

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 child rights 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 one of the first 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 facebook 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 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 street and the migrant children cannot be easily identified. A street girl with a baby lives in a kiosk could be a migrant child or a 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 other organisations to spend more time on family counseling. Churches should have more attention to families who are in difficulty.

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

It is asked for a collective and holistic approach. We workers at CAS will support all efforts.



Bro. Jos van Dinther
(Director CAS)

The above mentioned organisation officially started in April 1993. It is a Catholic Organisation to assist and support street children. However, before the official starting, a lot of preparation was done. In January 1991, Fr. John Thebault asked the Department of Sociology of the University of Ghana, Legon to conduct a study on these children. He met these children daily in the streets of Accra. With further assistance from Save the Children Fund U.K. a study was conducted. Approximately, 1000 children were interviewed and a report was presented at a workshop on street children in May 1991. At the beginning of 1991, we started walking the streets of Accra to meet the children. Based on the result of the report, a group of concerned people met and out of this large group CAS was born. The main group formed itself into the first Ghanaian NGO on street children called RESPONSE. This NGO started officially in June 1993. Both organisations are working under laid down constitutions and are assisted by Boards of Advisors.

By walking through the streets and markets we met the children and saw and heard under what appalling circumstances these children have to live in and sleep. In fact all visitors who we introduced and took to these places were shocked and became concerned. During the day, the children move about in town, either to sell goods, or to carry goods or to polish the shoes of the public.

At night they sleep or better say, they try to sleep under verandas of shops, in market stalls or in kiosks. A few that have sleeping places live in horrible surroundings. The children sleep very badly because rats crawl around them and over them. Also thieves try to steal their few belongings. These places are usually dirty, wet and smelling.

After these encounters with the children, we decided with the assistance of RESPONSE to find a House (a Refuge) where we can meet them quietly and get to know them better.



Often the question is asked, who are these children? This question can be easily answered. They are our children, our youth. Are they all run away children? Rascals

and thieves? We know that many of them do not belong to these categories. We estimate that approximately 5000 children are on the streets of Accra.

Why are they on the streets? We think that it is because of economical reasons. But do we really know? What to do?

We asked the Archbishop permission to operate the house of refuge for two years on experimental basis. We hope that these two years will be sufficient to know some of the street children and that they have time enough to know us.



With the assistance of PLAN INTERNATIONAL, through RESPONSE, this house of refuge has been renovated in Adedenkpo, James Town.

At the end of October 1993 the renovation was ready. The Board of the firm from whom we have rented the warehouse, Ghana Merchants, is very understanding and cooperative and we are very grateful for this. We are four months in operation and 30 to 40 children visit us daily.

They are shoeshine boys, Kaya Kaya girls, sweepers etc. A few are natives from Accra, but most of them originate from other places. To name a few places where these children are from, some come from: Kumasi, Kpanda, Ashanti Mampong, Kadjebi, Offinso, Bawku, Tamale, Ho, Abitifi, Ejisu, Yendi, Suhum, Oboasi, Koforidua, Keta and Togo.

Every day during their lunch break from 11 A.M. till 3 P.M. most of them come to the house of refuge. In the house of refuge, the children are allowed to take a shower and to wash their laundry. Lockers are available for those who like to keep safe their few belongings. The staff also takes care of their money and gives advice as to how to save it. The children are allowed to rest, to play games or to learn. We do not provide food or accommodation. We hope eventually to meet an organisation that operates hostel facilities so that these many children can find better accommodation. We do not want to attract them with gifts.

After three regular visits the children are registered. We have already 160 children registered. The social workers will conduct proper surveys on all those children who show interest to return to a regular life. This means the social worker will try to meet the parents or relatives of the children. Our intention is to operate as quietly as possible, because we are afraid to scare them with

publicity.

We like to share a few findings with you.

Quite a number of these children are sick. Of course this is understandable knowing their sleeping places. We accompany them to the hospital or clinic and pay for the expenses. We have asked a few medical doctors to assist us in finding a better solution because the expenses are very high. A large number of them are illiterate. A small group of boys have shown interest to learn to read and to write. Literacy classes have started in the mornings and evenings. We also discovered that the majority of the children are afraid, yes even to talk. As soon as they see a well dressed person they disappear. We need to have a lot of patience and time to overcome this difficulty. Several are mistreated, either by their own relatives or by other authorities. Twice a day our staff of eight persons visits the streets to meet them.

We think it is premature to plan what to be done for these children simply because we do not know them well enough. However we are planning ahead and we are trying to put in



place a network of contact addresses such as schools, workplaces and institutions who are prepared to help them. PLAN INTERNATIONAL will assist us to draw up a sponsorship scheme and in July 1994, we hope to implement it.

The staff meets regularly to discuss their findings and to plan as



how to proceed. We try, as far as possible to operate as a team. We have limited our field of operation because this project comes in contact with such a large number of social issues that we cannot tackle them all at once. In short, we meet children with various sicknesses, those who are involved in prostitution and these are many, those who gamble and those who deal or use drugs. Our night operations have been postponed. The problems are too manifold. Presently, we are introducing the project in the Archdiocese of Accra as well as to Civil organisations. At a later stage, we will introduce it in the parishes. We are convinced that many more persons can assist us in this enormous task.

NEWSLETTER NO. 2 JUNE 1994

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

In March '94 we issued our first newsletter. We thank all those who have reacted to this letter either by correspondence or in person. A number of persons have visited the house of refuge and a few have accompanied our staff members to the streets to meet the children. To see them is not only to believe but also to understand.

In our first issue we did not explain much about our activities in the refuge. Presently the numbers of visiting children has increased. Between 40 and 50 children visit us daily and 215 children are now registered and regular visitors. This required a change of approach from the staff. A new work rooster had to be made so that more staff members remain in the center during the day. This is not only for security reasons but also to have more opportunities to interact with the children. All members of staff are trying to update their records and reports. For this exercise, time had to be allocated and the field workers remained in the center for a full week. Our social workers will make a selection of these records and conduct social surveys on those selected. This is a time consuming job, because they have to travel sometimes very far in order to meet the relatives of the children.

We allow the children to take a bath and to wash their clothing.

They have never used a flush toilet and a bathroom with running water. You can imagine how these places look like after their visit to these facilities.

We try to teach them how to keep these rooms clean and not to waste water, but they are very slow in learning. Also the surrounding have to be kept clean. Anything they don't want, is left on the floor and they are not concerned about the surroundings.

The communication between themselves is also limited. Often it results in fighting and the only answer is a tough response.



We try to equip the center with a variety of games, preferable educational games. With writing and drawing materials, with typewriters and sewing machines. With simple books for reading. With sewing materials etc. The aim is to interest the children in a trade.

Each staff member (volunteer worker) is assigned to a particular subject to teach on each day in the literacy classes. Approximately 15 children follow these classes daily. Since the beginning of these classes, the children have shown great interest in each lesson and we have noticed an increase in participants. Some are really brilliant, even those who do not have any formal education are good. This proves that it is necessary to teach.

The Classes have been divided into three different groups. Those with no formal education, those with and those who dropped out of the system. Each day the children are taught five



different subjects which includes Mathematics and Comprehension, Spelling and Dictation, Writing and Drawing and Reading and Grammar.

The children have agreed to start the lessons at 12 o'clock to 1.30 pm. which is their convenient time each day. Some professional teachers have tried to teach the children and their conclusion is that it is extremely difficult to attract the attention of them for a long period of time. They do not remain quite, they do not keep the note and textbooks in a good condition. They are interested in something that is new, but as soon as they know what it is attention is drawn to something else. Infact they cannot be treated as normal children. Some are willing to follow the lessons regularly for a few weeks and then suddenly they disappear. Others who are drop-outs, are used to normal procedures in a class and therefore it is easier to teach them. We are very grateful to the International Woman Organization, who donated money to equip the House of Refuge with more furniture.

We have also tried to investigate the eating habits of the children. Most of the children eat either ones or twice a day. Only a few have enough money to eat three times a day. Eating hours are usually between 9 and 10 o'clock A.M. and late in the afternoon.

The meals consists of cereals such as maize and rice or beans, Gary or Kenkey. Several eat sweets and creams. In general we can say, most of them eat well. However, those who do not earn enough, eat poorly. Gary with sugar, or only groundnuts for a



substitute.

There are more problems with the hygiene. Most children do not bath regularly and often their clothes are dirty. This explains why so many have skin diseases.

Ofcourse it is a problem when you have one dress only. Either you wear it or you wash it. It is risky to dry your clothes unguarded, because another one might be in need of them. Several almost naked children had to be consoled.

Recently some medical doctors have agreed to visit the House of refuge twice a week and attend to the sick children. Two of our field workers are already quite experienced in attending to the sick, every week there are different cases. We also applied for a donation of the most common drugs as well as gauze, bandages, etc. In this way we hope that the medical bills will reduce. A corner in the refuge is partitioned for the doctor and patients.

When in town, the children of each region sleep in a particular area. often where members of their ethnic group are living. Although they sleep in the streets, they find protection and some solutions to their little needs there. The children who were first to discover the places introduced new ones to them. Those readers who are familiar with Accra Town will recognize the areas:

1. NEWTOW 2. KOKOMLEMLE 3. NKRUMAH'S CIRCLE
4. KANESHIE 5. KANTAMANTO 6. OKAISHIE 7. TIMBER
MARKET 8. KINBU 9. OSU R.E. 10. OSU AKO ADJEI 11. BEHIND
C.M.B. 12. TEMA STATION 13. LABOUR POINT 14. KOKOMBA
MARKET 15. NIMA

Street children and their abode in the street.

Children from: The Ashanti Region stay at: : 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10.



Brong Ahafo Region	: 1,2,3,4,5,6,8.
Volta Region	: 8,11.
Greater Accra Region (Ningo)	: 12,13.
Upper East Region	: 7,11,14,15.
Upper West Region	: 7,11,14,15.
Central Region	: 5,6,8.
Eastern Region	: 5,6,8.

RESPONSE:

Some months ago, RESPONSE opened another house of refuge in town, in Mamobi. This house is for street girls only, in particularly for pregnant street girls. Four field workers and one social worker are assisting the girls. While two part time social workers are in charge. As a board member of RESPONSE, I am coordinating that House of Refuge as well. CAS sends street girls who are pregnant or have delivered to that House of refuge. The workers face quit some problem there. Street girls are difficult to meet, because during the day they are working as Kaya Kaya and are not willing to be interviewed. They are afraid to lose customers during that time. At night they sleep in Nima or Mamobi, but are protected by street boys (men) who also sexually abuse them. Still it is worthwhile to operate in that area because these venerable girls (children) need our protection. The pregnant ones are counselled and advised to go for medical check-up regularly. The house operates with a different schedule. They are open every morning from 8 A.M. till 12 P.M. close in the afternoon and reopen at 5 P.M. till 10 P.M. During the evening hours, educational and recreational programs are organized. The girls are educated on family planning. aid prevention and hygiene etc. Their workers and ours inter changed for some time, in order to know each others field and know the different difficulties involved.

Some weeks ago 14 -2nd. year students from the department of sociology of the university of Legon joined the staff of the two houses for fieldwork experience. The first two days of introduction were jointly held in Adedenkpo. Four students went to Mamobi and 10 stayed in Adedenkpo. All workers followed a special schedule.

In this way we could cover a larger area of the town in order to meet the street children. After the first 10 days another jointly meeting was held to discuss their findings and find solutions to their problems. Several interesting observations were made. Another meeting was held at the end of the period and all activities and students were evaluated. It was an enriching exercise for both houses and it will be repeated again in August when the same students will come for a second time.

It is also encouraging, that more and more religious, postulants or novices, join us and have experience in this work with the street children. Often the time available for them is limited and this makes full participation impossible. But all contributions are very welcome. We also hope that the exposure to this apostolate will encourage some to prepare themselves well for the future in this field. We are trying to interest other congregations as well, because as religious men and woman we should all know about the present day difficulties in society.

The plans to start the sponsorship scheme are already in an advanced stage. The donor organization as well as CAS have agreed on a contract and the final arrangements are in preparation. The staff has screened the 215 registered children and 36 have been selected for a social survey. Of these 36 children, 15 will be selected as the first batch who will receive this sponsorship. The ministry of Social Welfare has offered 50 places in Swedru vocational school and 30 places in Osu vocational school. This is in addition to the places the O.I.C. in Osu has offered. We are also finding suitable places for



apprenticeship training.

Some workshops for training in Metal work and Ceramics have already agreed to take some of the children.

Although the above mentioned schools take boys as well as girls, we still have to allocate workshops for the apprenticeship training of the girls. In this way we hope to be fully prepared for this scheme so that it becomes a success.

We explained already before that our plans are to involve all parishes in the Archdiocese. Presently we started in one parish in Ashaiman where a group of concerned parishioners formed a society called The Friends of the Youth. They started about five years ago and CAS will assist them by means of this sponsorship scheme. They have five children in various schools and many more are on their list. CAS and FOY meet monthly to discuss the progress. We hope that the experience we receive

from this cooperation will help us to decide how to involve other parishes.

During the past months we received some financial assistance from some donor organizations as well as the Archdiocese. The running costs of this project are high because of the personnel needed and transport costs to conduct the social surveys. We hope you will help us to find donors or other interesting parties, so that the children will benefit from this program. Some concerned persons organized an Auction Fund Raising Raffle and they included us as one of their projects. We are very grateful to them.

NEWSLETTER NO. 3 SEPTEMBER 1994 PLANNING AHEAD

The third issue of our newsletter appears on the occasion of the first year operation of the House of Refuge in Adedenkpo, Jamestown, Accra.

A year ago, we started with the preparations to open this House in a warehouse of the firm Ghana Merchants. Now, because of its continuous use, we have already to make some necessary repairs. Our floor lino has had to endure a lot of wear and is in need of replacement in certain areas. We are happy to note that many street children in Accra know about the existence of the house. Many have, and many are visiting us. 290 children are registered at this moment and we consider them as regular visitors. Daily 60-70 children, both boys and girls, make use of the facilities and periods of numbers of 70 and over at any one time are no longer exceptional. At times the Refuge is so crowded that we wonder whether we should allow the number to exceed a hundred. We do not know as yet, time will tell. On occasions, when special educational programs take place, an average of 45 children attend. This is very encouraging. It is indeed a means to reach some of them.

Several congregations have sent their novices or postulants for a work experience. We try to involve them as much as possible. Their total involvement depends a lot on themselves. Those who come with ready methods and answers are quickly put in place by the children themselves. They tell us who they are and what they want. Our only choice is to listen to them. And so we learn daily from interactions and new developments. Those who have had the opportunity to meet the children at night in the streets, have all experienced it as an eye opener, a shock in the realization that these children have to sleep in appalling places and that they are exposed to so many dangers the biggest one being the acquisition of some of the wrong practices of life.

More and more we realize that society has changed. We have to re-think our position and approach the problems as new present day problems.

The number of visitors to the Refuge has increased. A particular question is often asked: "What about religion?"

Our staff is interdenominational and so are the children. The staff meets weekly, and interestingly this question is never brought for-ward. We think this is so because it's not a pertinent question. We all, from various different backgrounds are equally concerned about these children. Simply put, the children bring us together. For them it does not matter which religion, if any, they practice, because they all find themselves in the same circumstances. We of course approach them with our religious motivation in mind.

Another question is often asked: "What do you do for them?" When we decided to open this House of Refuge, we saw it as a means to meet the children, and we still see it that way. We can say, approximately 500 children make use of the facilities in Jamestown and Mamobi, that means that the other thousands are not reached. The indications are that the number of street children is on the increase. To try to be as sure as we can we have decided to conduct a head count. In a few months we hope to let you know our findings. Our main concern is, to get to know the children but in addition we are preparing a program to offer them opportunities for their future. We have signed a partnership agreement with Plan International, formally called Foster Parents International. Plan has agreed to find donors for the children we present, and will sponsor about 100 children up to the age of 16 years of age. We are very grateful to Plan. Last month we presented the first six children who are ready to go to school. Both parties have agreed on a format as how to present them and our staff is slowly getting used to the procedures. A social survey has to be conducted on every child and this consumes a lot of time. From now on we hope to present children at regular intervals.



**SUPPORT
GROUP
LATER
CALLED
CASAS**

Many children are older than 16 years of age. They are in fact "street youth". (We should remember however that the Constitution of the 4th. Republic of Ghana treats all persons under 18 as children). We have debated extensively whether we should assist them as well. Although our attention is with the young children, we feel we should help those we know very well. Other donor organizations have assisted us to sponsor some of these "street youth". With these donations we can finance all the preparation costs involved as well as sponsor children. We have budgeted each sponsorship at \$ 250.00 per child, per year for an initial period of three years. That is already too low by today's costs but we have declared it as a target and will stand by it one year at least. Recently we also signed a partnership agreement with UNICEF. UNICEF pays the salaries of staff members. Other individuals, families, congregations, schools, embassies and donor organizations in Ghana and abroad have offered us support. With all the support so far, we will be able to run the House of Refuge for another year and sponsor several children. The children will benefit from every cent we receive.

There is another question that many people are asking. "Surely your work and your Refuge are encouraging more children to take to the streets?" CAS and RESPONSE have seen the plight of the street children and are ready to do something for them. We are not sure if our methods are the correct ones, but at least we are trying and are prepared to learn along the way. It is encouraging to know that some donor organizations give us the benefit of the doubt and allow us to experiment.

Our policy is:

1. We only assist street children of 7-20 years old who sleep rough and work in the street.
2. The children should have been in the street for a few years.
3. Staff-members must get to know the children very well. Social surveys will reveal their background.

In the process, we hope to discover some of the causes of this huge problem. Social surveys show that many children have lost either one or both parents, either through death or divorce. Some remarry and certain step children are not accepted in the home any longer and leave. Again some families are very large and very poor. This causes children to leave home and fend for themselves. We have to say that we are experiencing two main causes why children leave for the streets: Poverty and Lack of Sufficient Parental Love.

The children come from all parts of the country. Our dream is that eventually the various communities from which these children come, will have a closer look at these two problems. Many do not have to leave the community if the community

takes care of them.

We are preparing some children for formal education in primary and secondary school system and in the vocational school sector. Other youngsters prefer to follow the apprenticeship system. So far Social Welfare schools, Community Development schools, the Opportunities Industrialization Center (O.I.C.G.) and associations in Ceramics, Dressmaking and Metalwork have offered their cooperation. We have visited all these places and we are aware that these schools and workplaces need assistance to take street children in training. We have placed two children in the O.I.C.G. and two are in private workshops. In all 34 are ready to go to school in September '94.

Last month we held a joint meeting with various donor organizations and embassies, and presented the different aspects of the street children project to them. Some have shown interest in sponsoring children, another in providing hostel facilities and another in supporting the Houses of Refuge and so take care of all the children who are not yet ready to go to school.

A child of the streets cannot be coerced into formal schooling.



FIRST HOUSE OF
REFUGE-
ADEDENKPO

Some will never leave the streets, others will never return. All have the right to our protection.

Peace Corps is ready to assist with volunteers teachers and instructors to support the various schools mentioned. They will study how best this can be done by starting with one or two volunteers.

In August, Fr. Patrick Shanahan, on behalf of RESPONSE has

taken over the running of the Refuge for girls in Mamobi. CAS refers pregnant street girls to the Mamobi Refuge so that with the help of UrbanAid maternity clinic, they will receive the best care. Both organizations, RESPONSE and CAS have the same objectives and therefore we are working very closely together.

With the advice and help of the Field Director of Plan International, RESPONSE and CAS have simple brochures stating our aims, objectives and activities. We will present them to you in the very near future.

NEWSLETTER NO. 4 DECEMBER 1994

Experiences in schools and workplaces

Hallo, before we end the year 1994 we want to give you an up date on the Street Children Project, CAS. In this issue we will talk about the children who are already placed in schools and work places. So far 30 children are following a training either in a primary school a secondary school, a vocational institute or a private workshop. Several more are being prepared for the next academic year which starts in January 1995. So far only one child gave up his training and joined his friends on their way to Nigeria. This is better than we expected.

We predicted that 25% of those in institutions would fail to continue. Most of these children have never been to school and have lived a very free life in the streets. To change to a regular live is in our view very difficult. Thanks to the professional assistance of the social workers in the schools, almost all have succeeded. This does not mean that there are no difficulties. We would like to share a few of these difficulties and mistakes.

During the preparation period we have acted too hastily at times. We have prepared some children fully only to discover that they have disappeared on the day of departure for school. You will understand that such a discovery is a great disappointment to us all. This has happened on three occasions and for three different reasons. In spite of this, our opinion is that much more time is needed for the child to adjust his/herself to this new idea of schooling. Another factor is that these who expressed the wish to learn a trade only thought of those trades that they are familiar with. In the institutions they have seen other possibilities and many have changed their choice of trade over night. This has caused problems for us because we had already bought all the tools required for their first choice of trade. Of course the tools will be useful at a later stage for someone else. The initial wasted outlay does not do our cash flow any good. We have now asked the heads of the institutions to introduce the children to various trades before they make a choice and we provide the tools. This is of course not possible for those who will learn a trade as an apprentice with a trade master. To date we have to report that these apprentices have

caused us very few problems.

Our plans to introduce several trades in the Refuge are still viable and recently we have started with the weaving trade. A young lady who has been trained, started weaving in the center and in so doing earns the equipment and tries to interest children. It is encouraging to see that young girls are visiting



ambuayda for the children - Adandankpo



Weaving at Adandankpo

regularly because they want to take part. It is indeed difficult to interest the girls, this offers one sign of hope. One of the Peace Corps volunteers will introduce the electricity trade by demonstrating it in the Refuge. We hope soon to engage a person who can introduce the ceramic trade. Although our Refuge is large we have been searching for other premisses because these trade demonstrations take a lot of space and attract many children.

Another unforeseen difficulty has been that the children are not satisfied with the food they received in school. We reported to you before that the children eat well while in the streets. They buy the food they like most with the money they earn. In the institution they do not have a choice of food but have to eat what is provided. In one school where many children are placed, the headmaster agreed to give them a daily amount of money instead. These children buy their own food as they were used to do. In other institutions the food ratio has to be supplemented. In most cases it is done by the school with the financial support of CAS. The children also receive pocketmoney so that they can buy items such as soap, toothpaste and other small items themselves. Our workers who visit the institutions regularly are all amazed at how the children have changed. In their school uniform and clean dresses they indeed look very different. Most of them are happy and grateful for the opportunity offered.

This work of preparing children and doing the follow up work has made us realize that we are severely understaffed. The few

social workers we have are torn between organizing the youngsters into school or training and working on the streets. We have to report that our street work is suffering and this is a very serious problem. If we don't work on the street we have no relationships with Street Children.

We are therefore happy to note that volunteers are joining us in our activities. Two Peace Corps volunteers are working in schools where Street Children are placed and two volunteers of Mission and Youth from Holland are coming to help us in the Refuge so that our workers can return to the streets.

The introduction of the Street Children Project in the Parishes has also continued. The Sacred Heart parish at Derby Avenue has its own Street Children project. In the churches of St. Augustine and St. Clementia in Ashaiman the Friends of the Youth are active and recently we had an introductory meeting with the parish council and youth leaders at Madina parish. Before moving to other parishes we want to introduce the project in parishes where children have been placed in schools. In the parishes small teams can be formed who will be able to assist us.

These teams can investigate as how many Street Children are in their parish; they can assist children who are placed into schools and hopefully find some families who are willing to foster children during the holiday periods. Parish centers can be opened for Street Children and operate as day care centers such as ours in Adedenkpo. A lot has still to be organized but with the help of many, Street Children can be helped. We do not do this to encourage more children to come on the streets, but those who are already there should be assisted and advised about their future life. This cannot be done if the children do not trust us. Therefore we have to gain the confidence of them first and that takes a lot of time.

Our Mission is:

1. To interact with Street Children so that they can be understood and supported.
2. To assist those children who choose to get off the street and into a stable living situation.
3. To create general awareness about the plight of street children of 7-20 years old who sleep rough and work in the streets of Accra, Tema and towns in the Accra Catholic Archdiocese.

Some children experience other problems in school. The biggest one is literacy. Most of the children we deal with are illiterate and while we knew that it was a problem we never realized how

deep it went. Now after our short experience we have realized that it can change your whole personality. It is not simply a matter of learning to read and to write, but more to become a respected member of society. As an illiterate you are easily overlooked or put to one side, because you have no "voice". All of us who are educated should be very grateful that we have had the opportunity to learn to read and write and not consider it a small issue.

We try to support all those children who are illiterate either in an institution or in the Refuge. One of our staff members is a full time teacher and most probably we will employ another very soon. We have been asked by the Managing Director of FAN Milk (a firm selling ice cream and yoghurt) to give his bicycle vendors the change to learn. Many of these vendors are street children and we have agreed to start with those who are working in the depot in James Town, which is close to our refuge. We hope that the volunteers who are in the institutions will assist in this exercise as well.

We have continued with the head count of Street Children and have concentrated on new areas. The head count shows that any particular workers meets daily in one area an average of 80 street children. This leads to our estimation that at the moment there are over 10,000 street children in the streets of Accra.

In another development, the Board of CAS has taken over Hopeland Farm in Ashaiman (between Accra and Tema) from the Association who controlled it and SMA fathers. We think that this farm project can be developed into an excellent training



center for Street Children. It remains an Archdiocesan project and the children can be trained in trades such as Poultry, Farming, Animal husbandry, Dry season farming, Agro-forestry, Bee keeping, Fish farming, Carpentry and Joinery, Ceramics and Welding. We are trying to engage a manager who will have

the free hand to set up this farm with his own ideas in consultation with the Board of CAS. As an intermediate solution we have employed a work group to run the farm for the first half of 1995.



Many visitors have come to see the Refuge and give us support. The Ghana International Women's Club have donated funding for our Sponsorship Scheme and food for a Christmas party for the children. The North American Women's Association have donated several items For the literacy classes and medical care for the children. We are grateful to them all. Last year the Christmas party was a success. This year we expect many more children because many more know us.

