period that you get to know how to educate the child. This cannot be achieved by interviewing the child only.

The level of participation is also related to the “support” a child receives from friends, from parent (s) or relatives.

A “Migrant” child is often on its own or has some friends. Those born on the street have their mothers to assist, and the urban poor have their brothers and sisters around. We know children who were asked by their friends to stop taking part in CAS’ activities, others also stop taking part because they did not get the approval from their parent(s). It is not always the child who decides.

CAS has still the policy not to work with parents, because the parents have many other needs which CAS cannot solve. We are ready to educate the child until the parent agrees to continue.

The social survey reports reveal who is involved. All staff agree that more efforts have to be made to obtain good social survey reports. These reports are the foundation of CAS’ assistance. We have designed a new format so that all social workers try to



obtain the same information on the back-ground, the family and the present situation of the child.

DISTRICT WORK

We applied to 100% for children (Denmark) to assist us to do the district work with the Department of Social Welfare. This work will start soon.

In order to be well prepared we organized researches in various districts. The sponsorship teams as well as two members of Hopeland and the field workers were all involved. Nine members of staff in field and two in the office organized these researches. Three teams of three persons were formed.

These teams visited one district each for two weeks to obtain additional information due to developmental changes going on by the government.

1. The area
2. The landmarks
3. Meeting points
4. Opinion leaders
5. Potential partners
6. Kind of children
7. Problems.

After the two weeks period we will meet again to discuss the way forward. Official contacts with potential partners could not be made as yet because the actual program has not yet been approved.

The aim of the pre-testing exercise is to have a good over view of the various districts because of the periodic changes going on to help introduce street corner education and other activities. This we want to organize with the partners in these districts. It is an ongoing project and we will keep you informed.

We also have the same objectives for the children who visit the Refuge or are invited to stay in Hopeland to make them functional literates. Members of staff have to learn how to keep records. This has to be done on individual children involved. Staffs have been asked to design their own method. After a few weeks we will meet and learn from each other's method.

An interesting question was asked during the department meeting: how long do we allow the child to stay at Hopeland?" In the past, the average time was six months, but we do not have an answer as yet for these "new" children.

Stivosina:

Stivosina is a Dutch organization that promotes sports and games in Africa. The organization assists CAS by paying the salary of a coach, with sports materials and in 2014; they fundraised for CAS to renovate the volleyball and basket ball court at the refuge. In January 2015, a team visited CAS to officially open the volley/basket ball court.



Their visit lasted three days. One day at the Refuge, a day at Hopeland and on the third day they visited a baby crèche in one of the slum suburbs of Accra.

During the visit to the House of Refuge, the volley/basketball court was officially opened. The children played games which were organized by the coaches. After a snack, a volley match between CAS and school children took place.

The next day the Stivosina team visited Hopeland. The day started with a football match between CAS and some organized boys in the area. It followed with a volley match and refreshments. The visitors were very happy with what they had witnessed and promised continuous support.

Staff and children are very grateful to Stivosina for this support.

Whilst we are waiting for positive approval of our applications to Misereor-Germany and 100% for children-Denmark, we are happy that we can count on the following:

1. Continuous support from Kindermissionwerk- Germany for the running of the Refuge.
2. Continuous support from Lentenfund-The Netherlands for running of Hopeland.
3. Two families and Aidworld- Italy who support the sponsorship.
4. Stivosina and Right to Play – games and sports.
5. Many private donors- Salaries members of staff.
6. Adeline Janssens stichting-The Netherlands- Education
7. Families Jansen Scholtes and Kunnen for tools and other equipment.
8. EOF and Stichting Songzel for continuous support.
9. Streetinvest- research.

10. Several individuals who support us regularly.

NEWSLETTER NO. 68 SEPTEMBER 2015 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

During the months of May and June we spent a lot of time on updating our website and Face-book page. Several people assisted us and we are grateful to them that we can refer donor to this website <http://www.casghana.wix.com/casghana>. On the Face-book page, Catholic action for street children, we uploaded many photographs and more will be added in future. In case you want to comment on the website or Facebook page you are welcome.

