

**Help & Shelter / EU
Child Protection Project
Project Coordinator's Report – April 2011**

Overview:

This report encompasses the strategic roll out of the Child Protection Project Plan in the target Communities of Zeelugt, Hague, Sophia and Good Hope, during the month of April 2011. The report includes feedback, results of monitoring and other supplementary aspects of evaluation and Project impact.

The requested follow up Parenting Sessions within the faith based groups continued in the Community of Zeelugt. Counseling sessions in Zeelugt progressed while in response to the national and school holidays project Action in Hague and Good Hope have been reschedule to the month of May. Counseling in Sophia will continue with the reopening of Schools in May.

During this reporting period the counseling case load in Zeelugt has been reduced due to strategic assessment of cases by the CCCs. The project team also decided to refer some counseling cases from Good Hope to Help and Shelter, and to close cases already referred to the CPA and Schools Welfare Department.

The first Community Reporting Meeting was held in Zeelugt. Several interventions were also executed, and the details captured in this report.

1. To raise awareness of Child Protection issues and alternative ways of parenting in a non-violent environment.

- o The follow up parenting session which was requested by the Zeelugt Majid was held on Friday 8th April. This session was open to men, women and children and was mobilized by the Community Liaison. **(See Annex 1)**
- o Parenting skills education session was held with the Zeelugt Baptist Church women's group on Wednesday 13th April. This session was attended by women from the church and other from within the community. **(See Annex 2)**, for report.

2. Introduction of standard protocols for care givers – Teachers, nurses, day care staff, by enhancing their ability to recognize and give correct responses in cases of child abuse.

The training sessions with the nurses from the Guyana Nurses Association, which commenced in March was completed .Reviews from the nurses trained in those sessions were highlighted in a press release. **(See Annex 3)**, for report.

3. Empowering children and Families to report child abuse and offering of counseling and court support services for affected children.

- o Counseling sites in Both Sophia and Zeelugt operable. **(See Annex 4 & 5)**, for CCCs Reports.
- o Home visits by CCCs enhancing the method of approach.
- o Foster care for Three (3) more children.

4. Creating an effective network of persons and organizations within the target community communities.

- o The first Community reporting meeting held with the community stakeholders and beneficiaries on Saturday 16th April. **(See Annex 6)**, for report.
- o Compliments of Childlink Inc. The Child protection Project has received for dissemination copies of the new edition of Parenting hand books, strengthening organizational support and networking.
- o A business entity has agreed to produce a Child Abuse Poster for dissemination within the four (4) target communities.

Other Persons reached by the Project to Date:

- Forty Seven (47) Teachers.
- 87 Parents – Parenting sessions and home Visits.
- 21 youths (unmarried & without children).
- 3 Parents have benefited from interventions.
- Four Children in foster care.

Project Stats:

Statistical Table : Showing the number of Children engaged by the Child Protection Project

MONTH -2011	CURRENT CASELOAD	NEW CASE S	REFERRED FOR INTERVENTION	BE-SAFE TRAINED	OTHER SESSIONS	CASES CLOSED	TOTAL ENGAG ED
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
February	57*	7	15	55*	3*	5	115
March	77	18	11	55	13	0	145
April	53	0	13	0	3	21	56
May							
June							
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							

Most recognizable Project Impact:

- In response to the overall Report of project action within the community of Zeelugt, the Zeelugt community decided to form an Action Group to address the needs of children within the community and to proactively deal with other social and environmental issues affecting the community. The group comprise of members from the Mandirs, Masjid, the Christian churches, the PTA, the community policing Group and Youth group. A plan of action has been adopted and a subsequent meeting has been planned.
- There were four (4) cases of persons who took action and called the CPA hotline number to report known cases of child neglect and abuse taking place in their community. These

persons had received information on the responsibility of reporting children in high risk situations.