The Mercy Ships group visited us as well. A team came to give a talk on AIDS and AIDS prevention and the Mercy ship band came to give a concert for the children. For many it was the first time since they went on the streets that they had come into contact with religion and we were surprised that the children actively took part. 65 children attended.

Some weeks ago we assisted the Red Cross Ghana to locate a building and a plot for a night shelter they plan to start for young girls. All of us formed groups and went to different parts in town to look for vacant sites. 14 possible places were listed and one

of them is very promising. We will keep you informed about the progress.

Lastly we must thank you for your interest and support during 1994 and extend our warmest greetings for Christmas and 1995. We promise always to use your help well.

NEWSLETTER NO. 5 APRIL 1995 Programs for street children

In March 1994 we issued our first newsletter about the CAS street children project. Now, one year later we present to you newsletter number 5. We are happy to let you know that the project is running well. Many street children in Accra are aware of the Refuge and many make use of it. Days with 80 or 90 children are no longer any exception, especially during the rainy season, which is starting this month. Many come for shelter and to find a sleeping place here. In the evenings it is very difficult to close the doors of the refuge, because the children do not want to leave. This is a real problem and many visitors question us about it. How can we send them back to the street?

We have to be realistic. At the moment we cannot give shelter to 500 children who are presently registered with us. We are already glad that RESPONSE runs a house of refuge for girls in difficulty, and we hope the RED CROSS will eventually start a night shelter for girls. This problem is constantly on our minds.

We realize that this House of Refuge is becoming too small for all the activities we have planned. For some time now we have been searching for alternative buildings. Unfortunately we have not succeeded locating another place as yet.

The problem of financing the activities is holding back some of our plans. We know it is difficult to understand that Refuges are needed as a means of getting to know the children and meeting them quietly. Often visitors question why such a large staff as ours is needed, and why so many other costs are involved. Understanding street children takes time and it is absolutely necessary that the field workers visit the streets daily. Only



those who have seen and studied the problems, can properly understand the position. We do not try to encourage more children to go on to the streets. We merely try to be available for those who are already in the streets. Even so, CAS will never be able to prevent new children coming to the refuge or going on to the streets. This problem is so large that one or two NGO's cannot solve it alone. As mentioned before we have approximately 500 children registered. Actually we can give you some statistics of 490 children.

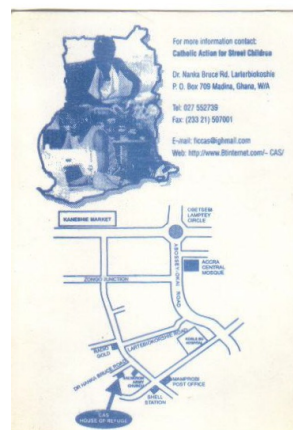
Our surveys show that these children come from 215 different towns or villages. 17 of them come from other countries;

Ivory Coast = 1. Togo = 11.
Nigeria = 3. Niger = 1.
Liberia = 1.

The Ghanaian children come from 10 Regions;

Greater Accra = 39. Central = 29.
Eastern = 62. Ashanti = 230.
Volta = 24. Western = 12.
Brong-Ahafo = 33. Upper West = 3.
Upper East = 11. Northern = 25.
Unknown = 5.

INVITATION CARD-CAS



These figures show that the street children are from everywhere. The department of Community Development has shown an interest in addressing the problem in the various regions and CAS will support their efforts. These attempts, to improve the situation in the regions, have to be practiced as well, and we hope that Community Development will start soon in one of the regions. Since CAS has opted to work with the children of the streets and on the streets, we are happy that other organizations join us to help prevent the problems growing.

Most children cannot make up their minds when deciding about the trade they want to learn. They do not know the different possibilities available because they have never seen them. In their villages only one or two trades are practiced. New trades shown in the Refuge immediately attract attention. The Weaving trade is a good example. 26 children are taking part in this and we have selected 6 of the children for more intensive training.

We have also come to an agreement with GRATIS to conduct a feasibility study in the Ceramic industry. The idea is to select a few ceramic workshops which will be updated to make suitable workshops for training.

This ceramic trade will be demonstrated in the Refuge and we



are sure that many children will become interested. We see this study as an investment. Sponsoring children and sending them to schools and workshops is an important part of our work, but only reaches a minority of street children. CAS is more concerned about the many still in the streets. We are of the opinion that several trades could be improved so that more job opportunities will be created. We have to think ahead about what to do with those who are presently in training. Will they be able to find a job or do we have to assist them in establishing small firms or cooperatives?

Already in schools, the children should learn how to undertake marketing and run businesses. Ceramics and weaving are some of the trades in which street children could find a future.

Another option is farming. Many children left their villages and parents because they did not like working as laborers in the farm of their parents or family. These children have learned to see farming as a punishment. This is very unfortunate, because there are so many different branches in this area.

In order to show the children the different aspects of farming, CAS has taken over Hopeland farm in Ashaiman. Hopeland farm project is now an independent wing of CAS. It remains a project from the Archdiocese, but the Board of CAS is responsible for its operations. The farm is ten hectares in size

with poultry and pigsty components already established. A workshop for carpentry and welding as well as two dormitories for children already exist. The products of the farm should cover the costs involved and hopefully a small profit could be made. Presently this is not happening and the Board has decided to invest some money to enlarge the livestock. Eventually this farm will become a training center where all the different aspects of farming such as; poultry, dry season farming, agro-forestry, bee keeping etc. are demonstrated and practiced. Some of the children will become interested when these activities are properly introduced. The children could learn how they might become owners of small scale animal farms for instance. Or they could learn how to grow and sell vegetables.

It will not be an easy task because of the children's past experiences, but we hope it will be possible. CAS has sent some children to the farm to clean it and prepare it. Only a few of those sent have shown interest. The training could start with these few. We hope to have a manager soon, who can build up this center for the benefit of the street children. Fortunately the farm is not large and well situated between Tema and Accra.

In the streets, the field workers of the Mamobi refuge as well as those from Adedenkpo meet many girls and young women who have babies. All the workers are very concerned about the plight of these babies and young children in the streets. We know their lodging places. Often they live in make shift shelters constructed from boards, cardboard or plywood. These shelters are built on refuse dumps or similar appalling places. When it rains, these places are awful. Babies should not creep in the mud, filth and rubbish. Many of these girls do not have husbands. And often they do not know the father of their child. This means they are the only ones who take care of the child. They do not have





Street children:

Migrant children

Urban poor

Born on the street

sufficient money for themselves, with the result that the child does not receive enough food or medical attention.

Many of these girls are Kakayooos or prostitutes. During the day they leave their babies with minders who run small 'crèches'. Twenty to twenty five babies are in each crèche and the field workers have already counted 23 crèches in one area of town. The mothers pay a small amount to the minder as payment and to feed the child. Many children are undernourished and sick.

In a joint effort we shall try to improve the conditions of some of them. Plan International has given us the go ahead to register 50 mothers with babies as a start. They will be treated as families and foster donors will be found for them.

First the environment has to be changed for these babies. We plan to build 3 good wooden crèches for them. The Chief Executive of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, AMA has given us a written permission to build the crèches.

When successful, others will be built later. We shall try to have water available. The NGO Urban Aid will take care of some of the health aspects such as immunization and nutrition. UNICEF will support us as well in this programme. We hope to start building soon. We also hope to improve the sanitation and so create a healthier environment. We know it is an urgent matter because many of these babies will die if we do not assist them. We are also concerned about the future of these babies. When they grow up in places like this they will become very angry citizens of the society. They will feel rejected and thrown on the dung heap of society. God knows how they will react.



FANMILK CLASSES



The teaching program for the Fan milk vendors has also started. So far three classrooms and teachers are in place to educate the vendors. One classroom is in Madina Community Development school, one in the Mamobi refuge and one in the refuge in Adedenkpo. The vendors have agreed to a time schedule. Some prefer to follow classes during the day others during the evenings. During the day they sell ice cream on the streets from bicycles. Many of these vendors are dropouts of the education system. Therefore different levels of teaching have to be organized. Particularly for the older ones it is big step to take, but so far the interest is encouraging. There are only a few women vendors and we hope they will not feel too shy to take part. Most of the vendors are street boys, who have fortunately found a job. The directors of Fan Milk company are very concerned because they have noticed that these vendors, despite their jobs hardly improve their lives. Together we hope to educate them in English, mathematics and simple bookkeeping, also in hygiene, organization and planning.

During our interactions with these children, we sometimes are shocked by the life stories of some of them. What they have already experienced is more than most of us can imagine. The majority of the children registered are from broken homes. Some of them can never return to their families but should not remain in the streets. We have to find foster parents for them, which is a completely new venture for us.

So far we know only a few families who are interested in taking a child. First of all we have to know the motives of the families, because we do not want that these children will be taken as cheap laborers for the family.

They should find a home where they are accepted and loved. Parish teams could assist us to register and examine families who are interested. In some parishes we have invited the leaders to visit the refuge and meet the children. We still plan to meet other parish teams in the near future.

In another development we see that youth organization show



Minister
visits
our
exhibition

interest. When the different youngsters meet it is always a test for both. Can they meet as equals or does one feel superior to the other because of wealth or education.

Recently, a group of musicians approached us. They are willing to train interested street children. Once a month these musicians will perform in the refuge and allow the children to take part. As with have experienced with other training programmes, many want to learn to play, one instrument or another. Since the training is quite costly, we have to use a very careful approach and only decide after a period of time who should be trained. Social surveys have to be conducted first on those interested and we do not foresee that this training will start immediately.

Also RESPONSE and the Red Cross organized in conjunction with UNICEF a course in AIDS prevention. Twenty boys were selected to follow the training. It was a success and the boys benefitted from it. We were all surprised that they all attended punctually and followed the instructions. We hope a follow-up will be organized soon. These boys could indeed become advertisers and spread the knowledge they have gained.

NEWSLETTER NO. 6 JULY 1995 Every child needs one thing:
THE LOVE OF AN ADULT FRIEND. HAVE YOU SOME LOVE TO SPARE?

We want to thank all of you who have in one way or another

assisted us in our programs. We have received clothing, food, tools, books and financial donations, which are all very welcome and necessary. We hope we have not forgotten to thank you personally, if so, our sincere apologies. The activities in the center as well as other projects have increased. With the help of several volunteers, ex-patriate and local, the children are better entertained and learn more daily. Let me mention some of our regular activities.

SOME ACTIVITIES.

At present CAS gives demonstration lessons in Weaving, Wood Carving, Pottery, and General Handicraft. Many children take part and several show excellent skills. We are particular happy



that many young children show interest, but as expected they wander from one activity to another. This is sometimes frustrating for the worker in charge. We hope that eventually they will choose a skill they like most. The investments for these programs are quite high, therefore we hope to recoup some of our outlay by selling the products. Recently we took part in the international Women's Bazaar and sold some products and had orders for others. Some local artists have appeared to assist us. Some have offered places of training for some of the children.

On a few occasions the children have been invited to perform plays and poems, do rapping or sing songs. Our literacy teacher has included this sort of presentation into his lesson programs. These activities have shown that some children show exceptional talent in many areas. Although many attend regular training lessons it is difficult to rely on them. We have to keep constantly in mind that these children have to earn the food they eat. They have to go back on to the streets to work. So formal classes cannot be given. Children choose when to play when to work or when to perform depending on how well they are surviving that day.

We have now organized some sports and games on the premises of Ghana Merchants and we appreciate that the management allows us to use their yard for this purpose. Recently the Firm also agreed that we could renew the rent for another two years. We have paid and so are sure of a roof for a further two years. With the assistance of UNICEF some renovations have been carried out and the center is now in a better shape than ever before.

Two Dutch Mission and Youth volunteers Margaretha and Annemarie have introduced many of the above mentioned activities. We have asked them to report on their experiences with us.

THE DUTCH VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE.

After working with the Street Children of Accra for three months, we have to say that it is quite an experience, one we will never forget. By spending our days in the House of Refuge in Jamestown, we find on the one hand that the children are independent and able to care for themselves. On the other hand, we see that the same children find it very difficult to handle their feelings of anger, frustration and fear, due to a lack of love and attention. We have tried in a small way to help them build up their self-esteem by accepting them as they are, by giving them attention in playing games such as table tennis and draughts, and by helping them become more literate.

Apart from personal support, we have tried to encourage them to work and play in a team. In the morning we do that by teaching the children how to make wall hangings from plywood and veneer. We let them work either individually or in small groups on one piece.

Often we have had to remind ourselves that these children are living in the streets. This helps us to get a better understanding of the way they behave and the way they react. That is necessary, because it is quite easy to get annoyed with them. When they are fighting, for example, the best thing we can do is



to give them attention in a positive way, by playing a game or just joke a bit with them. and see if the Ghana magic of laughter can diffuse the situation. In this sort of work we have learned more from the children than they have learned from us.

We have also come critically to examine our own life style and that of the children. We realize that while we have the security and backing of the powerful of world and they have to fight and struggle to survive. The most important thing we have learned is that they want basic love and attention on a one to one basis. All in all not an easy job but well worth it.

At the end of July Margaretha and Annemarie return to Holland. A Dutch SMA Associate Member will replace them and also occupy the rooms we rented for them. Other volunteers have applied. Members of different congregations take part in our programs as well. For all of them it is a test to see if they can associate with the Street Children.

Unfortunately we have also to report that on a few instances thieves made away with several items which we had received from some of our donors. There is still hope that two items: the video recorder and radio/cassette recorder will be found. We know that these items have been sold and by whom. The video recorder is missed by all because it proved to be such a good tool for education and recreation. We were aware that this could happen, but still some element of trust has to be maintained otherwise life becomes unbearable and the Refuge ceases to be a home.



The sponsorship scheme is going very well and in September the first academic year comes to an end. Last time we reported that only 2 children left the schools. One of them left because he had an outstanding debt to pay and therefore he decided to work again in the streets. Now he is ready again resume his schooling. Several children have asked for a transfer. The main reason is that in the particular schools only the English language is used and not the vernacular. Since most of them are illiterates the vernacular language really should be included. Fortunately in some schools the authorities are willing to give additional lessons. Those in secondary schools are doing very well. These children were drop outs of the educational system and it was very difficult to place them back on the correct level.



We feel that drop outs should be encouraged to return. More will do so when the opportunities are created.

Recently, Plan International invited me to take part in A SOUTH ASIAN CONSULTATION ON WORKING WITH STREET CHILDREN AND YOUTH in India.

Representatives of different organizations working with street children from Asia, Africa and Latin America shared their experiences, which was very enriching. Many topics were discussed, but this was only the beginning of networking among those involved.

CAS is very happy that PLAN wants to work for Street Children worldwide. Honestly speaking organizations working for children should have made that move ten years ago. We request PLAN not to hesitate. Street Children have equal rights. It is beautiful to document rights for all children, it is more difficult and more

commendable to work for it. We keep on trying many programs and cannot show too many tangible results because we have only been operating for some twenty months. In Latin America and other places (Nairobi, in Kenya, for example) programmes for Street Children are 10, 20, 25 years old and still they find it difficult to argue 'sustainability'. (Whatever that means in the context of children in and on the streets). Our plea is for major league players like PLAN to take a gamble on small N.G.O's working on the streets and back them regardless of the odds.

I am also happy to note that PLAN has the foresight to declare that networking is very important. It is not easy as there are many vested interests and plenty of unknown agendas among N.G.O.S purporting to protect the Street Child. But networking is the only way forward.

Here at CAS we see two major avenues of approach:

1. In order to work with Street Children, a meeting point has to be created. A day or a night shelter as well as crèches are such places. Not many organizations understand this approach and think that we encourage other children to come on the streets. In India I saw a shelter in town which was not more than a meeting point under a bridge. This could be an approach for us as well. Instead of building big shelters, several meetings points could be created in town where workers meet the children daily in the very places where they work and live.

2. The sponsorship scheme is a second area of involvement. Our short experience in this field has highlighted some difficulties already. It is extremely hard to interest young children below 16 years of age to consider any sort of education. They are happy to be free and have time to play about. We hope that examples will encourage them eventually to take decisions. Child based sponsorship is recommended because the geographical difficulties to involve families are tremendous and are very costly.

We are often asked why we are not working in a preventive capacity in the Rural Areas. The simple answer is:

1. CAS has chosen to work with the children already in the streets of the Greater Accra Region. We are of the opinion that the children presently in the streets deserve our assistance. CAS is too small to try and split its objectives and work in the rural areas as well. Other NGOs must take this on.

2. For a period of twenty years, several of us have been working in the rural areas of the north of Ghana. We started, for example, four vocational institutes and set up over 60 income generating firms for those who completed their education.

These institutes were established for those children who were deprived of further education. Unfortunately, because of existing education regulations the schools had to be upgraded with the result that the deprived were once again pushed aside. Our experience with the income generating firms is that they will only succeed when a foreign body remains in charge. Ethnic problems as well as basic trust in each other are the main stumbling blocks. On many occasions our most successful students with everything to play for in the north surprised us by joining the flow to the cities. We decided to follow them and work at this side of the problem.

FATHER JOHN.

From time to time you will have heard us mention the name of Fr. John. He is a French Priest and works with handicapped children. He is also Chairman of the Board of CAS.

He is truly the man who started the whole initiative on Street Children, not just CAS but the national awareness that Ghana like the rest of Africa has a problem with these youngsters.

Fr. John said all this in the early 1980 s. He quietly, for his method is quiet and strong, confronted the academics, the ministries, his own church and the NGO's and caused things to happen. One of the results of all this is CAS. His own Government has recognized his immense work for the children in West Africa and to his great embarrassment have awarded him the L'ORDE NATIONAL du MERITE. We are happy for him, but very sad too because John is leaving Ghana and returning to France to rest and study. As he says: 'My body has told me to stop for a while'. From the thousands of children he has helped and from us we say simply: 'Thank you John'.



KONKOMBA MARKET STREET BABIES.

The word Konkomba rolls off the tongue. In current Ghana news it is the name of one of the ethnic groups in dispute in the North of the country. In Accra history it is the name of the biggest yam market. It is also a growing Shanty town with all that means. Its structures are either illegal or semi-legal its activities many (the yam market has long been a mere corner of the whole site) its utilities virtually nonexistent. It is home to hundreds of Street Girl and Women Porters (Kaya yes's) and, our workers have found, hundreds of Street Babies. So we are now moving in too. We have acquired permission from the City Mayor to be legally, illegal! We have just started to build three wooden structures for day care centers for one hundred babies and children. We are being helped greatly by the Royal Netherlands Govt. and by PLAN INTERNATIONAL, UNICEF and private Donors.

What will happen in the next six to twelve months? We don't really know. All we do know is that very small Street Children and Babies are in trouble and PLAN and UNICEF are prepared to back our risk. In the next report we will devote more space and give a detailed analysis of our programme. So... if your company or organization has spare funds each baby/ small child will cost us \$ 300.00 per year to have. Simple health care and nutrition monitoring.

NEWSLETTER NO. 7 DECEMBER 1995 CAS REPORT

At the request of our Superiors and several donor organisations we present an evaluation of the CAS project. This evaluation will show where we are up to and how we have to plan for the coming years.

CAS started as an experiment, because we did not know the children well and we did not know their needs and expectations. The plans we made have been adapted and the children have told us which direction we should take. All the different projects we undertake at the moment are a result of interaction with the children.

We can safely conclude that we did not really know the children. We did not realise that so many were living on the streets leading such miserable lives.

The programmes presently in operation are:

- House of Refuge.
- Literacy Program.
- Demonstration Classes.
- Foster Families.
- Medical Program.
- Field work.
- Fan Milk Literacy.
- Social Surveys.
- Hopeland Farm Project.
- Baby Care Program.



- Remand and Probation.

We will explain some in detail.

THE CHILDREN.

During the past years we have learned many interesting things from the children. At present we are in contact with 900 children, 100 of whom are following a training in schools or workshops or in the House of Refuge. Social Surveys have been conducted on all of them and the following has been discovered:

100 children. number of boys = 72 girls = 28

Their ages vary: 4y=1, 6y=1, 9y=1, 10y=2,
11y=1, 13y=1, 14y=1, 15y=10,
16y=18, 17y=14, 18y=24, 19y=21, 20y=5.

Not all the children are interested in education. Children of fourteen years and above, realise that they cannot stay on the streets forever. They show greatest interest in trades they have heard of. We therefore show them a variety of trades so a choice is easier to make. The following statistics indicate the family background of the children:

- 44 Have parents who are divorced.
- 27 One parent died.

- 3 Two parents but pensioned.
- 10 Two parents with many children at home.
- 7 Two parents
- 9 Orphans.

These figures are frightening. 90 % of the children do not receive good parental care because of one reason or another. We therefore dare say that the main answer to this problem is not money but Love, Care and affection. What can CAS do? We are unable to influence the basic causes, but we can surely do something to correct it. From experience we know that a lot of patience is needed. We are happy that teachers, employers and parents who take care of the children have shown this patience. In the House of Refuge, the workers also have to appreciate that much patience is needed with the children. The children have been too long without parental care, and can not remember what it means to be cared for. Some children adapt readily to our caring approach.

Sometimes the older children assist the staff, helping other children who take longer to respond to our care. In some cases, children whom we sent to school, have dropped out. CAS discussed this problem regarding schooling and we think that the child's preparation was done too hastily. Still 87% have been successful, but we know we have to take more time in future.

Sometimes we are asked whether the project is sustainable. We tend to be very careful with our answers. Looking at the above it is difficult to measure. We are dealing with people and they cannot be easily measured as the following figures reveal.

- 20 Did not follow any education.
- 38 Did not complete the primary school.
- 11 Did not complete the J.S.S.
- 2 Did not complete the S.S.S.
- 25 Completed the J.S.S. but cannot write properly or speak english.
- 4 Completed the J.S.S. and do speak good english.

Here again we can ask a few questions; we noticed that some schools request contributions from our children which are not easy to understand. Is it really necessary that children have to belong to a higher society once they attend school? The school requirements are high and many parents cannot afford them, why can this not be limited? For instance, in the Refuge, the children follow classes half naked, because they have washed their shirt. Still they are able to learn how to read and write. We therefore suggest that non formal education might be more appropriate for these children.

25% of the children that completed school, cannot write or read properly. These children followed education for at least ten years and the results are abysmal. We will try to get an answer to this question by conducting better social surveys.

One fifth of the children have not received any education at all. One third of them are girls.

Some children did not show any interest in education and have got away with it. Now they are older they realise that they have to learn something for the future.



Creating awareness

In the coming years we hope to find out the real reasons why children forgo education for other occupations for instance:

- 17 Lived more then 1 year in the streets.
- 31 Two years in the streets.
- 6 Two and a half year in the streets.
- 30 Three years in the streets.
- 7 Four years in the streets.
- 7 Five years in the streets.
- 1 Ten years in the streets.
- 1 With guardian.

About half of them have been over three years on the streets before they got an opportunity to change their life style. We even

know children who are born on the streets and we wonder what will become of them in the future. They grow up in the wrong environment. They easily come in contact with crime, drugs, prostitution etc. We have to try to assist them as quickly as possible. We are sure that some families are willing to take care of one child. CAS will try to assist these families as much as possible.

Several children write us interesting letters from their schools or work sites. The letters are full of mistakes, but the message is clear. They are happy they have the opportunity to learn.

DONOR ORGANISATIONS:

During the past month, three donor organisations came to audit their contributions to CAS.

It was time consuming work. Since many donors contribute to the same project, explanations are needed. It is not enough to just show them the books. At the end of it all, everyone was satisfied and we hope they will continue to support us.

DEPARTMENTS:

We realise that CAS has already become quite large and we have decided to divide it into several departments. Each department will have its own accounts and general administration. The departments are:

The Literacy department, The Sponsorship department,



The Baby Care department, The Hopeland training center. In this way it will be easier to control the various activities.

Another group that meets as a unit are the Field workers. CAS knows that the personnel needed to run these departments have to be trained.

Two workers are following an accounting course, while two others are preparing themselves to return to Legon University to update themselves and study for a higher degree. Unfortunately, the universities are still closed.

Also, most members of staff will follow some training sessions in Family Planning.

Whenever there are suitable courses available for training staff, we will ask our members to take part. For this training, time is needed and therefore will be included in our agenda during the coming years.

FIELDWORK.

Fieldwork is our main activity. In the field we meet the children and contacts are established. This work is done on foot, and not all parts of the city can be reached.

We therefore have plans to establish "Meeting Points" in several parts of the city. Small wooden sheds or empty buildings will be used where one of the workers can contact all the children in that particular area. This approach will be much cheaper than building more Houses of Refuge. Therefore, more workers will be needed. The

present field workers are also in charge of a particular school or work place. Every fortnight they visit the training place and make a report on it. With the assistance of UNICEF, we hope to increase these "Meeting Points" in 1996.

HOPELAND FARM TRAINING CENTER.

The Hopeland training center is taking shape. UNICEF has helped us fence the compound and increase the livestock. In future, the farm will produce enough to pay the salaries of the personnel. Hopeland will become a center where children are prepared to follow courses in various skills. Beside poultry keeping and pig rearing, we will start with beekeeping and rabbit



CERAMICS

breeding.

We have presented a proposal to MISEREOR to assist us in completing some buildings and in establishing a ceramic workshop on the site.

Francis Art Studio from Nungua has offered to help us to start this trade. Also, the leather work association has contacted us. This trade could also be demonstrated in Hopeland training center.

The main idea is to interest children in a trade which will be beneficial to their future.

BABY CARE PROGRAMME.

The three creches built at the Konkomba market are almost ready. Two of them are already being used by the minders who take care of the babies. The 100 mothers with babies will be divided between the three creches and CAS staff will teach the minders and the mothers how to take care of the creches. URBAN AID will train our staff to keep records of all the babies and monitor and evaluate their progress.

At a later stage, health training sessions will be organised. The creches will be used for education in primary health care, hygiene and nutritional needs. Those babies who are in need of medical treatment will be transferred to the Refuge where every Thursday a doctor can be consulted. Presently, the main attention of our staff is on this program, and we want to be sure that it will get off to a good start.



Crime
Prostitution



REMAND AND PROBATION.