On the website you can see the Board of Advisors as well as two small videos about CAS. The various departments are explained and we have published all the researches which CAS conducted in the past.

CAS cooperates with many donors and fund raising organizations. They are all mentioned and links are provided to their websites.

We have also published all the documents, newsletters as well



as annual reports. Under the heading History the following are explained: Mini Refuges which CAS run in the past, the history of Hopeland, the two mechanical workshops CAS established at Lashibi and Adjei Kojo, (these two are suburbs within Accra/Tema) as well as the establishment of the crèches for the baby care at Old Fadama (will be published soon). Under the topic Fieldwork, we will explain further.

Fieldwork

Many of the children who visit CAS live in slums at Old Fadama. Various other names are given to the area which is in the centre of the city. The children were greatly affected by the demolition exercise by AMA (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) areas affected in the exercise were: Konkomba, Agboghloshie, Obron showers area and a fire outbreak at CMB Abuja.

The children lost their sleeping places as well as all their belongings. They are now trying to relocate elsewhere, and have to work harder to buy all that were lost. The demolishing of the sheds was a direct result of the flooding and petrol station explosion which happened in June 2015.

All children who visit CAS House of Refuge regularly receive additional clothing and other items such as toothpaste, brush and soap when available. However, children who take part in the education and sponsorship programs are fully supported. The child has to take the initiative to be educated.

House of Refuge

As mentioned above, many children were trying to relocate and acquire new belongings and so delayed to come to the Refuge. In addition, the Electricity power crisis also affected the programs at the Refuge. Members of staff suggested to create more periods for playing indoor games to entertain the children. In spite of the challenges, the average attendance in a month is quite high: for July, the Refuge recorded 250 girls and 290 boys which gave a total 540 children. Often "new" children appear and they have to be introduced properly.

This is a special task for some of the members because we know that each child needs to have some attention to feel at home.

The nurse in the clinic reports cases of malaria, accidents, drug abuse, smoking and self medication. Health education is therefore very important as well as counseling lessons. The children should be guided and counseled not only as a group but also individually.

The Catering and Cooking lessons continue using the three stages methodology. The children are being prepared to sit for the NVTI (National Vocational Training Institute) practical exam



demolition of part of old Fadama

grade two. This means they have learned how to write and articulate properly. They have to know how to calculate and measure. Although, the group lessons in these subjects are going on well, individual training has to be intensified.

The welfare of the children has to be guided by the staff.

Hygiene is key to a healthy life. Children are taught to take their bath regularly and keep their clothing clean. These issues have to be repeated and introduced during the health education lessons or counseling periods.

Members of staff as well as the children are satisfied with the present timetable. However, some subjects are not on the timetable such as decoration. We have decided to use available time in the afternoons and let children take part in turns. Several members of staff have received sufficient training in this subject and are ready to pass it on to the children.

Demonstration

Members of the demonstration departments are working hand in hand with the welfare team and short sponsorship team to prepare children in various trades and skills.

Attendance as well as progress of each child are recorded. The staff know the children well because the level of interaction and conversations with them.

During these conversations the staff acquires information from the children which is needed for the social survey reports. In addition to the training, items are made for production. These items are sold to the public. All trades are trying to produce "new" artifacts so that the public remain attracted to them. CAS

does not have copy rights on items often made "our" items are imitated by others.

Hopeland Centre

The timetable for Hopeland centre is designed in such a manner that the children do not get bored. Therefore, each day is different. The same subjects are taught at the Refuge and Hopeland and the staff are happy with the present timetable. Lessons in drawing and handicraft, and the use of recycled material are liked by the children.

Children referred to Hopeland are younger than before and therefore cannot be asked to take care of the animals, but all are involved in the cleaning of the rooms and the compound.

There is problem with the attendance of the children. Some are not stationary and disappear for days but always return to the centre.

