

ProjectsAbroad



HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE

MONTHLY REPORT - GHANA

JUNE 2012



SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT UPDATES

Community Police Unit Training – In 2011 PAHO was extremely involved in the training of Community Watch Committees. Established by the Community Police Unit, these groups have been registered as civilian police for their areas. Recently it was brought to our attention that further training was necessary as a follow up on how the committees performed last year. Over June PAHO held meetings with the Police to discuss presentations and how to go forward.

Feedback/ Next Steps: Over July we will visit three communities to meet and train the committees there.

Human Rights Focal Training - PAHO provides training to teachers across Greater Accra to educate them on the protection and rights of the child. In June we lead two training sessions. Normally conducted with a member of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Police, the training does not only cover domestic violence but also labour, trafficking, maintenance and corporal punishment.

Feedback/ Next Steps: This project runs successfully. The biggest challenge is addressing corporal punishment which is still widely exercised in Ghana. Our team continuously try to come up with culturally sensitive approaches to address the problem.



Osu Juvenile Remand Project - Over the month of June PAHO sent two teams of volunteers into a local, governmental run remand centre which hosts girls on correctional detention and boys in remand. The purpose of these weekly visits was to educate the past-perpetrating children on human rights, responsibilities and how to avoid criminal activity.



Feedback/ Next Steps: With the addition of a social worker who will join us in July, our team are hoping to develop the lessons into a mentoring programme for both facilities. Volunteers have been discussing classes on self-image, sexual health family planning etc.

Human Rights Clubs - PAHO continues to run human rights clubs in two of Accra's largest secondary schools. These clubs aim to promote human rights advocacy by empowering and informing the student bodies through weekly clubs for a period of 5weeks.

Feedback/ Next Steps: The students have one more session to hold before they prepare for a human rights debate. These programmes are very interactive; the children are noticeably more knowledgeable and enthusiastic than the beginning of their time with us.



School Advocacy - Over June, PAHO continued to host school advocacy programmes to inform children about their rights and responsibilities relating to domestic violence. The programmes involved a series of fun and interactive sketches played out by our volunteers to highlight the different types of domestic violence and how to resolve the problem.

Feedback/ Next Steps: This programme runs well and consistently. Children are very interested and will participate in a quiz in July to monitor their retention (and to have fun).

LEGAL/PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENTS

Over the month of June we were lucky to have two professional psychologists working with us at PAHO to assist in resolving human rights abuses and help support their victims.

Sandy Jay arrived at the end of May and was placed in a governmental run children's home which cares for 'abused children' and juvenile perpetrators. Here, Sandy provided training to the local staff on child development and behavioral management. Sandy gave a similar training programme to the staff of 'Touch a Life' home for victims of child trafficking. Sandy's work will continue over the month of July when a professional social worker will be joining us and continuing the good work already started.



Patrice Van Zimmeren has been our lead social working volunteer on the Campaign against Child Trafficking. Even though the Campaign has come to a close Patrice has decided to remain in Kete Krachi and continue her work in 'Village of Life' shelter. Patrice interacts with both staff and children daily, provides training on child development and protection to the staff of the home and a team of the local hospital's nurses. Patrice counsels the children in the care of Village of Life. Alongside her work on child development, Patrice has also trained the local prison service on mental health and stability (rehabilitation of prisoners is difficult due to a lack of resources).

RESEARCH

Sodom and Gomorrah Slum - In the month of June the team entered Sodom and Gomorrah slum for a guided tour. Sodom and Gomorrah is Accra's largest slum where the population reaches somewhere between 80 and 100,000. Since our visit we have been researching potential projects which we could launch in the wayward area.

Feedback/ Next Steps: Slum work has always been an area of interest to many volunteers. Having little support from the Government it will be important to pick a project which can be successful. The next visit is scheduled for the first week of July.



Politics and Governance - With Ghana's Governmental Elections coming up in December, a team of volunteers with Political backgrounds and studies have been put together to prepare for a research project in July. They have begun their initial fact finding missions to determine what the focal objective of their research should be.

Feedback/ Next Steps: Although this is not an area we normally work in the volunteers have been happy with the opportunity to really use their skills and knowledge. Parliamentary visits will begin over July.

OTHER

Launch of Amnesty International Annual Report - On the 12th of June, a group of our volunteers represented PAHO at the launch of Amnesty International Annual Report.



International Day against Torture - On the 26th of June the International Community celebrated the UN's Day against Torture. The Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice hosted Ghana's festivities with a symposium to mark the event. PAHO's entire office attended.

Photo Campaign against Child Trafficking - To keep the momentum of the Campaign against Child Trafficking going, a group of PAHO volunteers were interested to join in a Photo Campaign. Towards the end of June we decided on a slogan which would have the Projects Abroad Logo above, 'I'm against Child Trafficking, are you?' Over July we will begin to take pictures of people holding the poster to begin a solidarity social network movement.