An area on which we have not previously reported is the cooperation we have with the Juvenile Court.

The Remand Home, where young offenders between the ages of 8 to 17 are kept until their cases are disposed of at the Juvenile Court. The majority of these children come from broken homes and from poor parental background. Most of the children have no hope for the future and in order to prevent them from going to jail we have a joint collaboration scheme with the Department of Social Welfare; which runs the home, to assist all children put on Remand and Probation. (Boys and Girls). CAS as an organisation has sponsored eight of these children to follow trades of their choice and we hope to sponsor more of them soon.

NEWSLETTER NO.8 MARCH 1996

HOUSE OF REFUGE.

It is interesting to note that during that year and month we estimated the number of Street Children at about 5 thousand. This year we estimate the numbers at 10 thousand. Every day our field workers visit the children in the streets of Accra, at the very places where the children work and sleep. The workers keep daily records of their findings and also try to count the



children they meet at a particular area in town. The average number is 80 children. Accra town mainly consists of single storey buildings, and therefore the town covers a fast area. Street Children concentrate around markets and shopping centers, still the workers have to visit many areas and sometimes walk for hours.

Two years ago 160 children were registered in our House of Refuge, presently 945 boys and 131 girls have been registered. In addition, our workers know many children in town who do not visit the Refuge for one or another reason. Daily, 100-120

children are in the Refuge and every day at least four members of staff should be present to keep order. A timetable has been drawn up stating periods for demonstration lessons, literacy, music, sports, video tec. Volunteers, expatriate and Ghanaian keep the children occupied. These volunteers always need a period of acclimatization, but as soon as they have accepted the children as they are, the work will be easy.

Home situation. Our social workers accumulate more and more information about the back ground of the children. Reading through social survey reports, will make you understand better why a particular child behaves as it does.

Some are really violent, others are very quite. Some show no interest in any activitiy, while others are over active.

But we see the transformation taken place when one of the workers pays attention to them. Also those who are already in schools or work places cannot be recognized as Street Children any longer. It is indeed interesting to observe when these students, boys and girls, return to the Refuge and exchange ideas about their studies.

The reports show that from the 100 in the sponsorship scheme:
13 are from towns.

2 are from another country.

85 are from small villages.

68 come from families who are poorly housed.

25 children have been moved about from one family member to the other.

85 children had no electricity at home.

14 have parents who have well paid jobs.

6 have parents who are unemployed.

55 have parents who are farmers or fishermen.

3 have families who live in the streets themselves.

12 are from poor families.

While observing the children, reading the reports and studying the records, our conclusion is, Street Children are all different, because of their previous life experiences.

Baby Care Program.

The Baby Care Program at the Konkomba Market has taken off very slowly and carefully. CAS staff is trying to let the women and minders realize that this project is entirely theirs. They will decide what will happen with their babies and with themselves.

CAS by no means, has the intention to take any decision on

their behalf. The three structures have been built to create a better environment so that the health condition of mother and child can improve. It is a slow process because:

1. The women cannot understand that suddenly somebody cares for them.
2. Women of various tribes live in that area and a selection has to be made.
3. The problems there, are so manifold. Not all can be solved at once.

But we are making progress. Approximately 100 mothers and babies make use of the structures. Several women, 6-10 a day, come with their sick child to the House of Refuge where workers assist them to receive medical attention.

In order to know more about the people staying at the Konkomba market we have conducted a survey. This survey has become necessary because we did not know enough about the shanty and background of the women. We estimate that 28,000 people are living at these 3.5 sq.Km. on the refuse tip. They do not receive medical attention. Neither are there schools for the children. Interestingly, many girls and women asked to be



Hopeland chicken farm

educated themselves. This means, we have to expand the literacy program. A few teachers and other interesting persons have contacted us already for this literacy program. After experimenting so long it has become necessary to set up a good program so that the children as well as the mother will benefit from it.

Hopeland Training Center.

Hopeland farm has been improved during the previous months. In addition to poultry, pigsty and garden, rabbit and bee keeping has been added. That is to say some beehives have been placed at suitable spots and now we have to wait for the bees to arrive.

With the assistance of UNICEF, a chicken house will be completed and another one will be changed into a ceramic workshop. Some equipment has been bought already and we hope as soon as the building has been completed this training in ceramics, which started in the Refuge, can be extended.

The farm has 500 layers but the demand for eggs is so great that we easily can triple it. In addition, 1000 broilers grew up at the farm and many were sold during the Christmas period. The pigsty produced 20 pigs of which several have been sold as well. We will try to increase the number of live stock so that the farm will have sufficient income.

5 boys and a few girls are presently learning at the farm. The boys stay in dormitories while the girls stay at Ashaiman town. Our counterparts, the "Friends of the Youth" in Ashaiman are taking care of the girls. As soon as the buildings have been completed we hope to increase the number of boys to 20 and the girls to 10. This means that additional trades should be added to have a greater choice for the children. We will introduce duck keeping, sheep and goat rearing, plant more fruit trees and renovate a workshop for can and leather works.

Sponsorship Scheme.

This scheme has developed very rapidly. 120 children are being trained or about being send. CAS is working together with 22 schools and 26 workshops. The schools are in Accra and surrounding towns, Swedru, Prampram, Anloga, Cape Coast, Nungua, Ashaiman, Kukurantumi, Tema. The workshops are in Kaneshie, Madina, New Town, Nungua, Osu, Mamobi, Kantamanto, Cowlane, Zongo, Labadi, Odawna and Ashaiman. Workers have been assigned to the various places and every fortnight they visit them to assess the progress of the children.

A lot of materials, tools and equipment have been supplied to help the children in training. It has become necessary for CAS to

organise a team which visits all places of training, to check whether all is still available and in good condition. This team has almost completed their assignment and we are happy to know that most of these items are still in use.

This year, several children in training will sit for the grade two N.V.T.I. test. It will be the first batch who will complete this stage. We are already thinking and preparing for those who will not continue but rather establish themselves. All this can only be done with your help and financial support. We have received this support from many, too many to list them. You can be assured that the children are very grateful.

BOARD OF ADVISORS.

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NEWSLETTER NO. 9 JUNE 1996 CONSULTATIONS

HOUSE OF REFUGE.

The House of Refuge is based in a warehouse. It operates on the second floor. It has two large rooms, one for general activities such as table tennis, indoor games and video. The other large room is used for demonstration lessons in



handicrafts, pottery, woodcarving and weaving. In this room there are three beds for those who need to rest. On the same floor the Refuge has a classroom and a small medical room. It also has a small office, two store rooms and toilets.

During the four and half years of occupation, CAS has renovated this Refuge twice. Daily 100-150 children make use of its facilities. Recently, the Landlady informed us at CAS that we should leave her premises because she has other plans for the building. CAS has paid the rent up to May 1997. We had hoped to use this year to look out for other premises or a complete building but now we have to hurry. The staff is therefore out on the streets looking out for buildings, which are for sale or empty spaces in town, which are suitable possibly to build another House of Refuge. Memories are returning of the first year when Bro. Jos, Fr. Patrick and Ken Amoah spent months looking for suitable places. It was of course an opportunity to know the town well, but it was also a period full of frustration. Several times we came to a point of paying for the rent, only to discover that the owner did not agree any longer because it was for street children. We are not looking forward to repeating the exercise, but we have no choice.

A permanent House of Refuge should of course be in the center of town because Street Children do not leave their territory and they take time to trust us.

As our workers become more accepted on the street by the children so they are more likely to use the Refuge. For example many very young girls use our place but are still very shy inside the house. We would have to say that they are afraid of



following some of the programmes, so much so that only a few join the literacy or try the weaving. All this is to remind us that there is a need for a lot of counselling and encouragement. We have started to set aside Tuesdays as a meeting and counselling day. Private advice is in the morning and group gatherings are in the afternoon. Many children are responding well and beginning to benefit from such simple encounters.

MEETING POINTS.

CAS has also plans to obtain or to build temporary structures to act as smaller meeting points in town. We are thinking of wooden kiosks, which can serve as bases for our social workers. S(he) will know all the children in that particular area and refer all those who need medical attention or are ready to be educated. CAS has already many activities in operation and therefore she has asked her sister NGO Street Girls Aid (S.AID) to study the town and propose suitable areas where such meeting points could be located. We have plans to start with two and see how they will function. These „mini refuges“ we think will help to underpin the confidence of street children in us and be useful points of contact for them when they are in trouble.

FOSTER PLAN CAS.

CAS workers meet Street Children daily in the streets and in the Houses of Refuge in Adedenkpo and Mamobi. 120 children have been placed in schools or in workshops where they receive a training /education. These children are no longer in the streets. The workers, however, always meet children who cannot be placed as yet and who cannot remain in the streets for one reason or another. Some are orphans. Some are too young. CAS therefore hopes to meet families who are willing to foster a particular child for some time.

We have drawn up some guidelines, which will help CAS as well as the prospective foster parent to carry out such a role. We have to stress that such fostering is temporary. Where the family and child want it on a permanent basis then we use the legal system to effect the fostering.

The guidelines are as follows:

a. A child will be offered for fostering temporarily. This is in anticipation to find a lasting solution for that particular child.



b. CAS will assist the family financially to educate the child.
 c. The family takes the child for a trial period of one month.
 d. A social worker will visit the family very often.

- e. The family will, with the assistance of CAS offer the child an education/training.
- f. At all times, the family in consultation with the social worker can decide to stop the fostering.
- g. The head or any member of the family and the child should visit the House of Refuge periodically.

HEALTH PROGRAMME.

In the House of Refuge, CAS runs a small medical programme. The children who sleep rough in market and on refuse dumps risk their health. Many resort to self-diagnosis and self-medication.

CAS workers attend to sick children who report at the House of Refuge. The workers are not qualified nurses and therefore the only solution is to accompany the child to a clinic or hospital. This is time consuming work.

Recently we have started attending to sick babies in the Konkomba market shanty. Our workers have gathered some data from the mothers and their babies.

Every day 6-10 mothers visit the House of Refuge with their sick babies. We attend to their immediate needs, but we know this approach cannot continue the way it has started. In future, the mothers will have to pay a small fee.

The sick babies were initially taken to Ussher Town Clinic and the Children's Hospital and other clinics nearby the refuge. But due to time and other inconveniences we have now arranged a programme with Boa clinic at JamesTown. We realized that most of the mothers do not pay much attention to their babies due to ignorance: to their need to work long hours for money and other factors.

We are trying to counsel the mothers about their own health and that of the children. We realize more and more that babies who come to us for medical help are in a fairly deplorable condition both from a health point of view and a nutritional point of view.

We have therefore applied to UNICEF to fund a Mobile Clinic, which will be run by the Salvation Army. The project will be carried out in phases:

Phase 1. The clinic will start in the House of Refuge at Adedenkpo and will replace the present system of referring patients. A room and water are available at the Refuge. It will be run until a mobile van is available.

Phase 2. The Government nurses will visit the Crèches at the Konkomba market and start an immunization and nutrition programme.

Phase 3. The clinic will be moved to the mobile van and

continue visiting the refuges but also the places where street mothers live. At this stage, the Salvation Army will run and control the programme entirely. Education on AIDS prevention and HIV virus will be included as well as Family Planning and counselling. We have asked UNICEF to make a video on the Konkomba Market, which will be used to create awareness among the Ghanaian public. The video will also be a tool for Fund raising.

The Osu Boys' Remand Home was established after the Second World War by the Ghana Government, as a place of lawful custody for young offenders who had come into conflict with the law in the Greater Accra Region.

The young offenders aged from nine to seventeen are often admitted to the home through the courts.

The children stay in the Remand home until their cases are disposed of at the courts. Some children stay for a long period in the home owing to delays in the court proceedings on their cases. This results in boredom and frustration and idleness. These are the basic ingredients for violence.

There are no special programmes of activity and learning to help the children use each day well. We now know that the majority of children on Remand are from the streets. When they are discharged or released they revert to the streets again with nothing to help them.

The Probation Wing.

The Osu Boy's Remand Home also has facilities for children released by the court on supervised probation with a condition of residence in the probation home.

Probationers stay for a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months in the home. Children whose parents can afford are put in schools in the neighbourhood during the probation period. As with the remand children the majority on probation are from the streets and therefore need to be supported to go through their vocational training.

Even after one year, when they are discharged, they are allowed to continue and complete their courses. Since most of the children are our street children, CAS is very interested to assist the school to improve the situation for both Remand and Probation clients. We have proposed to the Department of Social Welfare to put in place a good practical programme, which can benefit both the boys and the girls. The school authorities have to undertake and control this challenge themselves. CAS sees its role to assist and supplement. The work is plenty and at times too much and we are happy that other NGO's are helping to solve some of the problems.

We have received quite a number of reactions to our previous newsletter. Thank you all for your support and observations. As regards to our House of Refuge, we have fortunately solved our problem with the Land Lady and we will now remain in Adedenkpo till May 1997. However, we have continued to look for new places so that eventually we will have a permanent House of Refuge. Although the various activities are running well, we experience, more and more, problems and misunderstandings in our activities. In this letter we will try to highlight a few.

AGE GROUP.

Often when we attend meetings about children's affairs, we are amazed by the difference in understanding the word CHILD. The organizers are referring to youngsters or unemployed youth. We strictly use the Ghanaian and International concept: A child in not older than 18 years of age. We know that youngsters older than this are more vocal and therefore easier to work with. Organizers often like to have representatives of the youth in their meetings to highlight their problems directly. We think this is not helping them at all; it simply gives the organizers something to "exhibit." We call it the "zoo" syndrome. We have chosen to protect them and therefore do not agree to such treatment.

The Street Children we are dealing with, are afraid of adults. They hide and are not outspoken. They do not want to talk about their background. It takes months of careful counselling before a child trusts a worker enough to talk a bit about himself/herself. I am still surprised that often we have misunderstood a particular child although we thought we knew the whole story. Street Children, because of the circumstances, grow up very fast and in their minds they are adults. They have learned things from others but do not understand it all; sometimes they do not understand themselves. It is one of the aspects of survival; show that you know all and most of all show



that you are not afraid. But in their hearts they are children who have still to learn a lot.

Another major obstacle is the mind set of some people in authority to the problems of Street Children. Sadly a lot of people in authority and with power still view street life as a problem of deviance and control. The way to control is punish, arrest, close down, sweep up and forget. Even the Mayor of Accra is frustrated at times when his own District leaders regard the problem of Street Children as one that can be swept away simply, with the "bulldozer" technique.

Many people who visit us think that most of the children they see are delinquents. This is very unfortunate. Maybe a small percentage of them are involved in criminal activities. The majority are normal children who behave as children. This includes, wrestling, shouting, not listening and sometimes fighting. We do not know how we can erase this from peoples mind. It surely does not help Street Children. We, who are daily with them, do not see much difference between them and other children.

The fact is, many are already in the streets for years without any parental care or guidance and this has made them as they are.

COMMUNITY:

Street Children are not part of the larger community. To talk glibly of "community participation" is to miss the main point that a street child has his /her own group. They live in small groups according to tribal lines. They form very small communities on their own. It is in fact a sub culture, which has grown within a culture. Therefore it is very difficult for a street child to give up its freedom and return to its own culture. Even if all obstacles at home are removed, he/she will find it very difficult to return and follow the traditional pattern. This is a direct result of urbanization on the very young.

URBANIZATION:

There are people who think that the problem of Street Children can be solved. We know the problems are very complex and they are touching all aspects of life. It includes family planning and family life, child-care, education and health. The process of Urbanization is a movement, which cannot be stopped or reversed. We believe that in the next 10-15 years more of the population of Ghana will live in towns and cities. Street Children are going to be with us for a very long time to come. What could be done is, to slow down the process and to take care of those who are already there. They need access to good health facilities, they need to be educated but above all they need to be loved. Sometimes a romantic picture is sketched about Street Children as if they are part of a musical.

Unfortunately the reality is different. The phenomenon of Street

Children is a direct result of:

- a. Urbanization.
- b. Break down of family structures.
- c. Economic difficulties of more and more families.

It has been generally accepted that there are many poor families. What many do not realize is that often Street Children come from families who live in misery. This is a striking picture you observe when you read through the statistics. Families who live in a vicious circle with no hope to break it. We should not accept this because it is plain injustice.

Since the CAS staff comprises members of so many different denominations, who read these signs of the time, we realize that we should do more to create this awareness among the people we meet every week. If we do not manage to persuade people around us that there is a problem, how can we ever hope to have the problem tackled at the grass roots?

So we who have chosen to work for children in the streets have a duty to assist others NGOs and organizations and Churches and Mosques who care for families, to see the problems of the streets clearly. So that this problem can be addressed from the grass roots. We who have chosen to work for those already in the streets can also assist the N.G.O's and Churches, which show concern for the families.

We surely have to reflect on this during the evaluation, which has been planned to take part in October. This evaluation will involve all of us, those working in the field as well those who support us. We in CAS are aware we are only just touching the edge of the problem. Many more hands are needed. Better still, many more people are needed who show concern and understanding.

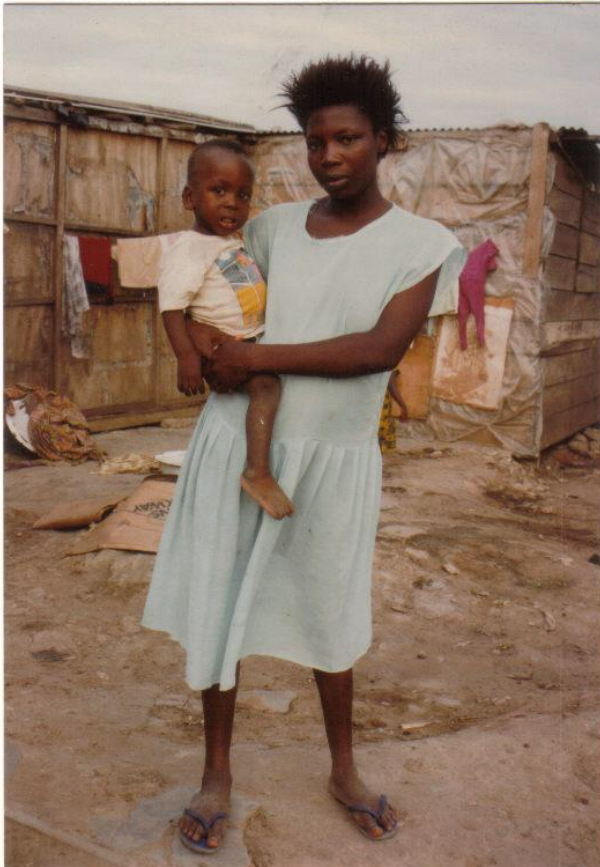
INCOME GENERATING VENTURES?

At times some people think that CAS receives money by running a health project, baby crèches, a refuge and a farm. But for all the different projects money is needed.

However, not many believe this and when assisting us want to be paid as well. In particular in the health projects a lot of financial support is needed. For running the Refuge, this includes paying salaries; it is hard to obtain support. And in the farm we are investing now to ensure that it will be self-supporting in three years' time. A recent acquisition was a refurbished tractor - a gift from LINER Agencies - a large shipping and transport company.

Mother's day.

Some weeks ago we organized a Mother's day for Street Mothers who are living in the Konkomba Market. Four students from Legon, who were on fieldwork practice, helped us. We programmed it to start at 10 o'clock A.M. but at 8.30 A.M. 150



Babycare program

mothers and babies were already present. The number was much larger than expected. In fact it was too large to have serious discussions. The workers gave several talks on the role of CAS, on child-care and hygiene. This exercise was conducted with the help of translators. At times it had to be translated into dialects and mothers helped us to do so. Several had no idea about the aims of CAS.

Some complained that we take too many photographs and videos of them to use for fundraising for ourselves. When asked why not all have their babies in the crèches run by CAS, they explained that problems exist among the different factions inside the shanty.

After the talks, a few videos were shown, however this was not a success because the Mothers did not understand the language and were not familiar with the pictures shown. In future, this has to be prepared much better. The videos should be simple and the presenter has to view it in advance so that he/she can explain what is shown.

Each mother received an amount to compensate for the workday lost.

We have evaluated the day afterwards and the conclusions are:

e. The language remains a problem for all of us.

f. The group was too large and next time it should be organized in smaller groups, for instance

- g. according to the registration of the Crèches.
- h. The women will be asked to keep their children in the Crèches during the meeting.
- i. Showing of videos should be better prepared.
- j. We have to be careful with sectionalism and tribalism.
- k. Leaders have now to be chosen from among the mothers to act for all parties concerned.

POLICIES.

A year ago the Mayor of Accra asked us to write a policy document for Street Children in his city. We realized this was a document that should include others, "the big boys". We asked our partners, UNICEF, to collaborate and produce it. This they did. At the same time they linked with the Department of Social Welfare who were preparing something for their Ministry. They in turn produced a policy document.

Unfortunately it's still a "Draft" document. It has no teeth, no bite it is not yet an implementing tool. This is a major obstacle.

If we can use it (and our work and research has been highlighted in it) then we have a weapon to wield at all corners. We need more social workers seconded with pay from the Government to go on the streets.

The document says that this should be done. We need permissions to experiment with Street Corners" Meeting Points or small health posts or literacy learning points. The document says this should be done. We need Government to facilitate and help and let us use their expertise and equipment. The document says this should be done. Unfortunately all these recommendations are at a halt because they are still in "draft", still mere suggestions.

So we are stuck. We have to claw our way through unbending bureaucracy and the Street Child goes unaided. Of all the points underlined the most important is more trained social workers on our streets. For that we need a strong policy guide, a virtual law. Without more workers our programmes are seriously undercut.

As you will know we have our Street Babies" project in Konkomba market shantytown. We are learning daily how to react to hundreds of small children left to fend daily on a rubbish tip area while their Street Mothers work in the markets. We have started with three "crèches", wooden sheds. These have been erected in the worst area environmentally because that same area has most of the babies. The obstacle is that two ministries combined to try and close us down on the pretext that we had not just encouraged bad environmental practice but imported all the health problems as well. We will not close down because the doctors on our board of management have argued the case. But the weeks of wrangling and arguing do nothing for a Street Baby in trouble and take away staff and resources that should be for children and not for the solving of disputes that have no



foundation. All this is to tell you that working on the streets with Street Children is not always as trouble free as we report.

MINI REFUGES + HEAD COUNT.

Since the problems with Street Children are tremendous, CAS works very closely together with other NGO's in particularly with Street Girls Aid. S.AID. Recently we have embarked together on two different projects. Many Street Children do not visit our Refuges because, either the distance is too great to walk, or by the nature of their job they do not have time to visit us.

Therefore, field workers are daily in the streets to visit them at their respective areas. Many more refuges are needed, but this is very expensive and difficult to organize.

A cheaper solution is to create meeting points (MINI REFUGES) in particular area where a large number of Street Children are concentrating. We have built two kiosks as a start at two different locations in town. The Staff of CAS and S.AID will work together and have made a schedule to be present every day to meet the children there. This is another experiment with Street Children we would like to share with you.

HEADCOUNT. Another exercise we have just completed is a new assessment of the number of Street Children in Accra City. Both staff met and each member received the assignment to count the Street Boys and Girls in a particular area of town.

The results are as follows: 10,440 are in the streets in 1996

WALK

On the 10th. of September, we launched a fund/awareness-raising Walk at the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. Mr. Eric Apetu, a student of Accra Polytec presented himself to walk to and through many towns and villages and so create the awareness of Street Children. For the fund raising, badges will be sold to the public. In our next issue of the Newsletter we will

be able to report more on this activity.

NEWSLETTER NO. 11 DECEMBER 1996 APPRECIATION

During 1996, we met many Street Children (1307 boys and 212 girls have been registered) and we have undertaken many projects and programmes for them, thanks to the generous contributions we received from donor organisations and from individuals and groups. We hope of course that in 1997 we will receive the same assistance. We are aware that all the projects are very costly, but our conviction is that we - our society- own these children help. Every child assisted to have a better future is an achievement.

A lot of the contributions have come from abroad, but also here in Ghana we have seen an increase in donations. As an attempt to increase these contributions locally, but also as an exercise to increase the awareness of Street Children, a long distance Walk was organised. A student from the Polytec of Accra, Mr. Eric Apetu volunteered to walk to raise funds for the Street Children. This Walk was launched on the 10th. of September at the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. Organisers, the press and we were all present. Unfortunately the Street Children we had invited to stand with us at the ceremony were missing! They had got the ministries mixed up. (They do not have much



Evaluation CAS and SAID 1996

to do in Government Ministries, normally). Some of our staff had to hire a Tro Tro and collect them. Each one was supposed to wear a 't' shirt, but unfortunately there were not enough 'T' shirts to go round. You will understand that this caused some commotion. Eric and his team took off after the introduction and soon discovered that in the towns and villages they went to, people did not understand the purpose of the walk and asked many questions. Some people were even in disagreement. Although CAS has been on the radio and television several times, many people have never heard about CAS or Street Children. The team therefore reorganised themselves and people were assigned to sell badges and explain what the exercise was all about. At a later date Eric walked to all these places and collected the contributions. Also in Accra we, the staff did our best to sell our badges and distribute them. We must report that the whole exercise was not a complete success. Financially we did not gain. We now know, that all the preparations for such a marathon walk is very costly. As an exercise to create the awareness the walk was more successful. Many more people are now aware that Street Children are in towns and cities and that they are in need of help. We still hope that in 1997 we will see some result from this walk. But we do congratulate Eric and his team for all the effort they have put in it.

EVALUATION:

Before we started the CAS project, we came to an agreement with our superiors and trustees to evaluate it after a few years to examine what we have undertaken and to try to set out a plan



for the future.