Short sponsorship program

Members of the short sponsorship program are responsible for the skill training which can be completed in 18 months time. The members visit training places at random to be sure that the training is well done. They test the children at each stage and discuss with the instructors how to proceed.

The department arranged a day to meet all the children. The idea is to create a platform for the children to air their grievances so that these could be addressed.

Some children had difficulties with their instructors and the role of supervisors was emphasized. The supervisors know the children well and often find solutions for the problems because of this knowledge.

Two members of the department were given the opportunity by CAS management to follow updating courses for two months. Members of the long sponsorship department came to the department's assistance.

The department experienced some settlement problems with some children who had completed, but a solution had been found to the problem.

The Regional Head of the NVTI visited the Refuge to assess the possibility to make the Refuge a recognized trade testing centre. During the coming months more logistics and tools are needed for those being trained through the support of other donors. A list of these items needed will be presented to some donors.

A new instructor, an ex-street boy who has been trained has been employed to teach decoration at the Refuge and at Hopeland.

Long sponsorship program



Members of the department collaborated with the welfare committee to assess some of the children in preparation. Some of them could start the training while others were being invited to stay at Hopeland for a period of time. All those in training were visited regularly and some children requested for more logistics which were provided. The department allowed some children to restart their training although they had stopped for one reason or another. Soon, some rooms have to be rented to accommodate children in training and some other rooms have to be renovated and maintained.

Of all those in training, one child was reunited with his family. They promised to give the child the opportunity to continue training. The department also need to increase its stock of logistics and tools for the new children being prepared for enrolment.

Right to Play

CAS has submitted a proposal to RTP to improve the environment for quality education for out of school children using play based approach methodology.

In addition a M.O.U. (memorandum of understanding) and a policy for child protection. had been signed.

Together with RTP, an interschool volley ball competition will be organized at the Refuge. The media will be invited to cover it.

Conclusion:

During the last Head of Departments meeting, we agreed to intensify the following:

- The sponsorship training program.

We have to apply for tools and logistics.
 The assessment criteria for children taking part to become functional literates can be used at the Refuge and at Hopeland.
 Progress reports on children would be needed.
 Three more rooms will be rented.
 An application to settle 10 trained children has been sent to Misereor

- The format to write monthly reports is understood and will be used by all department heads.
- A new plan for Fieldwork activities will be drawn up by bro. Jos
-

We thank you all donors, individuals and organizations for the support given to the children. Thank You. Bro. Jos
<http://www.casghana.wix.com/casghana>

NEWSLETTER NO. 69 MARCH 2016 GENERALIZATION IS NOT HELPFUL.

On several occasions, we have been asked about the success stories of CAS. We are often reluctant to mention them because it all depends on what we see as a success. We have to keep in mind the original mandate which we gave our selves when starting CAS.

1. Try to know more about the children in the street and
 2. Assist those we meet.
- The first mandate includes an in-depth study on the phenomena street children. Before we started, our superiors asked us, who are these children and why are they not in school? Frankly speaking, we could not give an answer to those questions. Some journalists claimed they knew the children because they had spoken to them in the street. They were their friends. But did they really know them? We conducted various researches during the years and in 2002 we were able to give our definition of a street child and name the causes why they were in the streets.

Most of these findings were relevant but now they are irrelevant these days. We are sure that the children we meet today (2016) are different from those we met in 1992. Their status on health, housing, survival, and living conditions are not the same. But there are strong indicators that the reason(s) of being in the street remains the same, namely family breakdown. We hope we will be able to start a discussion on this issue because we think many people could help find solutions. We will debate with staff, Board members, and other partners to find the best strategy or approach to the cause.

“Knowing about the plight of the children”, we call it a success story of CAS. The fact that we have recognized that the working charities cannot solve these problems on their own, but that



government has to take the lead in solving these problems in society, and this is a very big step we have taken. CAS wants to collaborate with the Department of Social Welfare to advise and assist the children in the various districts. The problems are not the same in all districts, and their circumstances differs. Generalization of the street children phenomena is a big mistake, according to our findings over the years.