Challenges:

- Reluctance on the part of some adults to report cases of child abuse because they feel it affects community cohesion and confidentiality.
- Persons who have reported cases have complained that they have to do so several times before a response is made by the relevant agencies, so they feel that their efforts to help a child is sometimes not worth it.
- In one community the mobilizer is finding it very hard to gather persons for a parenting session because the culture of that community is that the male dictates how families are run, and in that particular community alcohol use / abuse is an issue among males.

Forecast of Project Activities:

- Counseling
- Parenting Sessions
- Dissemination of Posters and Fliers
- Project Board meeting
- Home Visits

Annex 1

Report

Follow up Parenting Session – Zeelugt Masjid

Friday 8th April 2011

Objective 1. Raising the awareness of Parents and Guardians on the ways of alternative methods of Parenting and non-violent discipline.

Overview

At the invitation and by the Leaders and women's group at the Zeelugt Masjid a follow up sessions was scheduled. Twenty two (22) persons attended consisting of ten (10) males, nine (9) Females and three (3) children. The topics explored in this interactive session were Alternative Parenting Methods and the difference between discipline and punishment. Most of the parents that participated, still felt that corporal punishment was still an applicable form of discipline but they also recognized that sometimes it doesn't work as children often do act contrary to what is expected. The participants also listed the problems that youths face in the community and some devious activities in which some were involved.

Reflections on early childhood

The group was encouraged to reflect on their early childhood experiences to see if it had influenced the way they parent their children. Though there was agreement that corporal punishment (licks) was the only type of discipline their parents meted out, children now were getting immune to that and were still indisciplined and reflected bad attitudes. Some comment that were made:

- Music was influencing children's behavior.

- Peers influence children more than the family.
- Children of the day don't take advice.
- Sometimes adults in the community are bad role models.
- Persons in the community are afraid to speak out about values.
- Parenting is a big job.
- Abuse in the homes cause children to accept violence as a way.
- The police not very helpful with issues that affect the welfare of children in the community.

The participants were then asked to reflect on the very comments which were posited. One very vocal member of the Masjid then summarised that he knows that licks was not the only way to reach and teach his children but he uses what he was exposed to as a child, he then promised to use more communication and encouraged others to do so because he knows that lots of the problems with children come because of how parents communicate.

Discipline and Punishment

The topic of the difference between discipline and punishment was introduced to the group. Most members of the group thought that discipline included some sort of punishment and sometimes children needed to be punished. The Facilitator then reminded the group that in the previous session a child had stated that she was "bad" because she fights with her brother and for that reason she gets licks. This concept she had of herself he suggested was because she got licks for an activity which was part of the process of growing up. Discipline the Facilitator explained was used to teach but in this case the child felt the pain of a few lashes and was not thought that in fighting with her brother someone could get hurt so they must be both careful how they entreat with each other. Participants all agreed that in growing up all children, get involved 'romping' but parents sometimes use punishment as a reaction, while discipline is when you give the children more attention, while helping them to assess their actions. This brought the discussion to the rights that should be guaranteed to every child. The group agreed that a child needed to be loved, cared for, given health care, attention, shelter and be free from abuse.

Reporting Child Abuse

The facilitator reminded the participants that it was the responsibility of all to report once they know that a child is at risk or has been abused. If for some reason a person thinks that their safety is at stake then they should find someone who is confidential to give the information to so that a

child can receive the protection and care of the CPA which has the vested authority to do so. Some of the participants then interjected that in the community that was a hard task because people were generally afraid to report cases because of confidentiality issues. Some comments:

- Domestic violence is still a regular occurrence in the community but women are afraid to speak out and don't have the confidence in the system.
- It will take time for persons to find the courage to report child abuse and DV.
- The community needs outside help and force to help the women and children.
- It's alleged that Youths are involved in delinquency, gambling and smoking and it seems like nothing can be done.
- Parenting information needs to reach more homes.