We, the management, did not want a traditional evaluation only to find out how effective we have been, but we were more interested in the opinions of all members of staff and of the children. We also wanted to use it as a learning experience. Father Patrick knew that his old professor had started some kind of organisation in this line and he enquired. The result was that we invited Rev. Charles Elliott and his wife and Ms. Mette Jacobsgaard of 'Cambridge Partnership for Organisational Transformation', Cambridge University. They were with us for three weeks. Of course such an evaluation cost money and therefore we approached our donors and asked them of assistance. Misereor, Congregations to the Missionaries of Africa and Brothers F.I.C., UNICEF as well as private donors contribution. We are very grateful to them all

The process was an Embedded Evaluation. In short it means that all persons involved themselves and the project with the help of the above mentioned team. It is based on an APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY, which has four principles:

1. Begin with appreciation.
'Inquiry into' the art of the possible' in organisational life should begin with appreciation'
2. Application.
Inquiry into what's possible should be applicable.
3. Provocative Possibilities.
'Inquire into what's possible should be provocative.'
4. Collaborative interaction and Action.
'Inquire into the human potential of organisational life should be collaboration.'

CAS staff as well as the staff of Street Girls Aid. (s. AID), representation of donor organisations, Ministry of Social Welfare and our Religious congregations worked with these principles. The first workshop lasted two days and 32 persons took part. It was a preparation, which made you think and work according to this approach. During the second week, all workers used this approach in their own work environment. In the second workshop the experiences were shared and we all outlined a possible direction for the future. 35 persons took part in the second workshop. Everything was organised in the House of Refuge in Jamestown. The children were present as well as the noise and other realities of our 'Street house'!

It all went well but it was mentally and physically very demanding. All persons who took part are very pleased with the experience. We have got to know each other better and nobody has regretted being involved. The plans for the future are now

being made ready for implementation. We have received a draft report from them, which we have corrected on some issues. These have been faxed to them and we hope to receive the final report before Christmas. We will be very happy to share this report with any of you are interested in such a method.

OUTREACH CLINIC.

On the first of November, the Salvation Army started with the Outreach Clinic for Street Children. All persons involved, nurses, drivers and Co-ordinators held an orientation week and part of their activity was to visit all the clinics and hospitals in the vicinity as well as the House of Refuge and Crèches at the Konkomba market.

Unfortunately, neither a proper supply of drugs nor a vehicle was available and both the Salvation Army as well as CAS had to adjust and assist the nurses so that they could start as planned. It is easier to plan on paper than the reality, but in operation. Every day the nurses open the clinic at the House of Refuge and visit the Konkomba market Crèches. We managed to buy some drugs from different stores and slowly the clinic takes shape. As we write (December) they have taken delivery of a vehicle. We asked the nurses only to concentrate on the street Children and the street babies for the mean time, but when all is in place they can expand the working areas as well to take care of the street Mothers. Who are also in need of medical attention. We hope that by the 1 st. of January'97 all health related the Salvation Army would treat issues.

We have also asked the Salvation Army to take over the programme of Health Education for the children who visit our Refuge. We have been running it for almost a year now in conjunction with some Public Health nurses from the ministry of Health based at one local Government Poly Clinic. Another evaluation was made so that the Salvationist could ascertain the state of the programme.



We invited some street boys and girls all listened to what they had to say about the lessons they had had and the things they had learned. Teaching such a range of ages is hard enough and teaching Street Children who come and go is at times almost impossible.

Sometimes the nurses find the same group for two sessions and other times they discover that so many new children have turned up that they do nothing but start all over again. A second difficulty is the language barrier. Many children speak some Twi or Ewe or Ga but not all well enough to be able to reason or understand the details of the topic. Thirdly the boys and girls asked to be taught separately.

All this tell you that is it very difficult to organise and set up a 'Peer to Peer' system of health learning amongst Street Children. We presume too quickly that they understand and then that they can/will teach their street peers. We presume too quickly that the accepted methods of 'peer' training will automatically work with Street Children. It is a very difficult part of our programme and we want, at the end of this year, to say a big thank you to all the nurses who come faithfully, every fortnight to educate the children in health care.

HOPELAND FARM.

During the past year, Hopeland farm has changed tremendously. The chicken house and other buildings have been renovated and new chicken house has been built and an old house has been changed into a ceramics' workshop. This was all made possible with the assistance of UNICEF and we are very grateful to them. The chicken population has increased from 400 to 2000 birds. We were also able to start bee keeping and rabbit rearing. The bees have arrived and 30 rabbits are already at the farm. For this venture we received help from a Dutch organisation called 'Help Ghana'. They have also helped us with bunk beds for the dormitories.

The ceramics workshop has just started. Mr. Francis Boateng, an artist and CAS signed an agreement and Francis is now training some children at the farm. A lot of equipment and tools had to be purchased in order to set up this new programme. Misereor as well as the American Embassy took care that this workshop could be installed.

One of the kilns is now completed and the first ceramic pieces have been fired in it. At the end of this year we hope to have all the equipment in place both from here and overseas.

In another building a Candle making workshop has taken off. An organisation named Aid for Artisans in Ghana and financial help from The North American Women Organisation made this possible. We are aiming high. The candles should be of such a quality that they could be exported. In a few months time we will

know whether we have succeeded. For this work we have ordered some equipment from abroad and we are patiently waiting for it. Of course we will also sell the candle and ceramic pieces on the local markets but we do not know as yet what production level we can reach in the first year.

The idea is that children who are at the farm and show interest in these trades will get the time to learn them. As soon as the dormitories have been renovated, twenty boys and ten girls can work at the farm. The girls will stay in Ashaiman town, which is very close to Hopeland. At present 9 boys and 4 girls are at the farm.

Work has started on new managers' house and dam, which will provide water for the farm as well as for the people staying there. Our neighbours farm has a dam already but uses it as a fishpond. Hopeland has a borehole, but unfortunately it produces salty water, which cannot be used. The streams, which are full of water during the rainy season, will be to fill up both ponds. As soon as the water reservoir is ready, the dry season garden will be extended and we will plant many more trees, which will serve as fence but will also produce firewood. We hope that eventually this will be self-sustainable and even help CAS to cater for some of the costs of other programmes.

BABY CARE PROGRAMME

The Baby Care programme at the Konkomba market has grown. Presently 160 babies have been registered at the three crèches. The three minders and the three workers have their hands full. But is still growing, every day more babies are brought to them to be registered. We know from our survey that approximately 2000 babies and small children live in that area. The question is; what will we be able to manage? During the past years we have tried to improve the situation for the babies by cooking



supplementary breakfast for them, by allowing the sick children to come to the House of Refuge for treatment and by supplying toys, from the Ghana International Women's Club, which help a lot. But were we successful? we maintain that this project is strictly a community-based project. For us it means that the mothers decide what is good for their babies. The result is that the improvements are taking effect very slowly. We realise that some mothers do not feed their babies because we help too much. We see that most of the toys and mats are taken and sold. This is what happened, and we have to learn from it. Education for the mothers is therefore the only answer. The mothers should be taught how to take care of their babies and to understand that certain items are needed to bring up their babies in a health atmosphere. We should not impose our ideas but listen more to them and that means we need a lot of patience.

Recently, a firm has started dredge and clean the Korle Lagoon, which surrounds Konkomba market on three sides. The whole area will be affected. We are not sure that we can stay there much longer. We therefore have started the discussions as how to continue with this project.

At our fortnightly staff meetings we discussed issues such as, can we say no to a mother who presents her baby? Should we ignore the baby when the mother does not pay the 200.00 for the minders? To which place do we move when the authorities will bulldoze the market and ask us to move?

To be able to run this project and expand it a lot of money is needed. In 1997 we do not have money available for this project. Therefore, during the last Board of Advisors meeting we have decided to handover the complete project to Street Girls Aid. The reasons are

1. S. AID are already specialised in Street Mothers and Babies.
2. It is better that one N.G.O. decides on all issues concerned
3. S.AID will now be able to present this project as a packet to donor organisations who are specially interested in Street Mothers and Babies.
4. CAS and S.AID already work very closely with each other
5. CAS can still assist S.AID whenever necessary.

This means that on the first of January 1997 S.AID will run the Baby Care Programme of Street Babies. We are also grateful to UNICEF, Pru Smith and her team who recently completed the video on Konkomba Market. Soon we hope to show this video to the public. It really shows what is happening there and we hope that some people will be moved by it and come to the aid of these mothers and babies.



CAS workers will concentrate on the felling area and tasks in 1997.

a. Field work and Mini Refuge. As you know two Mini Refuge have been built and placed in the centre of town. Although we had permission from the highest Authority in the city, some other authority did not agree and painted 'remove by order' on one of them. We hope we have solved the problem so that this project can continue peacefully. Every day workers from CAS and S.AID are at the Mini Refuge and meet the children in the area. Sometimes more than 20 children are there at a time. The Mini Refuges are only meant as a meeting point and should not replace the main refuges(s).

b. It will take time before workers as well as children understand this. The Kiosks are so small that no activity can be organised in them. We have decided to evaluate this project in March 1997. Maybe we have to move the existing ones to other locations or make them larger. The plan to build at least 6 of these Mini Refuges has already been shelved because of lack of funds.

Increase the Sponsorship Scheme. As of December 1996, 145 children are under the sponsorship scheme. We will soon be able to have 200 children in this scheme. We will increase the staff that does the administration and also have another social worker attached to the programme. We are grateful to all the headmasters, teachers, workshop managers and workers who are assisting us in our sponsorship initiative. Recently we have had some set backs with some of the children who could not cope with their new situation.

Some are in need of professional help from psychologists or psychotherapists. We know that some have gone through awful experiences while in the streets and it takes time to be able to forget about them and think of the future.

CAS will also try to improve the literacy and Demonstration lessons. Two officers from the Ministry of Education are assisting the 10 part time teachers who are teaching the Fan Milk boys, to prepare a good syllabus which can be used for street children and street mothers as well. They hope to be ready with it at the end of the month. We have many other plans for 1997 but the funds available will decide what can be done. As always our dreams have to be tempered by financial realities. Thank you again for all your support in the past year. Have a peaceful and happy 1997.

NEWSLETTER NO. 12 MARCH 1997 CREATING AWARENESS

CAS is a growing organization and we are aware that donors and well wishers like to know how the organization is functioning. CAS has a Board of Advisors, which meet once a month. The members of the Board advise the management on certain issues. We are happy to let you know that the Department of Social Welfare has appointed a representative, Mrs. Mary Amadu (Dept. Director) to the Board. Also the Major Superiors of men and women religious will elect a representative soon.

CAS is depending on the financial support of various donors. The various departments are supported by them. These are: The House of Refuge with the Literacy and Demonstration department, the Fieldwork with Mini refuges, the Hopeland preparation centre and the Sponsorship scheme. CAS also supports the Baby Care program at the Konkomba market, which has been taken care of by Street Girls Aid, and the health department, which is now run by the Salvation Army.

Money received for the departments are acknowledged. Quarterly, the donor receives a progress report as well as a financial report. All receipts are kept at the CAS office. Copies of them will be sent to the donor. At all times the donors are free to audit the accounts and check the receipts. Since CAS receives assistance from several donors, also private donors, we have decided to stick to one particular method of reporting. This is necessary because of managerial reasons.

Donors, who support e.g. a child partly in the sponsorship scheme, will receive a full report of the expenditure, but in that case CAS does not show how much a particular donor has contributed. We are aware that not all donors agree with our methods. Some donors also want to be implementers. In our view, this is impossible. The donor has to trust CAS fully; otherwise the co-operation will be impossible.

EVALUATION.

As you are aware, CAS has evaluated its set up in October

1996. We have received many positive reactions from donors and others who have received the report. CAS staff meets regularly, every fortnight. During these meetings all the daily activities as well as the progress of children are discussed.

Since the beginning of 1997 we have added an other topic to the agenda, the Evaluation report. At every meeting a part of this report is presented again and the staff is asked to reflect and discuss it. Sometimes this is done in a large group, at times the group is divided in sub groups. Presently many volunteers, expatriates as well as Ghanaian are assisting us and they also take part in the discussions. So far we have dealt with the following topics: Social Surveys, CAS' data base, Drug addicts, Field work, Co-operation with other organizations and CAS' structure. The results of these meetings are now presented to the Board of Advisors. They in turn will discuss the various recommendations from the staff. The staff has already implemented some changes e.g. a panel comprising of three workers has been set up to screen the social survey reports. This panel also meets representatives from S.AID once a month, which assist in conducting surveys on children. We decided to ask the help of experts on drug addiction to help in the education on drugs at the Refuge. We also adapted the fieldwork report form. All workers who meet the children in the field need to have sufficient information to be able to counsel and gain the confidence of the children. Also the structure of CAS has been examined. We did not complete these discussions. All of us are involved, and we think it will be necessary to try out particular methods of operating. Departments are already created, but to know to which extend they can become autonomous, is the question. Several members of staff work and assist in different departments. You have to accept the complete child when you want to help it. Person, Health, Education, Environment etc. are all part of it. These cannot be divided. The various workers have to complement and support each other. The staff meetings are therefore a good tool to carry this out.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP.

An International Workshop on Africa's Urban Poor Child towards African Child-Friendly Cities took place in Accra on the 11-13 of March 1997. This workshop was organized by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/HABITAT).

CAS was highly involved in this workshop as members of the local organizing committee, as participants and as contributors to the entertainment and exhibition of handicrafts made by the children. We, as well as the persons involved were very happy that Street Children could take part as participants. Some

children who are presently in school and others who are in preparation to go to school took part in the discussions.

Two hundred and ten participants, including mayors of large cities of Africa, were divided into 5 work groups:

1. Children's Environments, Health and Education.
2. Second Decade Children in Crisis: Adolescence and Sexual Health/AIDS; Street Culture and Violence.
3. Child Labour and the Informal Sector.
4. Child Nutrition and Household Food Security.
5. Political Will, Budget Allocation, and Legal Harmonization of Municipal Laws with the CRC.

We at CAS are very pleased that people in authority are now recognizing that there is problem in society. Street Children as part of the Urban Poor Children, are real. The problems are very complex, and only a collective approach can do something to improve the situation. There are many of this kind of workshops and conferences organized, all over the world. We hope this one will be different and will receive a follow-up. Certainly, the Local organizing committee will find ways and means to keep these issues on the table.

Urban Poor children were sitting next to mayors and were allowed to ask them questions. For them it was a great experience. They have the following to say about the workshop:

- I am grateful to all for giving us the opportunity to participate and as such to witness such a program. - To my surprise, I thought being a Street Child I have no right to speak or ask questions, but liberty was given to everybody who is ready to ask or answer a question. Even though some of the words used by various speakers were quite beyond me, I was able to listen attentively and got all that the program was about. - I liked the workshop because everything was explained and I was able to understand and to contribute. Actually, I wasn't bored I was rather interested about the whole workshop. - I did not agree with all what people said. One speaker said that we always tell stories, which is not true. - I was sad when my question was not well answered to my satisfaction. I could not understand all of it. - I may say I liked it since the main objective of the workshop was based on the well being as well as the welfare of children in the street and also on the convention to the right of the child in society. - In some cases I was bored, but since one is a victim of the situation one would have to accept what others say. - It was very interesting to me, because it was my first encounter with distinct noble persons from outside my country and some of my country. It was the first time I had a chat with a white man and a white woman. - I was very attentive and listened to how my future will be. - The people explained everything to us. On



visit princes Ann

the other hand, we also questioned them a lot. - The people treated me very well, and they also let me know that I am part of the meeting. - I was neither happy nor sad but remained calm and eager to absorbing the materials presented and adding new information to supplement my knowledge on the life of us, Street Children. - The people treated me well, no question. I think these people will try to help the Street Children. - It was fascinating seeing different faces from different countries with such a high educational status.

- I was tremendously pleased and grateful with what I heard. Many organizations in various countries have now accepted to help us Street Children. I also hope that our leaders have something better in store for us. I know our leaders will not rule us forever, they will pass away and leave the nation to us the youth. I am happy that action will now be taken. - I was thunderstruck when I was seated with foreigners and other noble people in Ghana. I was shivering because it is not common and easy for Street Child to chat with such persons. What reduced my shivering was the conversation between us. They did not mind who you are but we became equals to them. -Moving together as if they were brothers and sisters.

SUPPORT.

In addition to the support we receive from our regular donors, during the past three months CAS has received assistance from other donors, local as well as foreign organizations. We are very happy with this support. It means more children can be helped. We received it from:

-Inner Wheel Club Accra Ring Rd. Central, Novotel Accra, North American Women Association, American Embassy, Royal Dutch Embassy, Lion's Club Accra.

-Aktion Drei Koningssingen-Germany, Church Service Centre-Holland, KLM Catering and Florence Nightingale-Holland.



We received support from various private donors as well. In addition we try to do fundraising by selling Car badges and items made by the children. This includes; woven clothe, napkins, and tablecloths, wooden carvings, ceramic items such as statutes, cups and pots and models. Paintings, veneer pictures, drawings, post cards etc. Several volunteers have introduced new ideas. These volunteers are from many different countries. They are from Germany, The Netherlands, Canada, Nigeria and U.S.A. Also Ghanaian volunteers are assisting us. There is a postulant from the S.V.D. congregation, two second-year novices from the F.I.C. congregation. and one postulant from the sisters of the Holy Child Jesus.

Expatriate volunteers are welcome provided they take care of their own accommodation and themselves. CAS cannot take care of volunteers but can assist them.

REPORTS.

The renovations and buildings at Hopeland Farm are almost completed. Misereor, UNICEF and Help Ghana have assisted us to undertake all these changes. The house for the manager is ready and in use. The dormitory for the boys has been renovated and in use. A small out door kitchen has been added so that they can cook their own food. A dam is still under construction. We hope it will be completed before the rainy season. As soon as water is available, the tree planting will be done along the fence but also more fruit trees will be planted. Also the North American Women Association is assisting us with the beekeeping project and the candle-making project. None of us knows what it means to keep bees and therefore we are trying to get advise from an expert. There are still plans to make a fence in the area for the pigs and after all these investments we hope to see the results.

After a few meetings with members of S.AID, the mini refuges are now operating better. It has not been easy for the staff to understand the purpose of these refuges. They are neither duplications of the main refuge, nor a health post. Their main



purpose is to have a meeting point for all the children in a particular area. Soon we will evaluate the functioning of these refuges.

NEWSLETTER NO. 13 JULY 1997 LIVE IN THE STREETS

Another three months have passed and CAS is still progressing steadily. In this news letter we will report on our daily activities but also on the various surveys we conducted during the past months. These surveys are necessary in order to improve our approach and working methods. Often we do not have enough information on certain issues, and it is not wise to dive in a problem with your eyes closed.

These issues include, street violence, drug addiction, prostitution, the operation of Mini Refuges and new working areas.

We conducted a survey on those children who sell items in the streets. There are many young people and children who live and sleep in the streets of the city. A group of them sell items on the streets of Accra. Some are children from poor families, some are Street Children from the rural area, and some are women who sell or carry good for their living. Another group which operate in the streets are the hawkers. We differentiate between the term hawking and selling. Hawkers are often persons who are able to buy item and retail them (i.e. they sell their wares by moving around, especially chasing vehicles. With a few exceptions, they are above the age of a child which is 18 years.

The children who sell items are mainly children from poor families who live in town. These children go home in the evening and are strictly speaking no Street Children. They are children on the streets. Some do go to school. But most of them do not. They know they can be punished for not going to school and therefore when questioned, will say that they are either in the

afternoon or morning shift.

Our workers meet them in the morning as well as in the afternoon.

Only 30% of the young ones attend school. The others are simply sent by their parents to sell items, to gain some income for the family. The age group is in relation to the items sold. The young ones sell different items than the older ones. 42% of them have experienced violence while in the streets.

Their educational background is as follows:

DRUG ADDICTS AND DRUG USERS and PROSTITUTION.

Many people who live in the streets use drugs in order to still their hunger, to give them strength or to give them courage to continue. Our workers see an increase in the use of drugs by street sellers and street children.

Usually they start by taking sleeping tablets such as Valium. Soon they try Marijuana which is also known as : Indian Hemp, Wee, Abonsamtawa, and Ganger.

These drugs are grown in the rural area. They are bought by middle men who sell them to retailers who in turn sell them to the users. These drugs are transported from the rural area by lorries who usually carry charcoal or firewood.

Several Street Children are known to be involved in the distribution of the drugs. A roll of wee of medium size costs between GC 500.00 and GC 1,000.00

From the 2000 Street Children registered by CAS, 19 boys and 3 girls are known to be addicted. The youngest boy is 15 yrs., the youngest girl is 16 yrs. Fortunately, the number is still low. A normal user smokes 3-4 rolls a day. An addicted drug user 6-10 a day.



SEWING CENTER

Cocaine and Heroin are also available but are not common. They are too expensive for the average street person. These drugs are at times mixed with Wee and sold at a cheaper price.

PROSTITUTION.

Many Street Girls who are known by CAS, are involved in the sex industry. Since they try to survive in the streets it gives them an handsome income for their living. The young ones are trained by older women in a brothel close to the Main Refuge. They practice the trade for a small fee in a shack at the Konkomba Market. When experienced, they go to main areas in town where prostitutes operate such as Tudu and Nkrumah Circle. Because of the great health risks involved, CAS asked the Salvation Army to educate the children regularly on general health issues and on HIV and AIDS prevention. Every fortnight health nurses from the Ministry of Health educate the children during an afternoon session. The literacy teachers and some volunteers are assisting them to prepare a drama on these topics. This drama will be staged at the crèches and at the Mini Refuges so that a wider audience can learn from it. The story of Rose, formerly a prostitute.

Rose lost her parents when she was still a child. She had to go to her uncle's village and live with him. She had no opportunity to go to school, because the uncle had many children himself. Some years later she was given by the family to a young man in another village. She had a child with him. This daughter is living with "Rose". The man was not a responsible person and did not take care of her and her child. She decided to go to Accra and find a job. She was staying with some friend behind the Cocoa house. She later left for the Konkomba Market where she rented



a room. She lives by the income she receives by working as a sex worker. She was courageous enough to tell her story to one of the social workers of CAS who met her. She promised to quit prostitution if she could be helped to acquire a vocational skill. Presently she is learning a trade at one of the sewing centers.

Rose' story is only an example as how girls get involved in the sex industry. We at CAS know that we need the assistance of experts in these matters. We hope to interest these people so that they can educate us and the children.

MINI REFUGES.

Two Mini Refuges are in operation. These are kiosks which are placed in areas where many Street Children operate. One is at a Mobil station near the Electricity headquarters, and the other is placed at Tema lorry station. They are operated jointly with the staff of Street Girls Aid (S.AID).

An evaluation on their function revealed that all workers are convinced that these "meeting points" are a good means of meeting the children. 15-20 children visit them daily.

Also coconut sellers, who do not want to be called street children, visit the Refuge. Their work is demanding but they have a higher income. We have to provide more ventilation in the kiosks and make them more attractive by decorating them. A new time schedule for the workers is in force. Each of the workers spends only two days a week at the Mini Refuge. The other days are used for general fieldwork or for general counseling sessions at the Main Refuge and follow up work for the sponsorship scheme. All workers are assigned to children who are learning a trade. Workers also venture in new areas in town to complete our knowledge of Street Children.

Literacy classes as well as other educational activities are taking place at these meeting points. In future, we hope to build a few more Mini Refuges. It is a cost saving method and many children are reached. Main Refuges are very costly to operate but another means to have contact with the children.

OUR GRADUATES.

This month 22 children complete their training in various schools and workshops. They sat for their N.V.T.I exams in June.

2. AUTO MECHANICS	GR. TWO
7 CARPENTRY/JOINERY	GR. ONE/TWO
1 ELECTRICITY	GR. ONE/TWO
3 BUILDING CONSTRUCT	GR. ONE/TWO
2 DRESSMAKING	GR. ONE.
1 DRESSM +CATERING	GR. ONE.
3 CATERING	GR. ONE.

1 WEAVING
1 LEATHERWORKS
1 GENERAL ART

GR. TWO.
GR. TWO
S.S.S.

We are very grateful to the various teachers, headmasters and workshop managers who have been patient enough to assist these children.

Two of them have such a good results, that we have decided to assist them to further their education.

Three girls who learned the trade of catering will continue their education in the kitchen of Novotel Hotel. We hope that after this training they will find a job in one of the restaurants or hotels.

Some large companies have promised to employ all those who have been trained in the building industry. Fortunately, all except two have decided to find a job in their hometowns. Those trained in carpentry and furniture making are convinced that they can find work in Ashanti region. Also those who have learnt dressmaking will start in their own villages. This is more then we dared to hope for and we hope this trend will continue.

GLASS COLLECTION + HEALTH SHEETS.

We have been contacted by the glass factory. They think, Street Children could collect broken glass from bottles in town for a fee. There are three main colors of glass and this has to be separated. We tried to interest the children in this exercise but they complained that the amount received are to small. We therefore added some other items like second hand clothing to the kilograms of broken glass they collect. Some are now very interested and so far we have 2000 kilograms stored on the roof of the Refuge. The factory only collect it in large quantities. We are discussing different methods of transporting the broken glass since it is very heavy. We cannot store the glass in open containers because the clever ones will sell the glass twice or three times to us.

A good donor imported plastic sheets which can be used for shelter during the rainy season and as protection against the sun. We painted on them the words HEALTH SHEETS in the hope that they will not be sold. Several members of staff were involved in the distribution. They are given to people living in cardboard boxes, handicap people who live on the streets, groups of Street Children who sleep in the open and some crèches and a school of which the roof was leaking.

NEWSLETTER NO. 14 DECEMBER 1997 SUSTAINABILITY

The various departments went through a test period. For a period of three months the Heads of the Departments had to work according to plan, improve the work and keep the



accounts. As we say in Ghana, “they have tried”. The records were well kept and work is on schedule now. This does not mean that there were no problems. Some would be explained.

Five years in existence.

It is already more than five years ago since CAS started. Plans to start a centre were discussed with the Catholic Bishop Andoh in November 1991, and a report on our findings in the streets together with our plans was presented in May 1992. In June 1993 CAS’ constitution was officially approved. The renovation of the House of Refuge started in July 1993. Reading through the proposal to start a centre for street children is interesting because the structure of CAS developed almost to the letter of that report. Before the sponsorship scheme started, many schools and workshops had been contacted. This was helpful at the beginning; the headmasters and workshop managers knew what we expected from them. Since that time the cooperation with these people in charge has been improved. Some of the original workshops and schools have stopped taking street children and other schools and workshops have been added to our list.