Assisting individual children is another success. But how do you measure it?

Children we meet in the street and listen to our advices benefit from CAS. Maybe, we would never meet that particular child again, but the child has learnt something.

Children who visit the house of Refuge or Hopeland and take part in the activities, benefit from their visits. Children who start learning a skill or trade benefit and children who complete their training benefit as well.

Therefore, we could show a list of the thousands of children who have passed through our hands and use this as our success story.

But I guess you want to know how many children sat and passed for the N.V.T.I trade test exams in the past. Only a few. This year (2016) we taking this part of the training more seriously. We have registered 10 children for the N.V.T.I. trade test which will take place this month. It has not been easy. Children go and come. The Refuge is not a school which has a



headmaster or mistress. The children regard their freedom as number one.

I will never forget a remark of one reverend sister who visited the classroom one morning; “brother, most children sit here half naked”. I replied; “but I am happy they sit here”. At least, they gave up their freedom.

In other words, what do you call a success?

We have tried to locate children (youngsters), who have passed through CAS and are now working somewhere. This is very difficult exercise indeed, because several children want to forget about the time they had been in the street. The street is associated with criminals, thieves and prostitutes.

This past will not help when applying for a job, better not mention it. Secondly, many have gone back to their regions, tribes and countries they came from. These regions include parts of Togo and Ivory Coast. Thirdly, often they are married

and live with wife and children elsewhere. We do not have the time and money to locate them.

We checked the sponsorship list from 2007 –2015 and managed to know the present jobs of 216 youngsters.

In alphabetical order:

4 are working in the aluminium fabrication trade, 1 is doing artwork, 3 are auto-body sprayers, 31 are auto-mechanics, 3 are barbers, 1 is into batik works, 1 is a bead-maker, 2 are carpenters, 21 are working in the catering industry, 1 is a cook, 1 works in the cosmetology trade, 18 are dressmakers, 3 electricians, 6 repair computers, 59 are hairdressers, 1 is working in the interior decoration branch, 24 are continuing their education (JSS) and 2 in SSS, 1 is mobile phone repairer, 2 repair motorbikes, 1 is a plumber, 1 a printer, 2 are secretaries, 15 are seamstresses, 1 is a sign-writer, 2 are tailors, 1 is working with tie and dye, 4 are welders, 4 are woodcarvers. A variety of trades and skills indeed.

In 2003, we did an extensive research. About half of the trained children were located. All of them have settled well, either



married or employed.

However, we discovered that most of them did not practice the skill they had learnt. Many learnt the traditional trades and could

not be employed. You can read from the above list that many different skills and trades are now popular. There is only one working as mobile phone repairer and one is working in the interior decoration industry. 21 in the catering sector. We predict that many more will follow working in these trades.

During the registration, we discovered that skills could be understood in different ways. For instance; what do we (CAS) and the NVTI understand by catering? Is it providing food services, or be able to cook, make pastries and cakes? We hope to come to an agreement before the children sit for the NVTI examination.

Most probably, the girl who is cooking her own meal in Hopeland can be described as working in the catering industry.

Is CAS or any other organization able to offer such variety of skills and trades?

No, we are not but we can prepare and introduce children in the necessary skills, such as calculation, measuring, reading and speaking. But first of all, the child should be able to take care of his/her self. Functional literacy is therefore important.

From the internet: The definition employed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics sees functional literacy as a level of reading, writing, and calculating skills sufficient to function in particular community in which an individual life.

Once the foundation has been laid, the rest will follow. Some of these can be taught in the streets. We are happy that Right to Play (Ghana) is ready to be our partner and support the street corner education program. This month both parties will follow a training session after which actual setting up of a street corner meeting point can begin. It involves a lot:

1. Finding a suitable meeting place.
2. Locate and gather the children.
3. Meet the local authorities such as market women. AMA authorities. Authorities of the lorry parks, etc.
4. Think about the security, contact the police or other officers.
5. Agree on a suitable time to meet.
6. Prepare the teaching materials.
7. Select the games we want to use.