Feedback and evaluation Comments by Participants

- The project was a good one for the Community, but it will take time to reach all target groups
- The community has to find ways to support the project
- The religious groups will be willing to work with the Project Team to reach out.
- Shops selling alcohol to children needs to be targeted
- The youths need some programmes and activities to uplift them.
- Police support is needed to deal with some children cases
- Participants said they now had a better understanding what the rights of a child are.
- The difference between Discipline and Punishment now clearer.
- Non- violent discipline can be used as a tool for teaching children how to behave.
- The information on the poster is simple and understandable.
- Need more sessions.

Submitted by: Colin Marks- Project Coordinator

Annex 2

Report

Parenting Session – Zeelugt Baptist Church Women’s Group

Facilitator: Colin Marks

Date: Wednesday 13th April 2011

Objective 1. Raising the awareness of Parents and Guardians on the ways of alternative methods of Parenting and non-violent discipline.

Overview

A Parenting Skills Session was held with the women’s group from the Zeelugt Baptist church at the request of the Pastor’s wife. Sixteen (16) women attended the session, fourteen were mothers and they all mentioned that this was their first Parenting session. The group leader Ms Yvette Roberts welcomed the Facilitator and community project liaison and expressed gratitude for the opportunity the parents in the group would get to share and learn things that would raise their awareness on effective parenting. A poster depicting the various types of abuse was also used to introduce to discuss the issue of child protection and the responsibility of persons to report instances of abuse that may occur in the community once they are aware.

Interactive session

Using reflections on early childhood experiences, the group was encouraged to look at their childhood experiences. In their reflections it was noted that thirteen (13) of participants mentioned that they experienced to some form of abuse. Their comments were:

- My mother beat me with any thing she got her hands on
- Mother and father had many fights
- I got lashes for everything
- Father got drunk frequently and would put the family out of the house
- I was abused in every for over twelve years
- Food was always a problem in the home
- Many time I had to kneel down and face the wall
- Never saw my parents sit and chat with each other
- I grew up with both parents
- My parent stopped fighting after a while
- As children we broke up a fight between our parents

Other experiences included Domestic violence, alcohol use/ abuse, abandonment and molestation. The open sharing within the group opened up the participants understanding of how early childhood experiences influence a persons self concept. One parent opined that after going through a tough childhood she decided she wanted to do better when she got her children but she still was overwhelmed when it came to dealing with her children without beating them as a method of discipline. She would also beat when she was angry over other things. Other parents echoed the same sentiment.

The facilitator then opened a discussion on the difference between Discipline and Punishment using the stated experiences of individual parents and comparing the effects it would have on their own children now. Early childhood development stages were explained, using the S.P.I.C.E dimensions to demonstrate how the child is shaped from different areas as they grow.

Child Protection and Rights

One parent shared that it is difficult for her to understand how to communicate with her children because she thought her parents beat her because they wanted to protect her. The facilitator then explained the only way to protect the child was to make sure the child grows with nurturing,

health care, attention, education, and making sure the child is not abused in any way or exposed to violence. Using a Poster as a reference the group discussed what the rights of a child meant and they all agreed that it was really what a child needs to grow and develop properly. The CPA hotline number (temporary) was then circulated and parents were advised that it was their responsibility to report cases of abuse, or where a child was exposed to a risky situation.

Comments after the session concluded:

- Parents should not beat for everything a child does
- The community needs more mentors
- I believe in licks but it can't solve everything
- I like the part about SPICE
- Parent need to become models for their children
- I learned a lot of interesting things
- We need more follow up sessions
- I will try some of what I learn but I need the support of my husband

Submitted by Colin Marks – Project Coordinator, Child Protection Project

Annex 3

Report of the Child Protection Training for members of the Guyana Nurses Association

Duration: Four weekly sessions on 23 March, 30 March, 6 April and 13 April 2011 at the GNA Hall.