But do we know the children? This is a very difficult question. We do not know the street children in general. Every child is unique. It is impossible for us to place them all under one hat. One thing is sure, Street children are normal children who

unfortunately do not receive equal chances in life. Most of them did not receive enough affection and love at home. This comes about as a result of problems in family life. Many are therefore suspicious. Suspicious of others, especially of adults. They have learnt to survive; now they have to learn to take advice from others again. This is difficult for some. At times they behave normally for a long period of time. Then suddenly they change and behave badly. It is as if their past experiences in life has given them a permanent mark.

We at CAS don't have a lot of experts in counselling. Therefore, we have applied for Professionals who can assist us in counselling children. Also in other fields we are in need of Professionals to help. As mentioned before we need assistance to be able to work with drug addicts and prostitutes, and to help us do a lot of fundraising.

We are aware that others are making use of our name to raise funds for their own organizations. We partly blame ourselves. We have to make CAS ready to be marketed.

We have revised our "handout". Prepared documents on children for the sponsorship scheme. Printed new stickers and made better photographs.

Presently, we are writing proposals for the various departments, which can be forwarded, to donor organizations. Also, some friends are preparing a homepage of CAS for the Internet. This is a very difficult task because we have to know the interest areas of people. In other words we have to read what we present in the eyes of strangers.

During these years of existence we have received favorable and also negative comments. The negative comments are often a result of lack of knowledge about our intentions and activities. We are aware of this and we will try to report more often. The positive comments give us a lot of encouragement.

In July this year we received such a big support from the Rotary Club of Accra. We received THE FIRST ROTARY AWARD for EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE to HUMANITY. We are all very happy with this recognition. Cooperation with our sister organizations.

At times, it is not clear to donors which role the various NGO's play in the work with Street Children. We have therefore re-discussed the activities. We are aware that all our activities do not reach one fifth of the all the Street Children, but it is still wise not to overload our fork.

Street Girls Aid (S.AID), our sister organization mainly concentrates its activities for Street Girls in difficulty and Street Mothers and Babies. The Salvation Army manages the health sector. While CAS's activities are directed to the educational aspect. We try to run a sponsorship scheme. Of course, each organization does more than what has been listed. At times the

organizations complement each other. At times they work together in the same activity. For example, S.AID and CAS operate jointly the mini refuges. These three organizations receive support from different donors. When the donation is in kind, it is shared with the other organization. For instance, when CAS receives babies clothing and equipment, it will be discussed with S.AID as how it should be used. Medicine is directly handed over to the Salvation Army.

Most of the items we receive in kind are reserved for the children who are on sponsorship. A lot of items are needed for children who are in schools and/or workshops. It includes clothing, furniture, study materials and tools.

These children are on sponsorship for three years; therefore several dresses and bedding are needed. Items have to be replaced when worn out or stolen. It is therefore very important that the worker assigned to monitor the study of child, does this work systematically. In practice, CAS workers become "guardians" of the children. However, we are not able to play that role to the full. After several years we know this work involves more than we had anticipated. We will try to improve our approach in the coming year. We have received a number of items in kind during the past years. Recently more items arrived and we still expect more from private donors, KLM Catering Department and a Ghanaian solidarity community in Italy. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to obtain the original papers to clear them. The facsimile communication is not suitable for this purpose. We have appointed a GOODS committee. They will receive all the goods and discuss with all the departments and organizations concerned as to how they will be used.

Not all the goods will be distributed freely. We try to retrieve the transport costs and people pay more respect to the item when they have paid a small amount for it.

Fund Raising.

CAS can only carry out certain activities when the funds for it are available. Therefore it is very important that we expand our fund raising activities. We have a fund raising committee in place, which will be supported by two members of the Board of Advisors. Several persons are willing to assist us with these activities, but we should not do these activities too hastily. In the past we have agreed positively, to proposals from others in this exercise. Now we want to be better prepared.

Also, our members of staff want to be involved right from the beginning and be sure that our image will not be spoiled by ignorance. Several proposals will be prepared and presented.

Plans for 1998.

1998 will be an important year for CAS. During the past years we have started several programs, established departments and

invested in the setting up of the Hopeland training center, Mini refuges, Crèches and main refuge. We do not have plans to expand further, but to see to it that all our activities can be sustained as far as possible. We at CAS have a problem with this word "sustainability". Our evaluation report says this; it will not be helpful to look at "sustainability" in the narrow context of the project. A project of this kind is not and cannot in itself be sustainable. The main requirement is human resources and that implies financial resources, which do not and cannot generate income for the project. The project is essentially a social service for which there can be no charge to the users. "Sustainability" must be looked at in the much wider context of society in general. The project should be seen as an investment in humans who on a longer-term basis will have made a sustainable life for themselves and their families a life, which is an alternative to life as a grown-up criminal.

This is how we imply sustainability. But, of course, a few departments should cater for themselves and maybe for CAS as a whole. The Hopeland training center is one of them. The Board has already decided to evaluate this department as soon as the report from the management has been completed. We also try to have some income from the Demonstration department. The weaving, ceramic and candle making activities should be self-sustainable. In general, all the work we do should get a permanent approach in 1998.

We also try to restructure our follow-up approach for the sponsorship scheme. We have sent letters to all the children on sponsorship explaining what they can expect from us and what we expect from them. Children who completed their course or are about to complete will receive a similar letter.

Hopeland Training Centre.

This center is almost completely ready. With the assistance of several donors, we have built new buildings and renovated others. We have started new activities such as rabbit and Bee keeping. Established a ceramic workshop and candle making workshop and renovated the dormitories of the boys. Presently a dam is still under construction. We tried to have it ready before last rainy season, but as with so many things done in a hurry, we failed. The first rains were very heavy and the dam filled up at once.

This resulted in the breaking of the sidewall, which was still under construction. All the water escaped and now we know where most of the water will gather. The contractor is trying to re-direct the water to the middle of the dam and finish it. We hope that during the coming rainy season, it will fill up with water. This water is very important for the whole set-up. The

vegetable garden can be improved, whilst the animals and humans will have sufficient water. We hope to rear fish and keep a few ducks.

Although most buildings are now ready, it does not mean that we cannot improve certain places. For instance the pigsty still needs to be improved. But in general we hope to gain some money with hard work. 15 boys and 3 girls are now at Hopeland. The general policy is to keep them for about 9 months at the center. This period gives us time to know them and to find out more about their area of interest.

Some have no interest in farming what so ever, but are ready to work instead of roaming in the streets. They know they are preparing themselves for their future. Three boys who have completed their training in a school for agriculture are trying to establish their own farm. CAS assists them until they can manage themselves. We have managed to obtain a piece of land for them so that they can grow vegetables for which there is a ready market.

We like to complete this newsletter with a short story of one of the children to illustrate his daily life.

Atsu (16) attracts attention because he is such a quiet and nice boy. His hometown is Anyako. Here he finished JSS. Because of the death of his father, he was unable to continue his education, due to financial difficulties.

Atsu is living in Accra for 2 years now. Kantamanto-market is the place where he works in the morning. He carries goods and he sweeps shop fronts. After having carried all the rubbish to the dumpsite, he will bath and come to visit the Refuge. At CAS he follows the literacy classes and he also does woodcarving. He likes to come to the Refuge, because for that time he is free, and he can relax and rest a bit. Atsu is a boy who is obviously not at peace at Kantamanto-market. He sleeps at the market, in front of the shops.

He does not like it there, but since his friend stays there, he feels it is better to join him than to be all alone. It's a rough and hard place to live and work, especially for this boy.

According to us, the interviewers, Atsu is really hurting because of the situation he is in, and it would be worth a lot to get him out of it by means of sponsorship. Atsu is very eager to learn to become an electrician. He has always liked this trade and he looks forward to being able to look after himself in a better way. He also wishes to help his family.

NEWSLETTER NO. 15 APRIL 1998 IT IS A COMPLEX SITUATION

Ghana faces an energy crisis. The water in the Akosomba dam is very low with the result that we do not always receive

electricity. The motto at this moment is “follow the light”. Unfortunately we do not always know where the light will appear. You might wonder whether Street Children experience difficulties under these circumstances? In general they do not, but the project does. On the days when there is no electricity it is very difficult to stay in the refuge. It is extremely warm and activities such as ceramics candle making and video watching cannot be done. The administration experiences most of the difficulties. Although we use laptop computers the battery power cannot be used for a long time, letters cannot be printed but most of all, the operator (s) have to have the strength to work in the heat. We therefore, apologize that we might be late in reporting and communicating to you about our activities. The fax machine cannot be used and the Mobitel telephone is not always loaded. We use this telephone mainly as a receiver, because we cannot afford the costs. Fortunately we are now connected to the Email. The number is FICCAS@IGH.MAIL.COM. CAS is also on the Internet. Some friends who are working with the BBC made this possible and



we are very grateful to them. CAS pages are on, CAS@Btinternet.com. But with all communication facilities we need to have electricity.

Due to the slow reporting and completing of all the requirements of donor organisations, we are experiencing a shortage of cash flow. A lot of money is needed for the activities especially for the 170 children who are following training either in schools or workshops.

We cannot withdraw them from the school or workshop because we did not receive the money from the donor.

The fact that we are in full operation is not always understood. We agree that we have to fulfil all regulations, but it is not always in our own hands to fulfil them. For instance, a donor can request an auditor's report. It takes months to obtain it. Obviously, the auditor also experiences the shortage of electricity and cannot work according to schedule. Also the difficulty of obtaining an official receipt is at times extremely difficult. But we are still managing. We only hope that the children also understand the difficulties. Last month many of them came to the Refuge because we were slow in paying the money for food and lodging.

EVALUATION.

At the beginning of 1998, CAS and S.AID staff met again to discuss the evaluation report of 1996 and to find out where we stand at this moment. We discussed this by means of answering questions. Questions which are always on our minds. They surface during staff or Board of Advisors meetings or are asked by visitors. The staff(s) which was supported by members of the Board of Advisors, Salvation Army nurses and two advisors of the Danish embassy were divided into 6 discussion groups. There was ample time to answer the questions and write the



answers on flip cards. Later, a small group compiled the answers and a report was written. These answers are now re-discussed during regular staff meetings.

The answers clearly show that CAS is always on the move. There are many changes since the Evaluation was conducted. To understand CAS, you have to come and experience it to day. At meetings we are often asked why CAS operates in a certain way. The answer is simple; we move and live with the children. They live by the day and we try to assist them now. But what about our plans? Our goals and future? During the forth-nightly meetings we try to plan activities for the coming two weeks. Often, we experience that even this period is too long, everything takes more time then we wish. A lot of patience is needed but also a skill of being very flexible.

One of the striking results of the questions is that many members of staff are of the opinion that we do not know enough about the background of the children and their environment. Social surveys are very important but it is expensive and time consuming to obtain them. The present staff cannot spend more time on these surveys. The tasks each one has are more than manageable.

Fieldwork is still the most important activity of CAS. We can never stop it or reduce it. As soon as we loose contact with the children in the street, CAS' work will become artificial. It will become a classroom approach, which we do not want. Therefore we have to find other ways of obtaining these surveys. There are suggestions that other social workers, for instance of the Department of Social Welfare can assist. This will only be possible if these social workers get to know the children first. This means they have to work in the streets before they return to their own districts. A method we think is feasible is that other NGO's or organisations: Obtain more information about town and villages from where many children come. Describe the general circumstances. Contact the parents of Street Children and write a general report. We can add the very personal information for each child by paying a visit to its homes.

THE POOR ARE (WERE) ALWAYS THERE.

Another question we asked ourselves is why did this phenomenon of Street Children not appear 20 years ago? Twenty years ago many people in Ghana were poor. We do not know whether this group has become larger or smaller. Or guess is that it has become larger.

But during that time not many Street Children appeared on the streets of the cities. Therefore we want to dig a bit deeper and put aside for a minute that the main reason of having Street

Children is poverty.

During our discussions it became clear that the society is changing, changing very rapidly. To mention a few observations:

- A large group of women have decided not to have a husband but have children.
 - Many people have new values to live for. Materialism is on the increase.
 - Life has become very costly. Education is not affordable for all.
 - We have to deal more often with selfish attitudes.
- Obviously the discussions on these topics will continue.

A COMPLEX SITUATION.

It is a good development that more and more people show interest in the plight of Street Children. We receive visitors from all walks of life and some devote sufficient time to taste the problems. Some really understand that it is complex problem and a simple answer cannot be given.

Do Street Children have the right to be in the streets? There are people who will say no. They argue that they only cause problems in the city and should return to their place of origin. Of course we have to be very careful with an answer like this. We all come from different places of origin. We cannot remain in the place where we are born.

Also, do we have the right to decide what to do with our own life? Or should others decide for us? Many of these kinds of questions are being asked. We do not have an answer for all but it is encouraging when visitors acknowledge the complexity. We are always happy when visitors come to the House of Refuge to see for themselves who the Street Children are and what they do. We always have time for them because we know it creates the awareness. In March we received a special visitor in the person of princess Ann of England. She visited the refuge one afternoon, spoke with the children and saw them taking part in various activities.

Later we accompanied her to the crèches at the Konkomba market where Vida Amoako, the director of Street Girls Aid showed her around. The children and staff enjoyed her visit. We heard that she enjoyed it too.

MAKING VIDEO'S.

Does CAS have activities, which prevent children becoming street children? In other words, does CAS work preventive? In general we have to say no. CAS has not been established for that purpose. It is an NGO, which accepts the street children as they are and tries to assist them. But we recognise that the above is very important. CAS is a small NGO, which cannot do

everything or solve all problems. We try to interest other NGO's or organisations to take on this important task. But CAS wants to assist. During the discussions on future plans an idea to make some videos was born. A video, which shows all activities of CAS and can be used for propaganda purposes. And another video showing the lives of street children. The video will show a drama staged and performed by the street children themselves. It will be similar to a children's program on GTV called "by the fireside". In the story children will tell why they decided to come to the city, what they experience in the streets, and how some of them run into difficulties. We will involve as many children as possible. The rough story is already on paper. If we succeed, many organisations, churches and schools can use this video. We hope it will prevent others from choosing the same life.



EVALUATION OF HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE.

During the last Board of Advisors' meeting, the Hopeland Training Centre was evaluated. Bro. Peter Agboso (FIC) an agriculturist on national service wrote a report on his findings and Mr. Azaah (Manager of Hopeland) gave a financial report. Hopeland is a training centre and as such it will not be able to gain a profit from its products. One can be satisfied when the input balances the sales.

The results are such that, Expenditure for salaries, transport and medicals cannot be met. Working with children in training is not the most profitable method. We also have plans to improve the set up. The pigsty needs to be expanded and improved. Unfortunately at present it is placed too close to the chicken houses. Therefore we have decided to rebuild it at a better location as soon as we get a donor who is willing to assist us. The goal of having 20 boys and 10 girls in training at the centre is almost reached. This means the management of Hopeland has to be assisted by social workers to be sure that there are no problems with the children. We are renovating the lodging places for the girls and a pit latrine has to be built for them. We are happy that the African Centre for Human Development is prepared to assist us in these activities.

LITERACY PROGRAM.

More than a year ago a syllabus was prepared for the literacy program. Literacy classes are given to street children (boys and girls) as well as to the Fan ice cream vendors. For them, in each depot a part time teacher is employed to teach them. There are already eleven of these depots where classes are being given. The teachers involved are free to use the syllabus and use their own teaching methods. We have now decided to evaluate this syllabus and ask the teachers how it is used, what difficulties they have experienced and what should be done to improve it. Two students on fieldwork practice were prepared to assist in this exercise. They travelled to all the depots, saw the teachers in action and discussed with them their experiences. The report reveals that most of them use the syllabus as a guide and are satisfied with it. However, most teachers lack teaching aids. We want to make this syllabus suitable for an additional group, the street mothers. Street Girls Aid has started a program for them. Together we examine all the materials, syllabi and teaching aids available and decide which ones are most suitable for our target groups.

REHABILITATION OF TRAINED CHILDREN.

So far about thirty of the sponsored children have finished training in various trades like Catering, Masonry, Auto Mechanic, Dressmaking etc. Among the trained ones, two carpenters secured jobs with Home Supply Limited, a Lebanese Furniture Company in Accra. One of the caterers now manages the kitchen of the Baby Care Project of our Sister organisation Street Girls Aid. Some of them are back to their communities whilst others are attached to some workshops to upgrade their skills. Through appeals to individuals and organisations, CAS has been able to assist some of them establish their own small-scale business. We are doing our best to either find jobs for the subsequent graduates or assist them to establish their own small-scale businesses.

Seven volunteers from Ghana and overseas have completed their stay with us, some members of staff will start a training course at the Govt. school of Social Work and two new members of staff have been employed. It is also the holiday period in many countries and this means we get many visitors to Ghana who want to visit our project.

As I reported earlier, CAS has been in existence for more than five years. During these years we have gathered a lot of information from the children. Approximately 3000 children have now been registered. Recently, a small group of workers with the assistance of our volunteers have updated the records. We have the following information:

- The numbers of street children of both girls and boys we come into contact with.
- Ethnic origin.
- Age.
- Towns and villages they come from.
- Reasons for leaving.
- Where they sleep in Accra.
- What kind of sickness they experience.
- What they eat regularly, etc.
- A little about the Street hierarchy of the city.

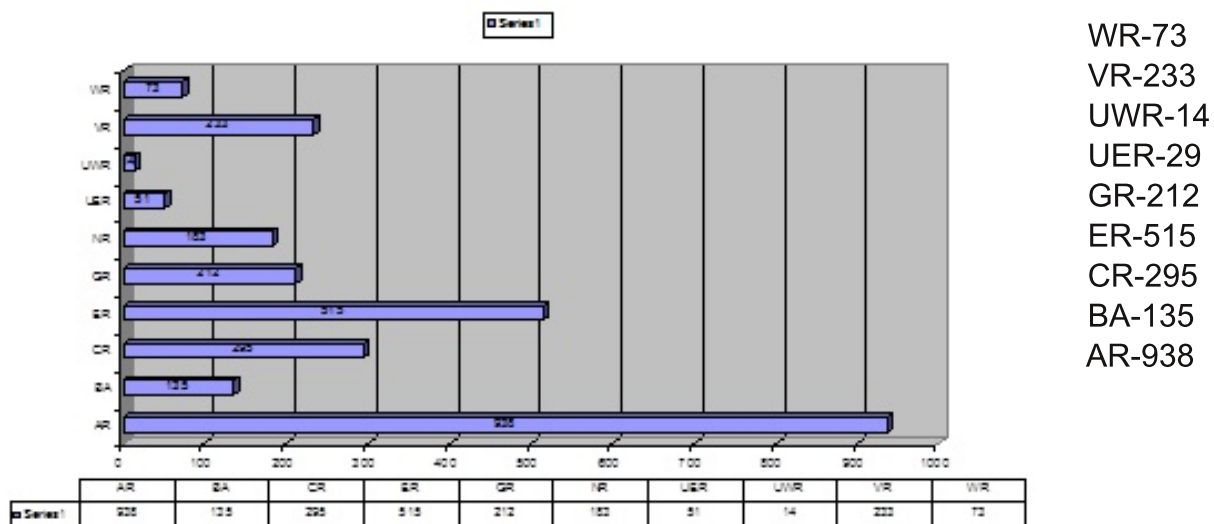
We thought that all this information would interest many of you. We want to use it to create the awareness of the plight of street children. When compiling this information we had the idea to mount an exhibition about our work. Mrs. Mary Amadu, the Deputy Director of Social Welfare, officially opened this exhibition on the first of July. While you are reading this, the exhibition is already over, but the information is still available.

It was staged at the National Museum of Ghana, in Accra and we invited our close colleagues from Street Girls Aid (S.AID), Salvation Army and the Wala Hamo movement to share the exhibition space with us. At the exhibition we showed all the items the children made.

Items made in clay and wood, woven clothe and dresses, as well as items made from paper and cardboard. We will soon have a permanent stand at the Arts Centre in the city. Every month we will be able to show what the children have made and we hope that our goods will favourably attract people in Accra and visitors and tourists to the city.

Obviously many of you could not visit the exhibition, and therefore we want to share some of the information that we

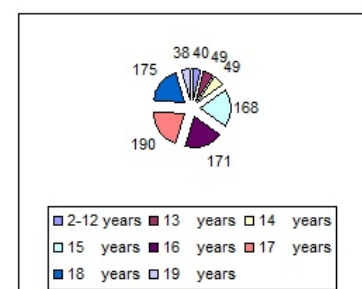
presented there. Many street children have jobs by which they earn some money for their daily subsistence. We have 2789 children registered with CAS. "Registered" means they have visited our centre at least 3 times. Of that number we have studied 700 in some detail. The jobs they undertake are related to their ages. Older ones for example are hawkers or driver mates. The smaller ones sell polythene bags or polish shoes.



Some have a professional trade or have some form of training. On the streets you see many girls selling ice water, and boys who wash windscreens but these are often children from poor families trying to earn extra money for the family.

Breakdown of jobs of 700 Street Children.

AID TO DISABLED PERSON	27
GUTTER CLEANER	92
COCONUT SELLER	6
ICEWATER SELLER	41
PORTER	132
SHOESHINE	191
DRIVER'S MATE	22
BARBER	10
FOOD SELLER	43
CHOPBAR ASSISTANT	7
HAWKER	88
WORKS IN A TRADE	22
POLYTHENBAG SELLER	7
SIGN WRITER	3
WINDSCREEN WASHER	1
FISH MONGER	4
TRUCK PUSHER	3
ERRANDS	1



We have a breakdown of the ages of 500 street children.

Children as young as 2 years of age are in the streets. Fortunately, there are only a few. We meet children of 5-7-9-11 years of age. They are grouped together under 2-12 years range.

2-12 years	40	13 years	49	14 years	49
15 years	168	16 years	171	17 years	190
18 years	175	19 years	38		

Regions they come from.

You will see from the chart that the children are from all the Regions of Ghana. There are many reasons why they move to Accra. Many are not stationary, they move from one Regional capital to another. In our next newsletter we want to explain more about this migration.

Some weeks ago we received two different delegations from Europe: One from Holland and the second from Germany. The Dutch delegation was from Stichting Horizon, which assists us by sending volunteers to help with our programmes. They wanted to help us with fundraising and we suggested to them to assist us to raise funds to buy a permanent House of Refuge. About three years ago we started searching for suitable buildings or plots. It is very difficult to buy land in the centre of the city, but that is where we have to be. Children only visit the centre when they can cover the distance on foot. A lot of children stay in their own area at street corners and that is why we have our mini refuges which serve as meeting places.

Now we have located two possible plots for a permanent refuge and negotiations have started. Some Parishioners from Derby Avenue Parish of the Catholic Church, some members of the Board of Advisors and a Pastor are in this team. The staff brainstormed as to how the new building should be. We know a lot of funding is needed and so we plan to build in stages.

The other Delegation came from Germany, from Misereor our main funding partner. (Misereor is the development agency for the German Catholic Bishops Conference and has a major fund raising campaign every Lent). This team is preparing the Lenten Fund Campaign for 1999. We first showed them all the departments of CAS, they could decide which locations to use for the photographs. These photographs will be used to make posters. The selection of children took more time, but with the co-operation of S.AID and a teacher at the Konkomba market some children were selected. It is very difficult to make



gifts received

arrangements with children who do not have a watch or are concerned about time, but it turned out well.

The team could make 3000 photographs and we are sure that some will be suitable for the posters. Both teams have returned safely home and are satisfied that all went well.

Presently, a number of committees are in function, which are related to the plight of street children.

1. The committee towards African Child Friendly Cities is preparing the follow up activities. Last year, the international workshop was held in Accra and many Mayors of cities and towns of Africa took part. The main resolution was to establish a secretariat, which will be responsible to monitor all activities related to children in Africa's cities. The Ghanaian committee has met a few times and has now come out with some proposals, which are yet to be discussed further. It is not difficult to come out with many reports and resolutions concerning this topic. It is much more difficult to put them into practice. First and foremost, the Political Will has to be there.

2. Another committee is the Mid Term Review Committee which is examining all the entire project supported by UNICEF. This committee comprises representatives from the Ministries, Town authorities, UN bodies, Donor organisations and NGO's. The projects are related to Health, Water and Environmental sanitation, Human Resources Development, Rural Community based development, Social Mobilisation, Social Research, Food security and Urban Community based development. Each group has formed a special task force. Their task is to examine the activities of various NGO's supported by UNICEF: write reports and suggest recommendations. This involves travelling to various towns and villages. All the reports should be ready by mid September.

3. The Ghanaian Parliament is presently discussing the Children's bill. It deals mainly with child labour and other children's Rights. This bill, when passed, will be a major achievement for Ghana. However, the mechanism to monitor the rules and regulations, are still to be put in place.

4. Finally, the Ministry of Social Welfare has presented a draft policy proposal on street children. This will be an important document in future. We therefore have decided to discuss this draft proposal in detail.

During the past year, five Dutch volunteers from various organisations have been with us to assist us in all the activities.

Some have assisted in the administration, others in the demonstration and presentation departments, others in education. They also took part in various committees and organised sports. We have recently evaluated their stay with our staff. The volunteers wanted more guidance and direction from CAS. It is very difficult to give a clear job description to volunteers in work such as ours. We rely on their initiative and interest. Since these volunteers are from different organisations and at times from different countries, we have compiled a new volunteer placement form in which we describe CAS requirements. We are also of the opinion that their stay should not be shorter than 6 months. Since travelling is not so difficult any longer, we also advise them not to receive too many visitors during their short stay.

CAS is not in the position to assist them with accommodation, and costs for daily living. The volunteers should assist CAS' staff to lighten their task. They should not become a burden. We hope that the volunteer organisations understand these problems. We receive many requests for placements, and we know there is a great interest. In order to improve the guidance and supervision of volunteers, an English VSO volunteer has come to assist us. Ms. Ann Holding has been in Ghana before and knows the situation. We wish her lots of success.

