



Monthly Review of PAHO, Ghana

October, 2012

1) Overview

Social Justice	Legal and Professional Placements
Community Advocacy	1 Psychologist: KeteKrachi
School Advocacy	2 Social Workers: Social Welfare facility
Human Rights Focal Training	Research
Juvenile Remand Project	Politics and Governance
Human Rights Clubs	Individual research on Witchcamps and Child Trafficking

Social Justice

Community Advocacy

During the community advocacy session a group of 2 volunteers went to Dodowa to carry out a fact-finding mission. Once arrived, they sat down with an assembly man to discuss human rights abuses within 'his' community. Quite fast the issue of parental neglect/responsibilities came up. Children are being sent out every day by their parents to make money in order to provide for the family. After this short, but interesting, meeting we went along to a nearby school to discuss the matter with some teachers.

Next steps/Comments:

During November the involved volunteers will come up with an action plan to find the most efficient way to address the community regarding parental responsibilities and the importance of education for their children. The date put forward is the 21st of November.

School Advocacy

During the month of October volunteers had some school advocacy sessions in the areas of Tema, Tenashie and Abokobi. I went along to Abokobi where three volunteers visited a school to give half an hour presentation on the children's rights and responsibilities. The volunteers had the attention of the class, boys and girls around the age of 10 to 16, and gave a solid presentation. Afterwards they received a lot of questions which indicated the sessions are engaging a human rights debate within the minds of Ghanaian youth. The Tenachi session was shortly briefed to me by one of the volunteers. It was a bit less successful since the poor attention of the classroom. However, when the topic of domestic violence came up the response was overwhelming.

Next steps/comments:



For the moment it's not clear whether the school advocacy projects are still coming off in November. In case so, the volunteers will have to reflect on their strategies for classroom management and brainstorm how the delicate issues of human rights best can be presented.

Human Rights Focal Training

Human Rights focal training is another of the projects I sadly didn't have the chance to visit. Then again, during my weekly meetings with the volunteers I received feedback on how they experienced the session. We had two sessions in October which were the final ones on a total of eight in which the volunteers had been visiting schools to carry out presentations on corporal punishment. Despite the fact that it's not always easy for volunteers to go and sort of 'lecture' how local teachers should withhold of the use of a cane, it is a very important thing to do. The volunteers also felt that their presentation was getting better every single session, which in the long run will be very important to create understanding towards the subject and their valuable work. As Anna used to say, nothing comes from nothing.

Next Steps/Comments:

Very important for these kind of delicate topics/set-ups are the impact assessment sessions that will be coming off in November. Volunteers will go back to 2 of the schools where the teachers trainings had been taken place to evaluate the impact. From there on we can analyse what needs to be adjusted in order for us to assure we keep on moving forward and we keep on running worthwhile projects.

Juvenile Remand

Osu's Social Welfare complex is a temporary home for juvenile boys and girls who have perpetrated the law and are either on detention or awaiting sentence from the courts. For the past few months PAHO volunteers have been visiting the complex three times a week. Over October these interactions focused on academic and social development of the juveniles. Lessons were given in English and Math as well as drug abuse, alcoholism and self-esteem.

Next Steps/ Comments: As last monthly review indicated the academic and social lessons have been on-going during October. The monitoring didn't come off because volunteers, especially the PRO-volunteers, raised questions on the attainability of this program. Also the work doesn't seem to suit our Human Rights volunteers who don't spend enough time at the centre to actually put such a program together. Much more feasible would be to take this up with our social workers. However, they indicated that they're working on a framework to train the teachers at the centre and would rather concentrate on developing that since eventually better trained teachers will be in the benefit of the children's standard and needs. Currently we also have an intern, Robert Gijbels, working in the boys remand centre. Developing this monitoring system might become one of his tasks during his 5 month stay here.

Human Rights Club

During the start of October the second human rights club of the term was held in Accra High. The topic covered was on the conflict in Syria in which the students had to take a decision on resolve supposing they were the UN Security Council. Unfortunately the remaining sessions



this month had to be cancelled due to a jubilee and a public holiday. We'll continue hosting the sessions throughout November.

Next Steps/Comments: I can only agree on Septembers comments. The volunteers absolutely seem to love this project, so I'm looking forward to attending one myself.

Legal/ Professional Placements

Social Welfare Facility

At the moment 2 professional social workers are working on a framework to develop play therapy at the centres. This is something unknown within the centres methods so Hanneke and Laura are working very patiently in developing and tailoring the framework to the needs and sensitivities of a Ghanaian context. They have been scheduling meetings with the Director of the centre and also had some Skype calls with a previous PRO-volunteer, Sandy Jay, to discuss and receive feedback on their ideas.

Next steps/comments

Strengthened by the positive feedback, the girls will carry on with developing their framework and start researching behavioural management. They'll also be going down to the centre on a more frequent base in order to build up a relationship with the teachers, since the framework intends at some point to start training the teachers on play therapy.

Research

Politics and Governance

After being rescheduled 2 times, the press conference finally came off on the 31st of October. The press conference was conducted in order to present the results of a research project previous volunteers had been carrying out. Throughout several months they went into local communities to find out the perception towards women in politics. The volunteers who presented were never part of the research stage, but were motivated to finish the hard work from earlier volunteers.

Next Steps/ Comments:

This press conference marked the end of a long term research project. For the moment there won't be any follow up, but the press conference was a platform in order to get ourselves known with local partners. There should be a press release coming up about the press conference. As soon as this happens I'll make a post on the facebook page. I guess that past volunteers will be pleased to see that their work has been carried out to the final stage and received the attention that it deserved.

Individual research

Near the end of October two Dutch girls, Lisanne and Isabel, arrived to carry out an individual research. The end product is partially meant as their graduation assignment, but should also be useful for PAHO as an office. Lisanne is thinking to develop a booklet concerning Child Trafficking and Isabel was looking into developing a presentation in relation with her



research on the witch camps. We also try to involve the girls as much as possible, given the timeframe and workload of their research, within our social justice projects.

Next steps/comments:

Throughout November the girls will have several meetings to collect data on their research subjects. For this they'll also have to travel most of Ghana since the witch camps are located in the North and most of the child trafficking is taking place in the Volta-region where the trafficked children are being used within the fishing industry. PAHO is supporting the research of the girls in every possible way (providing information, setting up meetings ...) since we acknowledge the importance of their work for future purposes within our Human Rights advocacy programmes.

2) Conclusion

My general perception of October tends to be positive. The volunteers were also very happy with the infrastructural improvements that have been made at PAHO by the purchase of a generator (very much needed since the high amount of power cuts) and the air-conditioning that got fixed in most of the rooms. Thank you!

I'm looking forward to experience the dynamics of the new projects that will be starting up in November. Having daily outreaches keeps the volunteers focussed, busy and enhances their experience in terms of cultural exchange. Being out of the office brings the volunteers inside the daily lives of the Ghanaian people and exposes them to human rights issues, which can be inspiring for the developing of our projects. I hope this is something PAHO will keep on providing on a frequent base for our volunteers.

Jon