The Guyana Nurses Association and Help & Shelter continued the relationship to orient nurses in child protection awareness as part of their Continuing Nursing Education programme. The Child Protection Training has become more urgent now that the Protection of Children Act of 2009 makes it mandatory for health care professionals to report cases when they think that children are in need of protection.

There were 25 participants at the first session and at the final session there were 20 participants. Most persons attended all four sessions. The participants asked that the sessions be held in consecutive weeks. Some of the participants who had come the first week had completed previous sessions. The nurses were drawn from Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Davis Memorial Hospital and St Joseph Mercy Hospital. The final session included two social workers from GPHC.

Ms Concheeta Gray from the Childcare and Protection Agency (CPA) led an interactive discussion during the final session to discuss the role of the agency and its operations.

Learning Objectives :-

The objectives of the sessions were organised so that by the end, participants should be expected to

- Define child abuse and explain their role in preventing child abuse.
- Recognise cultural and personal factors which may hinder appropriate interventions in cases of child abuse.
- Identify physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse.
- Learn some skills to interact with child survivors of abuse
- Discuss some ways to prevent child abuse
- Understand the legal framework for reporting child abuse

The participants also listed the following as questions they hoped to be answered by the end of the training sessions :-

- Who will protect the nurses when they make the reports? How safe is the reporter?
- What is the time frame before investigation is done?
- Different signs to look for in an abused child
- How would you know when a child is being abused?
- What are the forms of abuse?
- What is the role of schools?
- What is the role of private clinics?
- What age can children access care at health facilities without adult – abuse situations?
- How to deal with the protocols as it deals with child abuse?
- What information is needed to make the report?

- What is going on in the schools?
- How to deal with the mixed signals – if child changes story eg?
- How to detect abuse in a child?
- When a child is moved, are there follow ups being done?
- How much counselling sessions are done with the child?
- Will there be follow up from CPA?
- What do we do after making the report – send the child back?

Methodology

The methodology followed the one established by the Facilitator Resource Kit for Training Nurses in Child Protection available from <http://www.hands.org.gy/nursesresourcekit>.

All sessions were intended to be participatory and interactive, and to also draw on participants' experiences with child abuse prevention and detection. Participants were allowed to discuss their personal views, and worked in small groups and in plenary. The time allowed for some analysis of opinion statements and the case studies. The discussions were active. Handouts were provided for reference.

Evaluation

The evaluation sheets were submitted by the participants. The evaluation results are organised by the questions.

1. Did you understand the information presented?

Most persons answered **yes** with others saying somewhat.

2. Did you learn new ideas or skills?

Most of the participants said that they learnt new ideas and skills.

3. Meeting the objectives of the sessions

Most of the participants indicated that they felt that the objectives of the sessions were met, most indicating a definite Yes answer, with the others 'Somewhat'.

6. Did you like the way the sessions were facilitated?

All of the participants answered yes,

7. What was your favourite part of this session?

Most of the participants appreciated that they could have group discussions and interaction. Several topics were also listed as learning for individual participants.

8. What did you not like about the session?

Most persons said that they did not have anything that they disliked about the session. Some noted the following :-

- The limitation of time, the time was too short
- the heat and noisy environment was inhibiting
- the late arrivals were distracting

9. How could the sessions be improved?

Some participants indicated that the use of videos would be helpful, and an interaction with a survivor of child abuse would have improved the session. Some also said refreshment should be provided.

10. How will you use the knowledge you have gained?

Most persons said they would pass the knowledge on to peers, family members, parents and would also be more aware of how they are dealing with issues of child abuse.

Concluding Remarks

The attendance for four consecutive weeks resulted in greater attendance from the nurses. Some nurses had some knowledge, but were not fully aware of their responsibilities under the Protection of Children Act.