NEWSLETTER NO. 17 SEPTEMBER 1998 FACTS AND FINDINGS

We have bought another House of Refuge. We reported earlier that we were searching for a better place because the present House of Refuge has been rented and by May 1999 the lease expires. The committee, which was involved, searched for almost three years. Many empty houses and plots were discovered, but it was not easy to buy one of them. This new house was discovered almost by accident. It is a family house with a large compound. The building has to be renovated and some rooms have to be changed, but in general it is in a good

condition.

Of course it was not easy to take the decision because the money was not available we had to borrow it. HORIZON, a Dutch volunteer organization has promised to do the fundraising. The team, which visited us, suggested we build a



new House of Refuge in stages, but that plan is now overruled. We now have to fundraise and fill up the financial hole we have dug. We are in discussion with Horizon as how all of us can be involved. We were a bit worried about the location of the building. It is in a different area of town and further away from the center. Several members of staff and children visited the place before a decision was taken. The children said, "we go where you will go and we like the place".

Another good development is that PLAN INTERNATIONAL an international donor organization has approved our application for furniture, equipment and installation of the new building. They also have approved the building of a girl's dormitory at Hopeland training center. This programme will be carried out in stages.

We will start building the girl's dormitory after which the furniture and equipment for the new house will be bought.

This gives us time to carry out the renovations and make the changes to the building. We hope that early next year we can move some of CAS belongings to the new place. All these developments are now at the top of our agenda and all members of staff are involved.

SPONSORSHIP SCHEME.

The sponsorship programme is running well. Several donors are supporting us with this programme. One of them, the Canadian High Commission of Ghana assisted us with various sets of tools for those children who undergo apprenticeship training. All these supports will enable us to raise the number of children in sponsorship from 180 to 250 children. CAS believes that

education is one of the main solutions to the problems of street children. Therefore it does not end by sending a selected group to schools or workshops it also means that we have to educate all those who visit the House of Refuge or contact the fieldworkers in town. This is easier said than done. First of all we have to face the language problems and secondly we have to find a good approach. We know that a ready answer cannot be found so we have to continue experimenting and try out certain methods.

One of the methods we are now developing is education by means of drama. Street Children are masters in imitating; they easily copy behaviors of people. We have to learn how to use these gifts. Unfortunately it is difficult to measure the impact. We see children changing for the better while they are here, we see their response to our methods of teaching and we notice that many are happy while they are in the House of Refuge, but we cannot measure it in numbers or achievements. This is at times frustrating for donors or sponsors who give us the financial support. They have to trust and accept what we tell them. But there are success stories. We are in the process of writing out some of these stories to print in a booklet. These stories indicate that all the work and support can lead to success and that some children will have a better future.

FACTS AND FINDINGS.

In our previous newsletter we published some facts and findings of what we have discovered during the years working with the street children. We planned to explain more about migration, but the information is not yet ready. Instead we want to highlight some of the serious problems concerning street children.

A sample of 244 children gave the following reasons for leaving home:

Financial need 88 Neglect 37
Divorce 56 Death of parent 37
Domestic violence 7 Sexual abuse 7
Other reasons 12

We know why street children leave their homes.

FINANCIAL NEED NEGLECT DIVORCE DEATH OF PARENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEXUALABUSE OTHERS

The reasons are not all directly related to poverty. In fact only one third of the children told us that they left home because their parents could not take care of them financially. Almost 40% left home because of the divorce or death of a parent. The remainder gave a variety of reasons. Most of the reasons given are related to family relations and family life. The chart shows the breakdown.

We would like to illustrate this by means of a few examples.

Example one.

Samuel's father remarried after the divorce of Samuel's mother, who is presently in Nigeria. The stepmother never liked Samuel and always made sure that Samuel was not happy in the house.

The father also took sides with his wife and brutalized Samuel. He went further and stopped paying his school fees.

Samuel was in the streets for several years. He visited CAS and eventually he was sent on sponsorship to learn a trade. However,.....

Samuel was not satisfied with his choice of learning auto-mechanics. He went back to the streets where he got himself involved in stealing and was on remand. After several hearings on the case, the court discharged Samuel on probation.

Example two.

Atta was born on the 3rd. Of February 1982 in the north of Ghana. She is the third out of a family of seven. Her twin brother died at birth. Atta did not complete school because the parents did not find it necessary. One day a family „brother“ working in Obuasi arrived, married to a Moshi woman who delivered a child there. The brother asked Atta's father for a maid for his wife. Atta was chosen. A pattern of events followed. Divorce followed and Atta was left with the abandoned wife. This woman in turn gave Atta a very hard time: beatings, poor food or no food, verbal abuse.

Like many future street children, Atta ran away and made for Accra via Kumasi. Her new home was the central railway station. As with a lot of very young girls, she survived by running errands for the boys. Sadly she was sexually abused by the boys and also by elderly men.

She realized that she was in danger of being sexually abused even more and therefore it became necessary for somebody to „save her“.

Example three.

Ernest was born and bred in the eastern region. He was enrolled at a primary school. At the age of nine he lost his father and this situation affected his schooling. Later, Ernest joined his mother and other siblings to Accra. After seven months in Accra, his mother died and the mother's elder sister took care of him. However, she has many children herself and Ernest decided to go to the streets and stay there.

Example four.

Anum was born 19 year ago. His mother, who is presently in Nigeria, refused to disclose the father to the child. He started school, but due to lack of support stopped. He left for Lagos to

join his mother but was instead given to a family to stay with and to be exploited. He could not stand the treatment and returned, unknown to his family and mother, back to Ghana. On the streets he tries to survive by selling newspapers.

We can give you many more examples, but these few illustrate some of the problems. We also discovered that many of the Street children are not educated or have followed education to a level, which is not sufficient

uneducated	32	
completed primary sch.		38
did not complete J.S.S.		50
did not complete middle sch.		8
completed primary		44
completed J.S.S.	63	
completed S.S.S.	3	
completed middle sch.		5

It is therefore necessary to educate them. It takes time for most of them to make up their minds and join the programme. This is understandable because in the streets they experience freedom. No troublesome parent or teacher around but they themselves decide what to do and how to live. This sense of freedom is so powerful that at times children on sponsorship decide to return to the streets.

SURVEYS.

Some of the reports we have indicate that children, boys and girls, are involved in prostitution. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, no survey has been carried out on this serious issue. We therefore have decided to carry out a preliminary survey to find out the extent of the problem.

We are in discussion with S.AID, Ghana National Commission on Children and the Department of Social Welfare to make this a joint exercise. We will keep you informed about the developments.

Another survey on the background of street children has been approved by UNICEF and will start in December this year. We will get assistance from a Dutch journalist and documentary maker. We hope this survey will reveal how children come to a decision to leave home. This will complete the information we have published in this newsletter. The above are the stories of the children themselves, not the stories of their parents, relatives, chiefs and teachers. Eventually, we hope all this information will lead to better intervention on their behalf.

New house of Refuge.

The bill for the new house of refuge has been fully paid and we



have received a receipt for it. This means, the new house of refuge is now our property. The fundraisers in The Netherlands, Stichting Horizon are fundraising to refund for the expenditure on this house and as far as we are informed the fundraising is going well. We are very happy with this because it will give CAS a solid foundation for the future.

CAS refuge committee met at several occasions to decide as how the house should be renovated. They also met with the contractor and the rooms are now renovated accordingly. The contractor hopes to be ready in February. But the children will do some of the renovations themselves. A few times a week a group of children work at the site. They are preparing the compound. And as soon as the contractor is ready the children and staff will start the inside painting.

The new house and compound will give us a better opportunity to educate the children. There are more rooms available for the various activities. The compound is also spacious and sports, ceramics and other out door games can take place.

The children's Christmas party has been held at the new house of Refuge.

During the last Staff meeting of 1998, we evaluated the running of the present House of Refuge and also proposed how to improve upon it in the new house. Several suggestions were made and these will be implemented soon. One of them is the improvement of the security. We experience quite a lot of disturbance from older youth that is not allowed to enter the house of Refuge but do smoke weed and play poker outside.

They are always near the building and disturb in that way. It has become so difficult that we had to invite the police striking force to assist us. This kind of disturbance we want to prevent at the new house. We have decided to employ a better-trained security officer for that purpose.

Another improvement will be the security of the doors and windows. The windows in the new house can be closed with louver blades. But these will be protected on both sides. Outside burglar bars will be fixed and at the inside the louvers will be protected by wire netting.

Plan International.

Plan International is supporting CAS in many ways. They have approved our proposal to improve the facilities at Hopeland training centre, to buy new furniture and equipment for the new house of refuge, to improve the transport for the follow up work and assist with the capacity building (training of staff). The project will be carried out in four stages.

The first stage has been started. We are building a new dormitory for the girls at Hopeland and the dormitory for the boys will be renovated.

Also this building project should be ready in February so that the second stage can take off. This includes the buying of furniture and equipment for the new house. We are very grateful for this assistance which is very timely. We will keep you informed about the developments of these projects. The costs for the renovations were not yet covered. But again donors are on our side. The Jacob van Liesveldt school in Hellevoetssluis in Holland on initiative of an ex-volunteer Annemarie Loof organised several activities to fundraise for us. Students of the school wanted to experience what it meant not to have a shelter but to have to live in the streets.

They made shelters of carton boxes but unfortunately the weather did not co-operate at all. Of course living in the streets in Holland is different of living in the streets in Ghana. Nevertheless they raised a lot of money for us and we appreciate it very much. It is good to know that many people

support us.

UNICEF.

UNICEF is supporting us in many activities. As reported before we were involved in a mid term review committee and of late an evaluation of 1998 and planning for 1999 took place. Presently, UNICEF is supporting a research into the background of street children. Although we have a lot of information received from the children about their background, these stories have never been verified. Parents, relatives, teachers and chiefs did not have the opportunity to tell why the children leave their regions.

Two social workers from CAS and a Dutch Journalist, Mr. Eric Beauchemin who has come voluntarily from Holland to assist us have started this research. It is costly exercise, but the findings will be very valuable.

UNICEF is paying for the research while some private donors are assisting with the transport costs. The team will visit four regions and interview many people. While travelling they will keep us informed. The whole exercise will take place during three months. This means for CAS that two permanent workers are not at post and we have tried to share their duties among other members of staff.

We are planning to publish all the facts and findings which we gathered during the years. Fr. Patrick Shanahan who is in England is working on this and we hope it will be ready soon. These facts and findings are taken from the all the children who have registered at CAS. We have general information from approximately 3000 children and detailed information from those on sponsorship.

We are also reorganising our filing system and reporting methods. All staff is involved but of course the administrative staff is doing the lion share. Most of it should be ready before we move to the new house of refuge.

Visitors and donors.

CAS still receives many visitors. Especially during the holiday periods many people pay as a visit. We are happy with it, because it increases the awareness of street children. But also more Ghanaian volunteers offer their services. Some stay for a few weeks or months, others come once a week. There is always work enough. The children are always presents and it is the skill of the volunteers to interest them in the various activities. Two FIC brothers Mark and Alexis worked with us for some months and have now gone to Malawi to start their missionary life. We thank them and wish them all the best. Presently sister Regina Zoot (SHCJ) is with us to assist in the clinic. Since 1994 seventy-two volunteers and religious have

been with us or are still with us.

Some weeks ago CAS received a special visitor in the person of the second lady of Ghana Mrs. Mills. She spent some time with the children and taught them how to make a carpet out of cheap material. She also gave us a donation to support the activities. Many thanks! Also Mrs. Wendy Jones from England is with us for a view week to experience street children, to learn from them



and see how they live. Wendy writes poem about children and the period with CAS will be an inspiration for her.

They're many other donors who support us, Ghanaian as well as foreign, Private donors, schools and organisations. We are very grateful to them all. The CRS assisted us with the candle-making programme. We hope to report on this project soon.

Educational projects.

Besides the literacy program CAS runs several other educational periods. Children who visit the house of refuge are taught how to behave, how to address a senior, and how he/she to care of him/herself. Several times week there are music

classes. Children who are interested take part.

They can learn to play instruments but can also take part in singing classes. Others take part in a cultural group. They practice local dances and perform regularly. The drama group has to practice often. This group is difficult to keep together since children go and come. At times key players are missing. This means in fact that for every role play two persons should practice it. But children like it. This group often acts stories with an educational topic. CAS also organises excursions to interesting sites. Unfortunately, only a limited number of children can take part.

The demonstration classes are for many very educative. The children learn how to draw, paint and write. For some it is the first time that they use a pen or a pencil.

But others are very artistic. Children have produced Christmas cards and thank you cards. The staff and volunteers are trying to involve as many children as possible but it is difficult. The video is still very attractive. It is for us to find a balance and devote sufficient hours on education. Educating them by means of videos is almost impossible because of the language. Most videos are made in the English language and not many speak it. The children like to watch action films because they can understand them. Of course the debate of what to show is raised often. Action films are often films that show a lot of violence. The question is do they really see it as killings or are the goodies winning from the bad characters? We know that many of this kind of films are shown in the video centres and showing them in the house of refuge is a means of control. But we have decided to re-discuss showing these videos at another staff meeting.

The fact is many children are in need of counselling and we try to do this on individual basis but we also group them together along gender lines and age mates.

Children's bill.



A Children's bill is presently discussed by the Ghanaian Parliament. We received a copy and discussed some of the topics during staff meetings. We discuss what consequences this bill when approved will have on street children and NGOs such as ours. We ourselves have many questions and are not clear about issues such as parental duties, fosterage and adoption etc. We therefore have decided to invite an expert who can enlighten us on some of these issues. We planned it for December 1998 but again time was against us and therefore it will be organised this year.

Evaluations.

We are still searching for ways to continue the evaluation process, which started in 1996. Some people from Cambridge assisted us that time and a comprehensive report was published. We re-discussed that report during 1997 and implemented changes during 1998. We received a social audit book but did not really discuss it because we were not sure as how to use it.

Also the Baby Care programme, which is run by Street Girls Aid, has to be evaluated. This started in November 1995. We are happy that one of the evaluators Mette Jacobsgaards is prepared to come again this month to assist us with this exercise.

NEWSLETTER NO. 19 APRIL 1999 THE EXODUS

Research.

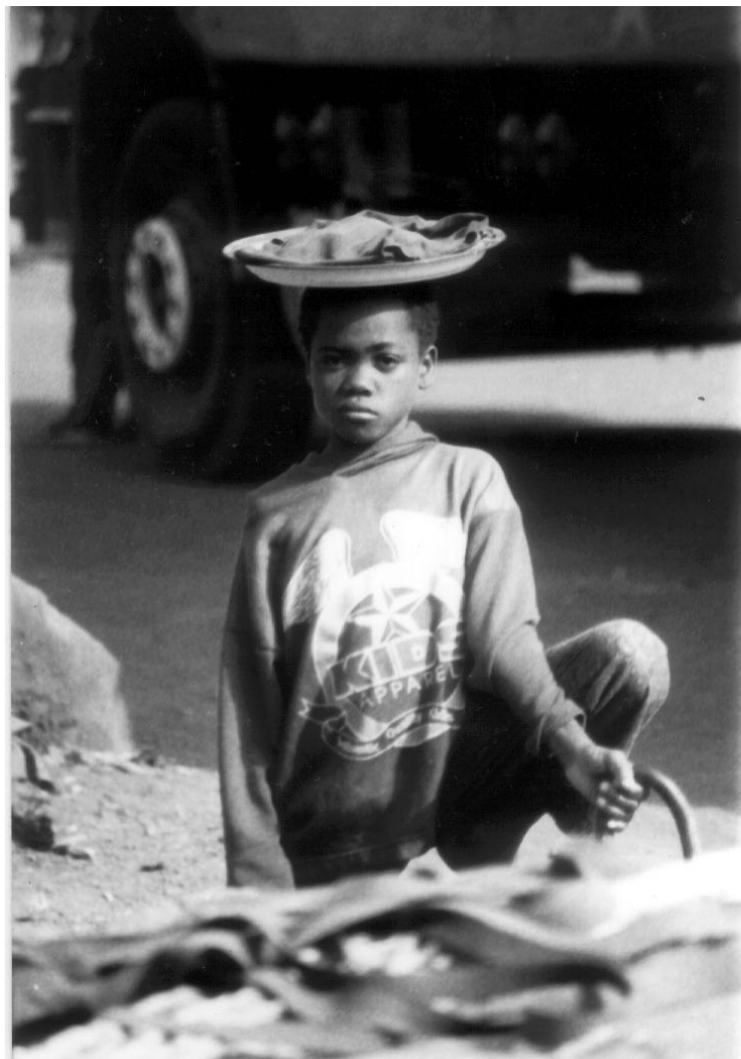
As reported in the last newsletter, in December 1998 research on the background of street children started. This has now been completed and the report has been presented to UNICEF. Soon the report will be officially released. The title of the report "The Exodus" explains in fact the result of the findings. Many, many children in the rural areas of Ghana told the research team that they have plans to leave their villages and come to the cities. This information does not come to us as a complete surprise. Our fieldworkers are always meeting new street children in the streets and see the increase. But let me start at the beginning.

As explained before, CAS has a lot of information from the street children who have been registered. The children have given us the reasons why they have left home, but we thought we must also listen to the parents, the teachers, chiefs and other opinion leaders. The research team, a Dutch Journalist Eric Beauchemin and two of our social workers Paul Avevor and Charles Baffoe visited five Regions. They visited the Upper East Region, The Northern Region, The Ashanti Region, The Eastern

and The Western Region. We selected these regions because most of the children, who visit CAS, are from these regions. In each region they visited four to six districts. 282 parents were interviewed and 805 children filled in questionnaires. Most of these children are students of JSS schools. The data of all these interviews and questionnaires is available at CAS and UNICEF Ghana. These are not included in the report because the report is already quite bulky.

In the report the authors write about the Economy, Family and traditions, Education system, Pull factors, Migration flows, Slavery, Children in the streets, The Questionnaires, Stemming the Exodus, and gives some Recommendations. This newsletter is not large enough to tell more about the above headings but instead we will give you striking remarks, which were made by persons interviewed.

- “We have only one teacher for an entire primary school.”
- “Parents just want girls to be able to read and write enough to trade at the market.”
- “There are no role models for children.”
- “The children come back and tell their friends they can get



easy money in the big city.”

- “Everybody is leaving. It’s the talk of the town.”
- “The only time you see them is when they come for burial or they get HIV.”
- “It’s serious. If nothing is done, there will be an explosion.”
- “If you want monuments and parks, go to the pyramids in Egypt.”

These remarks give you an impression of what has been explained in the report. All those who are interested in the report can give us a call. We have to charge a small amount for it, but it is worth it. We thank Eric especially for his dedication and hard work. Well done!

CALL FOR ACTION.

The above mentioned report indicates that a lot has to be done for the children already in the streets and for those still with their families. We therefore take the initiative to call on all NGOs, organisations and churches to take action in anyway you think is best.

Please, it does not make sense when organisations advise each other on particular approaches. We should experiment much more. If we at CAS see that a particular approach is successful we will surely adopt it. Please take action now!

Misereor.

On the 15th of February, Mr. Azaah and myself travelled to Germany. Misereor invited us to be present during the fundraising campaign the “Lenten Fund.” Misereor invited partners from Ghana, India, Colombia and Brazil. All persons are working with children, some in similar projects to CAS. We travelled to many town and villages where we gave talks in schools and parishes. At times we gave four talks a day.

The latest video, in which we explain the data on children, helped us a lot. Often we started with this video, explained a bit more and then answered the many questions. It was really striking for Mr. Azaah and myself that so many people asked questions. People were really interested which was a great encouragement to us. The big day was organised in Osnabrück where the official launching of the Lenten Fund Campaign took place. There we met again all the other guests. Fortunately it was a beautiful sunny day. The other days were less sunny in fact we experienced all kinds of weather snow, rain, hail and wind. Only the first day we experienced the worst cold because we were not well dressed for this type of weather. But our hosts had organised it very well. During the whole trip we were accompanied by a translator/guide Beate Matthies. She showed us the way helped us to buy the clothes we needed and



Beate Matthies bro.Jos Mr. Azaah Mrs Annete Mass
fundraising in Germany - Misereor -4-3-1999

translated everything. After a few talks she could tell more about the CAS project then we. Fortunately I understand a bit of German and could add what she forgot. We are very grateful to her and to Misereor for inviting us for this special event.

New House of Refuge.

Yes it is almost ready! At the end of this month we hope to move to this new house. The contractor and his team are advanced in the renovation work. The children go there a few days a week to complete the inside painting. We have plans to decorate all the inside walls but that can be done even when we occupy it. As soon as we have moved we will invite the Archbishop to officially bless the place.

During the coming weeks we have to decide how to move the items of the various departments and when to start with the activities there. The second stage of the Plan International project has been approved. It includes buying of furniture and equipment for the new house. All members of staff are involved in this exercise and we hope all goes well.

Sponsorship and Cash flow.

The Sponsorship Scheme started in 1995. 247 have been listed on the sponsorship list of which 53 have completed. They have been trained in various trades. 40 children will complete this year and 100 children are on the waiting list. Children are placed in boarding schools and /or accommodation will be found for them. Arrangements have been made with the heads of schools so that those children can remain in the school during holiday periods provided CAS continues paying for the lodging and feeding costs.

The academic year starts in July. The first term is from July till December, the second term is from January till April, and the third term is from April till June. Those in workshops can start

the training at any time, but it is advisable to start at the beginning of the year. An Agreement fee has to be paid at the start of the training and a closing fee at the end. During the three years of apprenticeship training students can sit for the grade Two and grade One-trade tests.

These tests are conducted either in April or in June. Therefore it is important for the Sponsorship Department to be fully prepared. Children who attend school have to be prepared in June and those who want to start the apprenticeship training should start at the beginning of the year. During the past three years we have learned that it is very difficult for donors to release fund at the beginning of the year. Usually we receive the first funding in April. This means that CAS has to have the money available to keep all those children in sponsorship at their training place during the first three months of the year. Presently for feeding we need 8,000,000.00 per month. The costs for follow-up work, fees etc. are not included. The above mentioned amounts are always pre-financed, but the fund is not always available.

The risk of not being able to pay the feeding costs is too high. We therefore have decided to limit the number of children on sponsorship. We will not exceed 250 children at one time.

Drama.

Street children like drama. It is a good way of getting them involved and educating them at the same time. Kathleen McCreery and her partner Rik Walton have come from England to educate the staff and the children on how to teach drama. Children are involved every afternoon by means of games and short plays to learn how to express themselves. Rik Walton is a photographer who is making a documentary of the drama activities. He is also assisting CAS to obtain good photographs of the sponsorship scheme. We will report more on this next time.

CANDLEMAKING.

The Catholic Relief Service assisted CAS by giving fund for the candle-making project. We started with this project in 1997 as a pilot programme.

From this we learned that it is important to have good equipment, to know which type of candles people want to buy and to know how many we can produce.

With the CRS fund we ordered new equipment which has arrived at CAS. This activity will be carried out at two places, part will be done at the House of Refuge where children will be introduced to candle-making and the production will take place at Hopeland training centre. We have already received a large order, but we first want to train some staff so that they are familiar with the process.

Credit fund.

Discussions on the small saving scheme started years ago. It is part of the sponsorship scheme. During the time the first street children completed their training we discussed the Trickle-Up Scheme – American Approach. We failed with this because we were too late in applying for it.

In the north of Ghana we started this small saving scheme with students whom had completed the vocational training. Those interested were grouped together and loans – grants were given to them to start their work. To be frank, this scheme failed. It is impossible for them to pay back their loans. They rather invest the profit in their establishments.

The Board of CAS started discussing this issue two years ago. A Donor organization Stichting Doen (Do it), which has assisted children in the sponsorship scheme knew about the set-up in the north and has proposed that we try a similar set-up here in Accra. They are willing to finance it.

The Board of CAS has decided not to link this fund and its operation to CAS directly. The reason is, a complete new department has to be created and because of finances, it could have many implications for CAS.

In stead, CAS Board has presented a proposal to the Arch-diocesan Development Committee to create an office at the Development department, which can deal with this fund. It is still under discussion.

Evaluation

Mette Jacobsgaards assisted us again with the evaluation. The first part was done two years ago. This time it was conducted in three parts: CAS, Baby-Care and SAID. We received the draft report and mailed a few comments to her. Later when we receive the full report we will explain to you how we intend to use it.

Visits.

Some weeks ago we were honoured by the visit of the Canadian foreign minister. It was a short but good visit and we appreciate that he took time to visit us. We also received some visitors from the Australian relief. We thank them for their visit. In addition, we have received donations and some encouraging words from the Second Lady and the President of Ghana. We are very grateful for these donations and their interest.

NEWSLETTER NO. 20 JUNE 1999 SPECIAL EDITION

We are happy to present to you a special edition of our Newsletter. On the 17th of June 1999, we officially blessed and



opened the News House of Refuge at Larterbiokoshie – Accra. During this occasion the “EXODUS” report on the background of street children was presented to our donors, benefactors, interested persons and the press.

- Master of ceremony: Rev. Fr. Anthony Asare Chairman of the Board of Advisors.
- Ms. Faustina Awuku Asante said the opening prayer.
- The children entertained the gathering with songs, dance and poems.

Blessing of House of Refuge and Presentation of the Exodus report.
17 June 1999.

Your Grace Archbishop Andoh, Your Excellencies, Representatives of donor organizations, Rev. Fathers, Contractor and workers, Representatives of NGO's, Invited guests, Members of the Board of Advisors, Staff, volunteers and children. You are all very welcome to this special day for Catholic Action for Street Children. CAS.

Today we are happy that our Archbishop will bless this New House of Refuge and that we can present the Exodus Report.

CAS started its activities in October 1992 and was officially

recognised in June 1993. During the past years all activities were organised and carried out at our former House of Refuge at Crewelane in Jamestown. But today with the assistance of various donors and individuals, we have established ourselves here. You might ask why a permanent House of Refuge for street children? The answer is that we workers at CAS have accepted the fact and reality that street children exist and that they have formed their own culture.