Presently, we are examining all the teaching materials we made during the past years. Some can still be used; others have to be replaced.

We will keep you informed.

We definitely want to prevent that children get involved in child labor. See below.

During the period CAS visited the social welfare districts, the workers came in contact with many forms of child labor. But often, the children are assisting their parents who are working in

these industries such as farming, fishing, stone and sand winning, selling of goods in the streets or transporting them. It is clear to us that many children do so to get some income for their survival.

Of course, action should be taken when children are forced to work. Also, children should not be involved in activities which are dangerous to their health.

But after witnessing how these children get involved in work, we have become more careful in condemning it. What is the family tradition? How does the family get their income? Why do the children not go to school? And why have they become so skeptical of the promises to help?

With the assistance of some donors we were able to renovate and paint some of the rooms and buildings. We also made new floor covers in the classroom handicraft room and staffroom. We will repair some of the roofs because the rainy season is getting closer.

We are also happy that three Students from Norway are with us to do their practical fieldwork. Slowly the applications for volunteer placements are coming again. The Ebola scar has passed.

NEWSLETTER NO. 70 JUNE 2016
USING THE CORRECT PROCEDURES

NVTI EXAMS.

First of all, we will report again on the NVTI exams because we did not explain to you the experiences of staff as well as those who took part.

The catering and carving exams were conducted at CAS whilst the hairdressing was conducted in a hairdressing salon at Kaneshie. The exam in Decoration took place in a workshop/shop where this trade is introduced, it is close to CAS premises.

Only one boy took part in the carving exam. We were asked to select the product the candidate had to make and the “thinking man” was chosen. On the first day the examiner witnessed the performance of the candidate. He examined the handling of the tools, the selection of the wood, and the sketching/ drawing of the item. The examiner allowed the candidate to continue on his own, he only returned to see his performances and the end product at a later stage. The candidate was happy with the result and of course hopes he has passed the exam.

Candidates for the catering exam were, 2 girls and 2 boys. Because of this, we prepared the general handicraft room for this exam. The examiner interviewed all candidates and asked them several questions individually. This proficiency exam is a practical exam and no written test is conducted. All candidates



should know a bit of the English language because they should be able to read the text on canned food items. I personally was not present but I am sure the local language was used as well. Although all the candidates took part in the measuring classes, they experienced some problems with this and during the evaluation we decided to intensify these lessons. These four candidates were very optimistic they will come out successfully.

The decoration exam is new to CAS. One boy took part. He was the only boy who joined the four girls from that training center.

All these skills can be learnt in stages and you have to reach a certain level to be able to do the exam. Several members of staff took part in the decoration training sessions conducted at the Refuge last year and we have a fair idea what is involved. In addition, to be able to make certain items, the candidates have to know the tools and materials used when to apply them. In the decoration trade they use balloons, papers, plastic flowers, ribbons, cloth etc. Glue. Drawing pins, tapes and paint are also used.

We have employed this candidate although we do not know as yet whether he would have passed the test, but we know he can pass-on his knowledge to other children.

Three candidates from CAS and five other girls took part in the hairdressing exams. They were examined on different days because not all were fully prepared and ready to take part on the first day. The examiner allowed some of them to start later.

Members of staff from CAS assisted as “clients” and willingly offered to be examined on. Their hair style corn-rolls was chosen and this had to be finished in a particular time.

CAS staff, learnt that we have to emphasize more on discipline and punctuality to the children. During the exams the children came in contact with others and they are most probably not so patient than the staff of CAS.

As mentioned before, we evaluated these exams and we hope that we could improve the general preparation next time.

HAPPY BABY TRAINING AT HOPELAND.

The NGO-Happy Baby organized a training course in the sewing of baby carriers. This course took place in the sewing workshop at Hopeland center.