Here at CAS we have a database of all the children who have been registered and this database shows the growing problem. 2692 children have been registered. In the room you will find a lot of information on these children, information where they come from, their ages etc.

We have established this House of Refuge as a meeting point where street children are welcome. It is their home. From this place, we are able to organise many activities. Street Children have to be accepted and assisted and that is what we want to do. The recent survey, which a Dutch journalist, Eric Beauchemin (who is working for the English department of Radio Holland), and two of our Social workers, Paul Avevor and Charles Baffoe conducted, shows that the problem of street children is related to many problems pertaining in society. Today



we are able to present you this report officially. UNICEF sponsored this survey and we are very grateful to them for assisting us in this exercise. These findings will help us to determine the course of action during the coming years.

During the past years we have considered a number of projects.

- 1) We have tried to reunite children with their parents, but this proved to be a very expensive and time-consuming exercise. Moreover, the results were very meagre.
- 2) We have tried and are still trying to get more information about the background of certain children, but often the children come from far away places.
- 3) We also discussed whether we should undertake more preventive work, although we know that our co-workers from various churches and other NGOs have been working for years in the rural areas to try and improve the situation there.

We had to make a choice.

All these experiments and the data gathered have made us decide to select one main activity and carry it out as well as possible. It is to educate and train the children.

We accept the children as they are and we want to educate them, but they have to decide what kind of education and training they wish to receive. In order to improve this approach, we at CAS are working together with various NGOs; among them are the Salvation Army Church and Street Girls Aid. We are also coordinating a literacy programme for Fanmilk. We work closely with a number of employers and head of schools who train the children in a wide variety of trades.

This cooperation with various NGOs and employers has already shown good results and we thank them for their continuing help.

Today we also wish to thank all those who have made it possible to establish this permanent house of Refuge, namely; Stichting HORIZON who are organising the fundraising for the refuge, PLAN INTERNATIONAL who assisted us with furniture and equipment, the staff and students of Penta college in Holland who are fundraising for the renovation of the refuge, the Contractor and his workers, the many private donors and Caritas Holland who are assisting us in various ways. Last but not least, we thank all the children who have helped us to paint, clean and move furniture.

We wish that this house will be a real Refuge, a home for the many street children who are living in the streets of our towns and cities. Together with them we hope to find solutions for their

many problems.

Thank you. Bro. Jos

Gifty (Street Girl) My poem is "What a Day"

What a day, what a day. This day is another good day for them. Happy day, happy day. When will a good day come for me? Should I prepare for the day or the day prepares for me. Tell me what a day. I have never experienced any good day, but seen many good days. What a day! He said, it is better to prepare for an opportunity and not get it, than to wait for an opportunity and not prepared. Oh yes, but me. Oh no, who said I will surely see a good day, if so how will the day look like. Please help me see my day the day of blessed memory.

PRESS RELEASE read by Mr. Paul Avevor.

Official release of "The Exodus – The Growing Migration of Children from Ghana's Rural Areas to the Urban Centres".

The 95-page report is the result of a four-month investigation in 5 regions on the reasons why more and more children are leaving their villages to live on the streets of Ghana's cities. The findings are based on interviews with nearly 1500 people, ranging from District Assembly officials and non-governmental organisations to parents, pupils and children out of school.

The results of the research are profoundly disturbing. They reflect the need for a thorough rethink of policies on a wide range of issues.



speech by bro. Jos



Archbishop Andoh, Fr. Stephen, Rosemary Baah

The phenomenon of street children is often ascribed to poverty, but the report shows that the issue is far more complex. Rural children are heading for the cities because of the failures of the education system, parental negligence and abuse, excessively large families, growing poverty and the lack of opportunities in the rural areas. Street children are a manifestation of these

failures. If there were no need for their services, the exodus from the rural areas would not be taking on such dramatic proportions.

The report is richly documented with the testimonies of children and parents from rural areas and includes pictures and graphs of the main findings. There are also chapters on child slavery, street children in cities other than Accra and the efforts being undertaken by national government, district assemblies and non-governmental organisations to stem the exodus.

Finally, the report makes over 20 recommendations of steps that need to be taken to limit the growing exodus of rural children to the urban centres.

FREEDOM a poem by Anita (Street Girl).

Who is free? Nobody is free. Everybody is looking for freedom. Doctors are looking for freedom, nurses are looking for freedom, students are looking for freedom and street children are looking for freedom. But as for us, CAS has helped us from frustration. So we say CAS, CAS, Oseye, Oseye.

Archbishop Dominic Andoh.

The children are our neighbours. No permanent solution has been found but he was hopeful that with time one will be found. The government has responsibility and is working on Education – FCUBE. This should mean that all children between 5-15 should be in school by 2005. So all should co-operate with the Ghana Education Service. Co-operation between NGOs is important, CAS works with Street Girls Aid and the Salvation Army Church. The Archbishop appealed to AMA to be flexible and come to the aid of NGOs seeking places to erect Kiosks, which can serve as meeting places for children.

UNICEF Representative in Ghana Dr. Omar Abdi.

For many this opening was just a ceremony, for hundreds of Street Kids it was a hope.

Despite the public efforts NGOs should intensify their efforts to support the children. Dr. Abdi made the point that the problem is multi-sectorial, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare should involve Health and Education. EXODUS demands that we look at how we put into practice the Convention of the Rights of the Child. No one person alone can address the problems of EXODUS.

Mrs. B. Katsriku of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare.

She referred to the Day of the African Child, which was held the previous day June 17th. 1999.

She said, many of the speeches referred to neglect of children.

This was one reason why children go to the streets. She congratulated CAS on giving freedom and opening up opportunities. The Ministry is considering a policy for those on the street and strategies for prevention. This is long term planning. The Government is to assist NGOs in these matters.

Mr. Felix Nyarko Representative PLAN INTERNATIONAL.

He spoke of policy PLAN has to support all those who want to assist children. Some money has been put aside for this and presently CAS receives 80% of the money, which is available this year. He thinks it a worthy course. He congratulated CAS.

Fr. Ivan of the Salesians of Don Bosco – Ashaiman

He spoke of the developments at Tema and Ashaiman. The Salesians have started a vocational school, which is meant for poor children and street children. Courses given include computing skills. They also have a football team. Father said he wants to have close links with CAS so that children can be sent for training.

Prof. Nana Apt van Ham Social Work department Legon.

Spoke of how she had thought back to the days of the first research and how the small group had wondered what could be done. She is now pleased with what had been achieved by CAS. Much has been done since 1992.

- The audience was invited to tour the house and see the exhibition of products made by the children.

People who attended:

The Archbishop, The Vicar, The Dean,
The UNICEF representative and urban officers.

Representatives of Plan International.

Mrs. Katsriku of the Ministry of Social welfare.

Prof. Nana Apt of the department of Social Work – Legon University.

Representatives of Ghana International Women Club.

Representatives of the Italian Woman Association.

Representative of the World Bank. Representatives of Save the Children Fund.

Representative of the Social Investment Fund.

Representatives of Fanmilk Company, Representatives of the Salvation Army Church.

Director, staff and children of Street Girls Aid. Dressmaking ass.

Ms. Rebecca Ansah.

Representatives of Centre of Hope, Representatives of Walahamo movement – Jamestown.

The wife of the MP Abelekuma South district,

Representative of the Christian Council., Brothers SVD,

Brothers F.I.C. Immaculate Conception,

Members of the Board of Advisors.

The Development coordinator of the Archdiocese,
Siobhan Laird – Social Work Unit, Legon University.

Mr. Dodd and his Wife, Mrs. Wientjes, Wience Ltd.

Dr. Docia Ministry of Health, Rev. Fr. Ivan Salas ions.

Mr.& Mrs. Tetteh area representatives, Contractor and workers
Milson Construction.

The Press: Times Cooperation, Graphics cooperation and Radio
Gold.

G.B.C. Religious correspondent Mr. Mantey

Regrets and well wishes:

The American Ambassador.

The British High commissioner.

The British Women Association.

The KLM Manager and his Wife.

Acknowledgement:

Detlev and Sandra Vreeken from Amsterdam Holland assisted
the staff very well with the preparations of the celebration. Thank
You.

The official opening was sponsored by: Philips Medical Systems
and Dutch & Co.

History:

- Fr. John Thebault asked Prof. Nana Apt, Head of the Social
work Department of the University of Ghana to conduct a study
on street children in Accra.

- In April 1991 the study was completed.

- Bro. Jos and Ken Amoah, a social worker started visiting
street children in October 1991.

- In November 1991, Bro. Jos discussed the issue with the
(Then) Bishop Andoh.

- In January 1992 he conducted a research on vocational
and technical training.

- In May 1992 a workshop on Street Children was held at the
University of Ghana. Legon.

- On the 23th. of May 1992 the report was published.

- In June 1992, Fr. Patrick Shanahan joined the group.

- From January '93- May '93 we searched for a suitable place
–House of Refuge.

- April 1993 – CAS started officially.

- On the 21st. of June 1993, RESPONSE the umbrella
started officially. Fr. Patrick and Bro. Jos both assisted Prof.
Nana Apt to establish it.

- October 1993, Ms. Rosemary Baah joined CAS as the
housemother of the Refuge.

- On the 18th.of March 1994, Archbishop Dominic Andoh and
the Priest council approved the project.

- In April 1994, RESPONSE started a refuge for street girls. As Board members, Fr. Patrick and Bro. Jos were in charge of the running.
- Hopeland farm was taken over by CAS on 1st. of January 1995.
- In January 1995 the first children started their training under the sponsorship scheme.
- Also in January 1995, Fanmilk Company asked CAS to assist them train their vendors, so CAS started a literacy program for them.
- The Baby Care programme started in November 1995 at the Konkomba market.
- In December 1995, CAS held its first internal evaluation.
- In October 1996 an official evaluation was conducted for CAS and S.AID.
- On the 1st. of November 1996, the Salvation Army started with their outreach clinic programme. Salvation Army also took over the running of the clinic at the House of Refuge.
- On the 16th November 1998, CAS bought the New House of Refuge at Larterbiokoshie.
- The research into the background of street children was conducted from December '98 till March 1999.
- The second Evaluation was conducted from the 24th of January till the 13th of February '99.
- On the 17th of June 1999, The New House of refuge was officially opened and Blessed by Archbishop Andoh.
- During the same ceremony, the EXODUS report was presented.

NEWSLETTER NO. 21 DECEMBER 1999 CONSOLIDATION

In the 20th issue of the newsletters we reported that we have moved to the new house of refuge and that we have officially blessed and opened it. It is from this new refuge that we report again about our activities. We are very happy with this new refuge. All of us are settled and all departments are still improving their rooms so that it serves their need.

The EXODUS report.

During the official opening we also presented the "Exodus" report to the public. This report is the result of a survey conducted on the background of street children. It explains why children are in the streets and what their parents, teachers, chiefs and opinion leaders think of it. Many organizations received this report from us. But since then many more have requested for this report. Among them were church leaders, persons from the universities, companies, students and journalists including a journalist from the Common Wealth Youth programme. This report is now well spread and many people

have read it. What to do next?

The stories from the children, which are in our files as well as the Exodus report gives us a lot of information about the causes of the phenomenon of street children. This information can give us a direction of what to do to prevent more children to come on the streets and what to do for those who are already there.

We see it as our task to spread this information and explain all the information available. For the coming months quite a number of meetings have been planned at various level. We hope that these meetings will activate many to formulate action plans.

COALITIONS.

CAS is a member of not less than four coalitions.

- The coalition for Child Friendly Cities.
- Technical Committee on Poverty (TCOP) and the National Development Planning Committee.
- GAPVOD Ghana Association of Private Organizations in Development.
- European network.



During these meetings we realize that often the members do not talk about the same kind of children and about the same issues. This is confusing. We have recently discussed some of these points and have decided to come out with some definitions:

CAS' DEFINITION OF A STREET CHILD.

A Street Child is a child who lives in the street, without regular support from family or relatives but tries to take care of him/herself.

CAS' DEFINITION OF AN URBAN POOR CHILD.

An Urban Poor Child is a child who finds him/herself in an urban setting and has some kind of home to go to where there is support, but is in the street because of lack of basic necessities

of life.

You might ask is this important? We think it is. The definitions explain that a street child is not supported by anyone, but an urban poor child still receives some kind of support. When you want to assist a street child you do not have much contact with the parents or relatives. But when you assist an urban poor child you have to deal with the parents or chiefs or person in charge.

In other words the problem and the approach will be different. We hope that eventually also these coalitions will come to action plans.

The Main Refuge.

Since we are operating in and from a new area of the city, we have seen many changes. In the old Refuge we allowed children from Jamestown (Urban Poor) to visit us. Also we allowed young men and women (above 18 years of age) to enter the Refuge. This gave us a lot of problems. Some came to disturb so that they could steal, other smoked wee and at times we had to call in the police. In the new refuge we are trying to prevent these problems. In general, youngsters above 18 years are not allowed to enter the refuge those who smoke wee are also known and prevented from entering. Two security officers are daily at work to control matters. The result is that in this refuge it is much quieter and the younger children are not disturbed. However, our field workers have noticed that the older ones still try to prevent the younger children from coming to the refuge.

Those who visit the refuge can take part in the activities organized in the various rooms. In the old refuge we only had one demonstration room in this new refuge every trade has its own. This is of course much better. The activities are better organized and controlled. There is also a common room. It is a big hall, which we are trying to make more attractive. The paper work such as drawing and painting is done in this room. Video's can be shown and performances of the children can take place in this room. We are installing the disc jockey equipment, which we received from Plan International. This will be installed in a secured area because the equipment is very expensive. You will see and hear, soon the latest musical albums will be made and performed in this room.

Every Friday has now been fixed as performance day. We either invite choirs or drama groups to perform or our own drama and music groups perform. During the past weeks we have witnessed some talented children and many have enjoyed the Friday.



Rainwater enters the Refuge

cleaning the compound

FIELDWORK AND MINI REFUGES.

The workers also meet different children in the different areas surrounding the refuge. These children do not know us as yet. But we meet daily new faces. Also many of the regular children have been sent on sponsorship or to Hopeland training centre. At the moment 280 children are in the scheme. This is in fact more than we want. We know we are able to manage the follow up work of 250 children. When there are more, some will not receive regular visits and attention they need. We therefore have decided not to send more children until we have reached the desired number. Quite a few will complete coming June and this will reduce the number again.

You might say this is a pity. More children want to be educated but you will not send them. It is true but we feel that we do not do justice to the children by doing shabby work. If we can educate 250 children at a time then we think we do well. The children, who still want to go, can follow the preparation period in the refuge and learn from the daily general literacy and health training.

The field workers who operate also try to improve these teaching periods while in the Mini Refuges or street corners in town. During the coming year our attention will be on this. The workers meet approximately 175 children daily in the streets. If each one of them receives some information daily than we are getting somewhere.

At Hopeland training centre the children are educated in literacy and health as well. It means that in three different places lessons are given. It is therefore important that these lessons are well coordinated. How this should be done is under

discussion and we will keep you informed.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL has assisted CAS Street Children during the past 6 years.

- With the renovation of the first ever House of Refuge at Adedenkpo in 1993.
- With the sponsorship of 18 children.
- Building one Crèche for street babies at the Konkomba market in 1995.
- And recently by assisting building a dormitory for girls at Hopeland Training Centre, a department of CAS.
- And with furniture, equipment and a motorcycle for the New House of Refuge at Larterbiokorshie.

We are very grateful to PLAN for this support. In September we organised a special day to thank the Country Director and management from PLAN. The children performed for them and we showed them how we have used their financial support. A photo album was presented as a remembrance.

We are also preparing an album for Stichting Horizon who did and are still fundraising for the payment of the new house. At the beginning of next year we expect a delegation from them for which we will organise a special day.

CAS is very grateful to all the donors who have assisted in the past or are still assisting.

We have plans to list all donors on a board and fixed it in the main hall.

UNICEF.

UNICEF is supporting us with a number of activities. Ireland Aid as well as Ibis a Dutch hotel chain channel their assistance through UNICEF.

With this help we can carry out the educational programme as well as send children on sponsorship. Recently we held a mid term review meeting and we received some visitors from Ireland Aid.

In order to plan well for the year 2000, we asked all departments to evaluate their activities of 1999 and to plan for the new year. At a joint staff meeting we all worked on these plans and after several hours of hard work we managed to write it down. Now we are discussing the details. With this information the fundraising committee will be able to write out proposals for the donors. It is very difficult to estimate the costs of things at the moment because the Cedi is not stable. For instance last year

we estimated the cost of one child on sponsorship at \$ 852 per child per year. With the present rate per dollar it is now \$ 1000 per child per year. This includes the settlement costs. The costs also include the preparation stage and the administration costs. Still, only half of it is for the actual education, the other half is for accommodation and daily feeding cost.

HOPELAND

Several donors have assisted Hopeland training centre during the past years.

- MISEREOR
- UNICEF
- HELP GHANA
- AMERICAN EMBASSY
- PLAN INTERNATIONAL
- PENTA COLLEGE

It is now a centre where street children can be prepared for the sponsorship scheme.

Recently the girl's dormitory has been completed. Plan International has donated this. Also the new pigsty has been built with the assistance of The Penta College in Holland. We are now moving the containers to a central place where the goods are kept, and the contractor is transforming the old pigsty into a duck house. With these changes we hope to have more income and so cover the running costs of the centre. More children are sent to Hopeland and that means that we are planning to build a classroom/ recreational hall as well as a new office for the centre. When completed, the centre will be well established and suitable for its purpose. We will keep you informed about the new developments.

NEWSLETTER NO. 22 APRIL 2000 A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

At the beginning of the year 2000, CAS is in full swing and we have started executing our new plans. The title of this newsletter is "a participatory approach". I will try to explain how children are involved in decision making and planning of CAS' programmes.

A PLACE TO REST AND KEEP THE BELONGINGS.

During the early days, CAS did not have a House of Refuge and we met the street children in the street. We discovered soon enough that it was almost impossible to have good conversations with the children in places where there was a lot of noise and distractions of all kind. We asked the children what they wanted and they told us that they needed a place to rest and keep their belongings. It took a while before we had found



CLINIC TREATMENT AND ADVICE



and rented a good place, but their wish had been fulfilled. The House of Refuge was born. Children came to rest and kept their belongings in specially made lockers. Now, after some experience, we know that keeping lockers for street children is not an easy matter. First, we asked the carpenter to make wooden lockers, small compartments with a door and a pad lock. Unfortunately or fortunately, many street boys are shoeshine boys and have their hammers and pincers in their shoeshine boxes. You can guess what happened. Some lost their keys and used their hammers and pincers to open their boxes and at times those of their friends. These lockers were often repaired, but they did not last. Plans were in place to buy lockers made from aluminium sheets, but that proved to be too expensive. At CAS we do not have lockers any longer. Some street children keep their belongings in places known by some members of staff.

KEEPING THEIR MONEY SAFE.

Some of the street children keep their money with the matron of CAS. In the streets and in the places they sleep it is very difficult to keep it safe. Some give the money to older mates they trust. But here is a problem as well. Being children they cannot decide what to save and what to use. They hand over the money but need it again an hour later. Therefore the children need advice from our staff about this.

MEDICATION.

The approach to advise and assist the children who are sick has changed a lot during the years. At the beginning some members of staff volunteered to take care of those children who were sick. They cleaned wounds, fixed bandages and gave pills. We soon realised that this was not the right way to help them with their health problems. The Catholic Doctors Association assisted us. Once a week a doctor came for consultation. This

was not an easy matter for the doctors concerned because they tried to come after their normal daily work. The result was obvious. When we needed a doctor, he was not available, when the doctor came late in the afternoon the children had gone back to the streets. It was a relief when the Salvation Army Church agreed to run a clinic at CAS. The nurses were available every day and we allowed the mothers from Konkomba market to come with their babies to the House of Refuge. At the beginning only a few came, but soon there were more mothers with babies in the refuge than street children. We had to change this approach again. The Salvation Army agreed to open a clinic at the Konkomba crèches and mothers with babies could receive assistance there.

The clinic at the refuge is still open daily and the nurse attends to those who are sick but also gives advice to the young mothers with babies and teaches others about health issues. There are children who do not want to stay at the refuge but attend to the clinic.

LISTENING TO STREET CHILDREN.

Social surveys are conducted on children who want to be educated. It is interesting to hear what stories they tell about



their background and present life. They are in the streets to survive. Therefore also in telling their stories they protect themselves. It takes time for the social workers to find out the truth about their lives. Social survey reports can therefore not be written all at once, every time more accurate data has to be added.

When children are asked to tell their story in public, they are often good actors. They look to the audience or to the persons who likes to hear the story and they adapt their story accordingly. They are even able to cry on command if need be. Needless to say, I do not believe their stories when told in public. I have heard drug addicts or former drug addicts telling their story, which was exactly the same but it happened with a different person in a different place. They are able to add or to subtract details to their stories, which they heard from their friends. A particular incident happened some years ago, which illustrates my reservations. A worker came with a child who told me while crying that he had heard that his mother had died and that he wanted to go home. His friends had given him some money but not enough to go home. I showed my pity and we paid for his journey only to discover that his mother did not die and that he did not want to go home, but needed money for food.

The true story only emerges after a lot of counselling and a lot of patience. We at CAS are never happy when children are being asked to tell their story in public and we try to protect them from this.

A PLACE TO SLEEP.

All street children ask for assistance to find a place to sleep. Although children have beautiful plans for this, we do not include it in our programmes. The answer is that we do not want by any means that street children become dependent on us. It is very easy to fill a house with street children, give them good accommodation, feed and clothe them and.... Yes what do you achieve? We want to respect them as they are and advise them for their future. A second reason for not assisting them with a place to sleep, is the sheer numbers. We estimate that 18,000 street children are in the street. We have registered approximately 3,000 children. It is impossible to give accommodation to so many. The same can be said about giving them food. We know that our House of Refuge will be too small when we decide to distribute food.

In Ghana we are fortunate that most street children have a job and earn a small amount of money so that they are able to feed themselves. More and more children are coming to the streets and we notice now already that it is difficult for some of them to earn enough for their living. May be in future we have to help

them to find a job while in the streets.

BE EDUCATED.

Children who want to be educated have to take the initiative and decide what they want to learn and to which school or workplace they want to go. We also involve them in buying the goods they need for their education. Still it is difficult for some of them to make up their mind. At the beginning of the sponsorship scheme, the worker decided with the child which trade s(he) could learn. At times, after a few weeks, the child changed his/her mind and we had to start all over again. Another workshop had to be found. Other tools had to be bought etc.

From this we have learned that we should allow the children more time in deciding what to do and learn for their future.

HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE.

Hopeland Training Centre has been set up for this purpose. Children who still doubt what to do are asked to go to Hopeland and stay there for at least 6 months. At Hopeland they are accommodated and while taking care of the animals the children get more time to make up their minds. As such, Hopeland becomes more and more important within the sponsorship scheme. This year we still want to improve the facilities at the centre. Misereor has approved our plans to build a multi purpose hall and an administration block. Also a permanent social worker as well as a literacy teacher will be employed.

By improving Hopeland we notice a change at the House of Refuge. Fewer children will be at the Refuge because part of their preparation is done at Hopeland.

PREPARATION.

As part of the preparation of children for their education we involve them in music, drama, story telling etc. We also try to interest them in sports and games. These activities are done at the House of Refuge but also at Hopeland Training Centre. The new initiative mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Friday performances has proved to be a great success. Competitions are liked most. This can be done in the form of games or quiz but also as individual performances. Many are not shy; they sing, rap or dance. When other children are invited for sports or singing, the competition is high, nobody wants to lose. The number of children who come to take part overwhelms us at times. We do not want to restrict it, but we should remain in control.

Concluding the above:

YES, street children take part in the decision making and planning of CAS programmes. Better said the children have

made CAS as it is today.

NO, not all programmes were successful.

NO, we do not accept all suggestions they have.

YES, they decide about their own future.

YES, they decide how they are educated. We carry out what they like most. Whether it is music, drama or sports. They decide about the length of the lessons and programmes. They tell us what they want to learn.

YES, we listen to the children but have learned to listen objectively and not emotionally.

FORMING DEPARTMENTS.

As mentioned before, CAS is in the process of forming good and manageable departments. There are six departments at CAS. Some function very well other have a lot of difficulties. These difficulties arise from the fact that not all members of the department see the need to carry out certain decisions or are not yet able to manage their own time and plans.

We still want to improve and therefore we have asked all members of staff their opinion. The results are that many members of staff wish to learn more about planning including financial planning, teamwork, report writing, time management and decision taking.

Also staff need more information on e.g.

- drug and alcohol use, self-medication, STDs, HIV/AIDS, diseases etc.

- rights of the child – understanding the implications.

- helping skills relating to: interviewing, communicating with the child, and advising.

- knowledge and understanding of adolescent behaviour and the effect that abuse, rejection, neglect etc. can have.

- dealing constructively with aggressive and destructive behaviour.

- Some want to learn basic teaching skills or have more knowledge about fundraising and marketing of products the children make during the demonstration lessons.

We hope to find donors who are ready to help the staff to upgrade themselves in the above mentioned topics.

Finally we are happy to let you know that we are, together with Bright and Nicky from BBC religious affairs, upgrading the internet pages. Soon they will be ready. You can find us on: <http://www.btinternet.com>

It is June 2000, and we want to give you another update of the activities of CAS. This year CAS pays a lot of attention to staff training and improvement of activities but first we would like to tell you a bit more about the history. Recently we compiled notes about the history of some street children projects in Accra-Ghana. Although everything started only 9 years ago, it is interesting to see how fast things developed and how society changed.

We consulted minutes of past meetings, read articles and reports published on street children, and reviewed data gathered on the computer. Some of us have been there right from the beginning and at times are surprised that all are not aware of some developments. We also noticed that at times wrong information has been published or wrongly interpreted. During this period many articles have been written, articles on studies conducted by researchers and articles written in newspapers. We gathered quite a number of them during the past years. Generally these articles blame the existing structures in the country of having children living in the streets. Not many articles suggest that something can be wrong with family structures and wrong behaviour of certain individuals.

The "Exodus Report" published last year clearly confirms that many children have left home because of problems in the family. We hope that organizations and churches will do more on family



counselling. We also suggest that more attention on these issues could be placed in schools and club/ association meetings. We also noticed that new NGOs are set-up to assist street children. Some are establishing houses for the children, while others believe that one institute can help in getting children from the street. There are still people who believe that a quick solution can be found to address this problem. But we know this cannot be done so easily.

IMPROVING ACTIVITIES.

In the past, CAS held fortnightly staff meetings and all activities were discussed and planned during these meetings. This has changed tremendously; CAS now meets on departmental bases. Once a month, on fixed dates, the various departments meet as well as the Heads of departments. This is a great improvement because now everybody is involved. But of course not everything is clear and understood by everyone. For instance, we insist that records are written and kept on weekly bases. This is at times difficult for some members of staff because they do not understand the reason why these records should be written. Another problem is the communication. Although departments can decide how to carry out certain activities, it is important that this information is circulated to all members of the other departments. The children do not belong to any department but take part in activities organized within. In order to improve this communication a timetable has been made. Every day different activities are organized, many by the education department.

The education department takes care of the literacy classes, which are taught in the refuge, at Hopeland and in the streets. It includes health education, which is also taught in the above, mentioned places. It organizes music, drama, sports, excursions and Friday entertainment. The department organises the running of the library and coordinates the Fan-milk literacy classes.

One of the fieldworkers who assisted the education department on regular interval by teaching the children literacy and health has now become a permanent member of this department. This meant that we had to employ another fieldworker. We received a number of applications and on the 15th of May three members of staff interviewed all those invited.

We have employed one of them, although we are in need of many more fieldworkers. Unfortunately we do not have the fund to do so.

A special committee has been set-up to oversee all the activities in education. Members of this committee are: a social

worker/programme coordinator, follow-up coordinator and the head of the education department.

This committee also assists the recently started Educational Research programme. (CMC) Centraal Missie Commissariaat from The Netherlands supports this programme. Two volunteers who work for CAS in 1995 returned to do research in literacy and health education. During the research they will find out which literacy and health programmes are already in operation by the various NGOs. They will also visit the appropriate Ministries and organisations, which can assist.

After the initial research they will try to write some simple courses, which can be given by workers of the street children projects. Of course, it requires a trial and testing period. The plan is to spend half a year on research, one year on writing and testing and half a year on finalising and printing.

Unfortunately, we have experienced already a setback. One of the volunteers was homesick because she missed her boyfriend too much and decided to return to The Netherlands. We are now trying to employ somebody to take her place. This will not be a simple matter, because it should be somebody who has a lot of



experience in teaching. It cannot be a new volunteer either who first has to learn how to live in Ghana and to know how CAS operates. But there is hope that we find another person.

As explained above, many activities and persons are involved in education. Therefore it has become necessary that these “teachers” follow a laid-down plan. At the moment we are relying too much on the creativity of the persons with the result that at times the children get confused.

For us it is also important to know what has been taught, how it was done, and to know whether the children understood it? Therefore, since we have started this new project we are determined to continue it.

In one of the previous newsletters we informed you that a follow-up coordinator has been employed. Bro. Patrick Gyereh F.I.C. is the new coordinator. We gave Bro Patrick time to see how CAS is operating, and how the supervisors do their work. Patrick also sorted all tools in store and visited many of the children who are on sponsorship.

His task is to take the lead in this follow-up work and see to it that all children are regularly visited. That children are placed into workshops where they can learn and not be used as cheap labourers. He will also check that all who are following the apprenticeship scheme have the correct tools and equipment for learning. In short, he will assist all the supervisors to do the work better.

STAFF TRAINING.

One of the priorities of CAS is to train the staff and as such improve the work done for street children. This topic has been on the agenda for many years. Already during the first embedded evaluation in 1996 we decided to invest in this. Some fieldworkers attended a course at the Social Welfare School. Others followed specific courses.

Two members of staff, Anne Holding and Paul Avevor met all members of staff to assess what types of courses were needed. So we know quite well what members of staff need. Some need specific courses to upgrade themselves in the job they do. In general all Heads of departments wanted some training in management.

This year two members of staff participated in a two days course on effective management for NGOs and groups organised by the Centre for Youth Development and Education (CYDE). Two others attended a course in financial management organised by

the same organisation. In addition, all Heads of department and assistants followed a 6 days General Course in Management organised by The African Centre for Human Development.

This course included: Planning, organisation, Time management, organising meetings, Personnel management, delegation, accountability and Teamwork.

Some weeks ago, Anne Holding conducted a one-day course on effective record keeping at CAS for all members of staff. She explained about the system of record keeping, the reasons why records have to be kept and discussed the format of the records, which are kept by CAS.

Since most members of staff have now gone through the basic training programme, we have given them a questionnaire where they can tick additional courses needed. As soon as we have the results of this questionnaire we will decide what to do next.

Most members of staff are happy about the courses, however some made the remark that outsiders should study CAS before planning their course. In this way the course will be more focused.

JOINT MEETING CAS & SAID SENIOR STAFF.

CAS as well as SAID have grown a lot. Jointly about 100 persons are employed to work with and for the street children. Both organisations have the same structure and operate departments. Because of the number of persons involved, communication has become one of the most difficult issues. The management of both organisations is not always sure that all members of staff are well informed about certain developments.

Therefore it became necessary that both senior staff' met to exchange ideas about main topics such as: the growth of both organisations, the training of staff, the cooperation with other NGOs and organisations. The involvement and support of donors, the sponsorship of children, and new plans we have for the future. Although many activities are carried out jointly, we will organise such a meeting only once a year. Most of the issues can be discussed in smaller groups.

INTERNET PAGES.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, we have now updated the Internet pages of CAS-SAID and SCA. While we provided the information, Bright and Nicky from BBC religious affairs did the actual job of preparing them for the Internet. Unfortunately

the photographs we sent to them by mail got lost and we had to send new ones.

Also a British photographer, Rik Walton who visited us last year, made many photographs of CAS and SAID. He opened some Internet pages as well:

<http://www.snaps.free-online.co.uk/ghana> and CAS

<http://www.btinternet.com/~CAS/>

Rik and his wife Cathleen have opened an exhibition in England.



We are planning to open a similar exhibition showing his photographs at the British Council hall in Accra and Kumasi. We will keep you informed.

Cathleen and her daughter Rosa, have been with us for some weeks to teach the staff and children drama. This is the second time they had been to Ghana and to be precise to CAS and SAID. Many children were very interested.

At times it was difficult for them to be in time, but at the end we witnessed some nice plays. One play from SAID, one from Hopeland group and one from CAS' main refuge.

Sponsorship and Settlement.

Every year during the months of June and July we witness children completing the sponsorship (the training) period. Quite a number follow the academic calendar for this training period. It is indeed an important time for many, because they have to decide where to live and where to work.

Since the beginning of the sponsorship scheme in 1995, CAS assisted 496 children in their training programme. This academic year (1999-2000), 280 children were in schools or workshops where they learnt various trades. They were sponsored by a number of donors namely:

UNICEF	90	MISEREOR	85
BARCLAYS BANK	9	ITALIAN WOMEN ASS.	5
VOLENTIBUS	10	MISSIO	5
PRIVATE DONORS	18		

58 Children of these donors have completed this year and are preparing themselves for settlement. This means, they are applying for a job or starting their own workshop.

These 280 children are part of the number, which has been registered at CAS currently. The total number of children who have visited CAS regularly is 3084. We are aware that the number who have followed or are still in training (496) is small compared with the number who visits us. There are a number of reasons to explain this trend. The initiative to be educated has to come from the children themselves. CAS workers counsel and advise children, but do not force them in anyway. Many street children are young and happy to be free. Although the experience misery at times, they are not concerned about their future. Another reason is that they cannot decide what to do. Some children are with us for years before they take a decision.

INVITATION CARDS

Some months ago we decided to start an exercise to invite more children to the new house of refuge. Field workers operating in the new areas discovered that many street children did not know the new place and did not know what they could do in the house of refuge. We decided to print small invitation cards and distribute them during the fieldwork time. We realised that much more could be done with such a card. The children could be counted, and they could be interviewed at the same time. These invitation cards had to be printed. We are very grateful to Saki Publicity Limited who printed and donated 15,000 cards to us. The first sets of cards were printed in the Twi language. This proved to be a small mistake. We discovered that most of the street children couldn't read Twi at all. Therefore the second and third sets are in the English language.

In 1996 we conducted a "Headcount" together with Street Girls Aid. 30 members of staff were three weeks in particular areas of town and counted all the street children they met. This year the counting has been done with 8 workers from CAS only. The reasons are: (a) this method is more accurate because only street children and not urban poor children are counted. (b) We are 90% sure there are no duplications. (c) Only children below 18 years of age are counted. (d) We could interview the children; getting to know their ages, the regions they come from, and what they do in town.

At times night visits were necessary. This was not easy because of the fact that of late so many women are killed in Accra that the police think a serial killer is at work. The police is on patrol especially at night. We therefore decided that the workers could only operate in groups of two or four. This worked out well except for the times that there were complete black outs in certain areas.

What are our findings:

- The number of street children have definitely increased.
- We counted more boys than girls, although the difference is not large.
- In some areas only boys are operating.
- Children from all tribes are in all areas but some tribes are dominant.
- The main sleeping places remain the same.
- Some operating places have changed due to the improvement of the infrastructure in the city.
- Street children do not sell expensive and big items.
- Too many are involved in selling of Wee (drugs).
- The number of street families is on the increase.
- Not many street children operate in Ashaiman and Tema.

FACTS AND FINDINGS.

Two years ago, in September 1998 – Newsletter 17, we gave you the facts and findings we gathered from the reports of street children. This year we want to give you an update. The social survey reports of the 280 children in sponsorship suggest that only 17% of the children have left home because of poverty. 160 reports are from boys and 120 are from girls. Twenty children are born out of wedlock, while 7 have their parents living in the streets. We are afraid that this number will rise soon. The fieldworkers meet more and more complete families, that is father, mother and children living in the streets. Seven children have not given any reason at all why they have left home. A good number, 17 children are orphans and have no parents alive. Surprisingly, nine children have lost complete contact with their parents and do not know where they are.

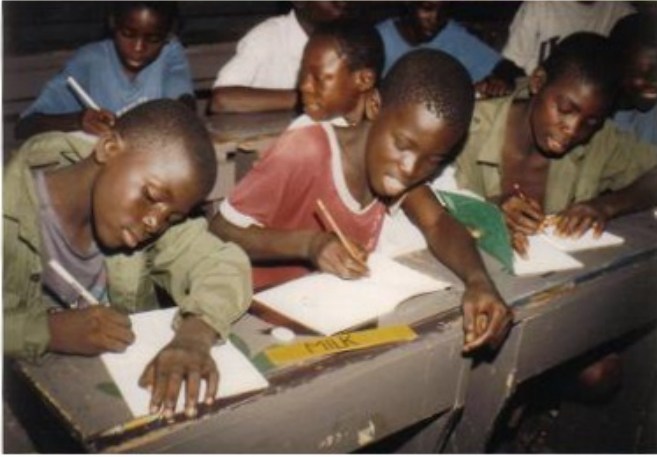
In cases like these, it is very difficult for the social workers to investigate their background. 59 children have parents who are divorced. And 70 children have a single parent caring for them, either one of them died or disappeared. Of the 14 children who ran away from home, the majority are girls. It will be interesting to investigate the real reasons why they decided to run away. Sadly enough, 15 children left home because they were maltreated. 13 left home because they met violence at home and 2 were sexually abused. One the last two is even a blind girl. But let me give you all the figures.

Single parents	25%	Divorce	21%	Poverty	17%
Neglect	8%	Orphan	6%	Ran away	5%
Violence	5%	Family in the street			3%
Broken Home	2%	No reasons	2%		
1% Handicapped parent		1% Handicapped themselves			
1% Pregnant in school		1% Sexual abuse			
1% customary rites					

CREATING AWARENESS.

Beside the normal programme the demonstration department went to the Trade Fair. This is an exhibition where the industry and other organisations try to promote and sell their products. The duration of the fair was 10 days from early morning till late in the evening. This meant that many members of staff had to assist and take turns to be at our stand. We sold quite a number of items, however the costs involved were equally high. In sort, we do not gain anything at fairs. Our main aim is to create more awareness about the plight of street children. Soon we will evaluate our involvement in these exhibitions. In addition to this we, Street Girls Aid and CAS, opened a photo exhibition at the British Council Hall. As mentioned in the last newsletter, Mr. Rik Walton, a British photographer made many photographs from street children during the time his wife taught the staff and children drama.

Rik and Cathleen opened an exhibition of these photographs in England while we opened one here in Accra. For nine days members of staff showed the photographs and also various products the children have made. This exhibition was also shown in Kumasi. Some members of staff were really involved in these activities and they did a very good job. We received a numbers of calls from people who told us that we should make much more noise about street children. We are doing a lot already, but of course more should be done. We however know what it involves. Many members of staff have to do extra work and financially, it always costs a lot of money. For instance, to show a video on the T.V. costs already GC 300,000.00. We hope donors will help us in this exercise to create more awareness.



In this special edition we will give you an update as well as overview of the work we do with and for street children. CAS workers are already eight years in the field and we are happy to note that more and more persons and organisations recognise the work we do and support us. However, although we do a lot to create awareness of street children, persons who criticise the street children and the work of CAS also often confront us. There are still many people who do not know the street children but are ready with their opinions. The work with street children starts by accepting them as they are and where they are. Money alone cannot solve their problems it is the love you give them.

Street children are victims of a situation. They can be victims of family problems, of poverty, even of wrong rules and regulations. A victim needs help. It is no use to start criticising this victim; it is better to find out how this victim could be helped. Many street children have left their homes and tribe for years. They grow up in the streets among other children. The result is that they form a tribe on their own with a hierarchy and rules to follow. We at CAS are fully aware of this and we still learn a lot from these street children. At times, when these children are in the streets, they fall victim again. They may be beaten, robbed or raped. We should never forget that it is children we are dealing with. A tailor-made solution cannot be found.

Therefore CAS' work is still based on experiments. We do not have permanent activities. We investigate, make a plan and then the trial periods begin. This is often confusing for donor organisations. The organisations want fixed programmes with fixed budgets. We however are always ready to adapt the laid down plans according to the situation at hand.

We are very grateful to donors who give us a free hand in carrying out the activities. We hope CAS workers will remain flexible in the coming years, ready to experiment and ready to adapt.

DEPARTMENTS.

All activities are carried out in the departments namely:

- House of Refuge and Administration.
- Education department.
- Demonstration department.
- Fieldwork department.
- Sponsorship department.
- Hopeland Training Centre.

Recently the various departments met and discussed plans and issues in detail for the coming year. After evaluating the previous years performance, new plans and proposals were made. Some of these proposals have been submitted to donors and donor organisations.

HOUSE OF REFUGE AND ADMINISTRATION.

The new House of Refuge at Lartebiokoshie is the head quarters of CAS. All programmes and activities are organised from this building. It is a Day refuge, which opens in the morning at 7 A.M. and closes in the evening at 7 P.M. At night the children go back to the street and sleep there. Often we are asked why do you not allow the children to sleep in your refuge? This question touches on one of the principles of CAS. We do not want street children to become dependent on us. We do not want them to be relying on us for food, clothes or accommodation. This sounds very hard but we believe that we do not help any child in the correct way by supplying these provisions.

The child is in the street and (s)he has to decide for him/herself how to leave the street.

The second answer is for practical reasons. CAS has a registration of over 3,000 children. It is not practical to provide accommodation for even one fifth of them.

Although people accuse us of being the reason that street children are in the streets, we do not want to be a magnet for children to come to the streets of Accra. If these people can show and prove that we are the reason for all the problems, then CAS will stop its activities immediately. There are over 17,000 street children in Accra. At the most we help 1,000 at a given time. What about the rest?

We opened the new Refuge in June 1999. We also started to enforce rigorously the rule that young persons over the age of 18 years were not welcome. In the former Refuge we experienced problems. It was very difficult to exclude older persons because of the open nature of the compound and the building. The younger children were often made to work for the older ones. Some of them smoked "wee" and caused disturbances. Now in the new Refuge we have seen more and more younger children come which we feel is a good sign.

We have noticed that the separate rooms we have for the demonstration department are a great improvement. In general the activities are more orderly and better organised.

The House of Refuge also contains the offices for administration. The dealings with various donor organisations bring a great deal of administration work. Letters and reports have to be written, financial reports prepared and records have to be kept. CAS has adopted one system of reporting. An external auditor audits the finances and donors and individuals receive a financial and a progress report every quarter.

Records are kept of all the work we do. CAS has gathered a lot of information over the years and we are discussing ways of analysing this data.

CLINIC.

There is a small clinic in the Refuge, which is open daily. A nurse from the Salvation Army Church staffs it. Street children can obtain advice and treatment free for everyday ailments. More serious problems are referred to hospital. If necessary CAS will help with the cost. The nurse is a member of CAS staff and contributes to health education classes.

TRAINING



CAS is aware of the various training needs of its growing staff. Staff attend relevant short courses and a basic management course was held at CAS during 2000. Good and appropriate training is expensive and CAS is looking at the most effective way to meet the diverse needs of staff.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The education department is an important part of CAS. Its objective is to help the children become literate and numerate and function well in society. Three teachers are employed. The children are divided into three groups, JSS drop-outs, semi literate and illiterate, depending on the level at which the child stopped his education and his ability. Classes take place from Monday to Thursday and include reading, writing, English, basic mathematics and general knowledge. Music and drama and health education classes include a cross section of children.

HEALTH EDUCATION – DEVELOPMENT

Considering the vulnerable nature of the children, their lack of knowledge and their life style CAS wishes to improve its health education programme so that it meets the needs of the children and looks after their interest.

Initially, some research was done to find out what the actual health-problems were, what approach would work best and what suitable teaching-tools were available.

Based on the outcomes of this research a series of eight lessons has been worked out and a pilot is now being carried out to see what the results are.

It became clear that issues such as personal hygiene, nutrition and sexual health still form the background of many health-problems that street children face. Children lack awareness and knowledge of risks that a poor condition brings and need guidance in maintaining good health. This means that those topics are the core of the health-programme. As for existing teaching-tools, not many are suitable for street children.

As their health-problems are mainly street-related the lessons should fit in with the situation the children are in, and advice must be realistic. This means we are now adapting some tools and are developing new ones. Since many of the children are illiterate or semi-literate pictures and other visual aids are used. We also plan to include drama in the programme.

Staff involved in health-education has been introduced to the new lessons and are trying them out. In the process we evaluate every lesson and decide how we can adapt it further for the different groups we work with (e.g. the children at Hopeland, young children, girls).

Soon we will move to the streets and carry out an experiment with street-corner-education. If this is successful we will expand

the programme further and teach regularly in the streets.

LIBRARY

A small library has been built in the compound. Children are given the opportunity to read and view pictures. Many show interest in reading but also in the computers, which have been placed in the room. Children can play educative games and at times five to six children are giving each other advice as how to play the games. Since this activity is very successful we have decided to expand the library next year. An organisation, Wings of Support, from the KLM has approved our application and so we are able to realise this wish. The library also contains text books for staff and reports relating to street and working children.

EDUCATION AT HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE.

At Hopeland there are a variety of educational activities. In the newly constructed classroom the children can learn reading, writing, mathematics, English and music.

Health education classes are held twice weekly and follow the pattern developed for the Refuge.

The new classroom/ recreation room is a great improvement. It will now be possible to start a small library where children will have an opportunity to improve their reading.

Outside the classroom, the children are involved in drama and sports. These serve the purpose of entertainment as well as education.

FRIDAY ENTERTAINMENT.

On Fridays the children are encouraged to entertain themselves. The participation and response is very encouraging. The children can exhibit their potential when it comes to competition and performances such as dancing, singing and drama. With these activities their confidence and self-esteem improves. Once a month the cultural group perform.

SPORTS.

There are facilities for sports activities at CAS. There are two table tennis tables, a volleyball pitch, a bowling track, Basketball can be played in the compound. Twice a week we take the children to a football field at the Salvation Army Park nearby. 15 to 20 children join for this activity. Every month CAS invites school teams to play a volleyball or football match against the CAS children. We are also planning to take the children to sporting events on a three monthly basis.

During the coming year we want to set up a more professional sports programme and contact has been made with persons

who can assist us.

The children can also play indoor games such as Ludo, draughts, aware etc at the House of Refuge.

CAS/FAN MILK LTD LITERACY PROGRAMME FOR VENDORS

The literacy programme of CAS for vendors of Fan Milk Ghana Ltd, aims among other things to improve the reading and writing skills of vendors who have attained some level of formal education and also to teach others who are illiterate. The programme, which started in March 1995, has a syllabus, which covers English Language, Mathematics and general knowledge. Trained literacy facilitators are assigned to specific depots to teach the vendors.

Life skill training and health education are also undertaken. For those with sufficient knowledge basic information about small-scale business is included in the syllabus.

Participation by the vendors has been encouraging and they have contributed positively to discussions.

DEMONSTRATION DEPARTMENT.

The demonstration department gives an opportunity for children to try various trades, such as weaving, candle-making, ceramics and carving as well as simple drawing, painting and handicrafts. These activities help the children get used to a working venture and develop an interest in their future. They form part of their preparation for sponsorship. In the new Refuge each activity has its own room, which is a great improvement. The children receive an introduction to the trades. CAS does not fully train them but if children are interested they can be sent for further training.

Some ex-street children have been employed. They work under the supervision of staff instructors.

CAS attends to bazaars and exhibitions to sell items made. However, this is not the main reason for attending. First of all we want to be there to create an awareness of street children and to show that they are capable of producing nice items. CAS does not make any profit from the sale of these items. Children produce them and before good products emerge many trial items have been made and recycled.

FIELDWORK.

Fieldworkers go to the street every morning to meet the

children, get to know them, gain their trust and help and advise them where possible. Children are told about the Refuge and some decide to visit. Other children never come or make an occasional visit but continue to interact with the fieldworkers on the street.

The fieldwork activities have changed tremendously over the years. This is due to several factors.

The number of street children has grown from an estimated 4,000 in 1992 to over 17,000 in December 2000. In the past it was much easier for a street child to find a job. Now the jobs are very competitive. The result is that the older children exploit the younger ones. In particular the situation for the girls has changed to such an extent that many opt for the sex trade. During the day you do not see the girls, at night they are very active. Those involved in the sex trade stay at particular areas in town and do not want to come to the Refuge. Some of them take drugs as an encouragement.



Accra city has changed as well over the years. Commercial areas are forbidden areas for street children. The town authorities have become more strict especially in market areas. At times we wonder whether some of their staff are educated about the rights of children, because we question the way they carry out their duties.

The number of street children varies according to seasons. In the rainy season more are in the town than for instance during the Christmas season. There is a growing migration movement within the city, which makes it more difficult to interact with the children.

Because of these changes, CAS has realised that their fieldwork activities also have to change. We have to concentrate on particular areas in town where many children live and operate. At the end of 2000 the fieldworkers undertook a head count to help determine the most useful areas for them to work. Mini refuges or Meeting points will be created in these areas so that the children will have a place to meet the fieldworker. Street corner education will take place at these places.

SPONSORSHIP SCHEME.

The sponsorship scheme of CAS started in 1995. Many children have benefited from this scheme. It is not easy to place street children because we have to send them to schools and workshops at very different levels. Some children are in kindergarten, some in primary school others in secondary schools, poly technical schools, vocational schools and one is at university. Most children are 14 or 15 years before they make up their mind to opt for education. They are usually too old to follow formal education and this explains why most of the children follow apprenticeship training. Here again we have the “difficulty” that they can opt for so many different trades. While some learn the traditional trades, others learn to work with computers or learn electronics.

Requirements from workshops as well as from school are very high. Often we are not able to fulfil all the requirements because we have our limits. The children in apprenticeship training also receive a complete set of tools at the end of their training. We have included this in the costs of sponsorship because we hope that those trained will start their own business or find a job.

Children who follow the sponsorship programme leave the street and we help them to find accommodation either in a boarding school or in a rented room close to the training centre. These children also receive a daily feeding allowance, pocket money and medical care. Half of the cost for sponsorship is for this

living allowance.

FOLLOWUP WORK.

A member of staff, a supervisor, assists all children who are in training. (S)he visits the training place at least once a month to assess the training and to find out how the child is managing in the new situation. (S)he interviews the child as well as the trainer. Of late a follow-up coordinator assists the supervisors. The follow-up work is very difficult and during the coming year we will try to improve it so that the children really benefit from the assistance of a CAS worker. We will also try to identify areas where improvement can be made in the preparation of the children.

HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE.

Children who are preparing for the sponsorship scheme and are not yet ready, are sent to Hopeland Training Centre which provides residential accommodation.. It is a big step for the street children. They not only leave the streets, but the town life as well. They stay at Hopeland between 6 to 9 months. At Hopeland, they work with animals such as chickens, pigs, rabbits and ducks, they follow lessons in ceramics and candle making and attend literacy classes and health education.

Not all children who pass through Hopeland are sponsored. It is a centre where staff have an opportunity to know the children well. Some do not go to a school or workshop but return to the main refuge where the children are given more time to prepare themselves.

Recently, a classroom/ recreation hall has been built and the contractor has started with a new office block. When they are finished the infrastructure of Hopeland will be complete and we hope many children will benefit from it.

The farm as an agric centre should be self-reliant in a few years time. Of late we have experienced a number of setbacks.

The swine disease affected the farm, the layers did not produce as expected, and the broilers did not grow well. Most of the problems at the farm are attributed to lack of rain over the past three years.

Another factor is the high inflation rate of the Cedi. Although there are no problems in selling the products of the farm, the profit margin is very low due to the inflation rate. We hope of course that during the coming years things will improve.

MEETINGS

Heads of departments meet monthly with the Director and senior staff. They review progress, discuss new developments and plans and ensure a co-ordinated approach. Heads also hold monthly meetings with their departments. Departments check their performance against their yearly plan and budget and are told about the progress and plans of other departments.