We arranged it in this way because, it took place over a period of ten days so that the candidates and trainer could stay at the center for that period. They stayed in the dormitories and food was prepared as well. Three staff and four children (one boy and three girls) took part. Within the period of ten days the baby carrier should be completed made of cloth and foam. It has been a difficult exercise because, when the foam is inserted the material is still having to be sewn.

However, it all went well and each candidate managed to complete within the given time. In addition, a small bag was made to keep the carrier when not in use.

This course needs to have a follow-up because eventually small workshops could be started to sew these carriers for sale.



THE CORRECT PROCEDURES.

Since 1995, CAS has prepared children to learn skills and trades. The step by step procedure which was used during the first 15 years of CAS was very successful. In the streets the children followed the street corner education programs. They were invited to continue the education at the House of Refuge. After a certain period, many were invited to stay at Hopeland center and while staying there, workshops or schools were selected where the children could continue with their training.

This step by step approach changed when CAS came in contact with children who were born on the street. In addition, the introduction of the skill training workshops at CAS, were reasons to change the procedures. Many children started the training before the preparation period was completed. They did not go to Hopeland and some chose skills they did not really liked, because they were influenced by their friends.

At the workshops in the Refuge we try to follow official rules such as starting on time, working at least 7 hours a day, and be present all the time.



However, many children were not serious. They arrived when they like and some were often absent. Still they want to sit for

the exam. Another problem is the presence and influence of their mothers. In the past, (Migrant children), the child was alone and could decide as such, now the mother is involved. "My mother wants me to learn hairdressing because one sees money every-day and payments are instant.

We also allowed too much time for a child to abscond before following up. A child absconds for a reason; this means we have to know the reason before we can correct it. If too much time is allowed, it will become more difficult to find solutions.

These problems as well as others have made us decide to go back to the old procedures.

- All children have to go through an agreed period of time during preparation.

This preparation starts at the House of Refuge; it continues either in the Refuge-workshops or at Hopeland.

- All children who want to benefit from the sponsorship scheme, are invited for a period to stay at Hopeland.

Those who do not want to go to Hopeland are not sponsored to learn a skill or trade. During this period, we will get to know whether the child can take care of him/herself, whether s(he) is able to follow instructions, and most important whether s(he) behaves properly.

- All children should have a Social Survey report which indicates a contact address.

Children can be sent to Hopeland before the social survey report is ready. A preliminary report is sufficient to start, but the social survey report should be completed while the child is in Hopeland. These reports would still be opened for additional information on the child.

- Some children could be chosen to follow the functional literacy program either at the Refuge or at Hopeland.

Children who are too young to start an apprenticeship training follow this course. Or children who are not able to decide which skill or trade to learn could be included. We want to teach them for a period of one year. It seems to be a long period, but when a child is 12 years old starting this training, s(he) is still young after one year. Decisions can only be taken on individual basis.

- The welfare committee at the Refuge as well as the committee at Hopeland will know the children well during and after the preparation period.

The welfare committee at the Refuge has members of each department. They have to meet once a week. The committee receives information about the children while they take part in the activities. This committee will be able to assess each child and decide what is best for its future.

There are also children who come to the Refuge and have bad influence on other children. It does not help when we prevent this child from coming to the Refuge because in the street s(he)

can prevent others to take part in the activities or even visit the Refuge. We want to assess this child as well and try to work on its strength rather than on its weaknesses.

- Fieldwork and street corner education.
Fieldwork is very important because the children live and survive there. Members of the House of Refuge and Demonstration department are ready to visit the streets when necessary. For instance, children who are following skill training but are not regular, somebody has to find out why. When children have been asked to stay at Hopeland but choose not to stay there, somebody has to follow-up. We have now decided that members of Hopeland visit the Refuge and together with the follow-up workers try to locate the child. We also will carry out some fieldwork at Adjei Kojo and Ashaiman as soon as arrangements are ready. We are still waiting for favorable responds to our applications made to some donors to expand this work.