Submitted by

Vidyaratha Kissoon, Help & Shelter

15 April, 2011

Annex 4

Child Protection Project

Child Care Counselor Report for the month of April , 2011

Counseling:

Number on Case load twenty (20), Child Care Agency one (1) case referred, Number of new cases (0)

Parenting Session

The monthly sessions held at the Zeelugt Health Centre was rescheduled for May 19th, 2011. A visit was made to the Health Centre on April 21st, on this day no parent was present, the Nurse advice that our next visit should be done earlier in the morning.

One to one session was held with four (4) parents in the Zeelugt area, addressing issues on alternative discipline methods. A parent shared how happy she is to learn new ways to deal with her daughter besides beating her for everything, she further shared she is now teaching her husband the new methods we shared.

Another parent was visited by the CCC and the project coordinator. The parent explained how he looks forward for the weekly visits and further shared how helpful the information is to him being a single parent father with two girls.

Home Visits

A total of eight (8) homes visits were made for this month one (1) in the Sophia area and seven (7) in Zeelugt. One (1) additional home was visited for placement for a child who is in need of care and protection.

Impact

Due to intervention by CCC and the Child Care Agency three (3) children in need of care and protection were placed into a home. The children were visited at the home by the CCC and was seen playing in the spacious yard surrounded by fruit trees. The past two visits made to the children's mother home she has been seen sober, she explained how happy she is to have the children under the care of the other woman, and thanked us for helping her find a proper home for them. The mother of the children asked us to continue visiting her and talk to her to help her better care for her baby.

Submitted by

Chabela Lord

Child Protection Project

Child Care Counselor's Report for April, 2011

Counseling:

No counseling sessions were held at the Sophia Special and Primary schools for the month of April due to end of term exams and closure of school.

- Total Caseload thirty-three (33) of which Seventeen (17) cases are counseling, Thirteen (13) cases with Child Protection and three (3) cases are monitoring.

- A total of twenty-one (21) cases were closed for the following Reasons:
 - o Intervention was done by the CPU and Probation & Family Welfare.
 - o Children no longer attending the school. (School to follow up with the School's Welfare Department).
 - o Children who no longer needs to be monitored.

- Nine (9) children received counseling.
- New cases (0)
- Referrals (0)

Home Visits:

The homes of ten (10) children were visited: six (6) in Zeelugt and four (4) in Sophia.

Parenting Session:

One to one sessions held with three (3) parents addressing issues such as alternative discipline methods, parent/child conflicts and family relations.

Awareness Session:

Help & Shelter was once again invited to conduct awareness sessions on social issues at the Annual Wildlife festival which was held from the 15th to 18th April, 2011 at Annai in Region Nine. This Annual festival features children ages 12-18 yrs from over fifteen youth groups in the North and South Rupununi competing against each other in various activities such as Art, Poetry, Impromptu Speech, Physical, Dance, Band and Cultural presentations. Social issue topics “Substance Abuse and the Effects on the Family” and “The Effects of Domestic Violence on the Child/Children” were presented by Ms Karen Gomes and me respectively. The sessions were very interacting and persons requesting addition information and contact numbers. It is important to note that from the information gathered, domestic violence, child sexual abuse and substance abuse are prevalent within the communities, however resources such as counseling sites, protective custody are not available in this region. Brochures on information such as child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse etc were distributed to the participants.

Prepared and submitted:

Karen Shaw

Child Care Counselor

Annex 6

Report

Zeelugt Community Reporting Meeting

Saturday 16th April 2011

Overview:

The Child Protection Project hosted its first Community Feedback Meeting in Zeelugt. Zeelugt was the first Community to be Launched by the Project and this Meeting was very strategic for the monitoring and evaluation of the community response and impact.

A total of six (6) Parenting sessions were held within Zeelugt over a ten week period.

The reporting meeting was attended by Twenty six (26) persons. Representatives of the various groups who attended were from:

- Shree Rama Krishna Mandir
- Zeelugt Masjid
- Latchmie Saba Group
- Zeelugt Primary PTA
- Youth of Tomorrow Club
- Zeelugt Baptist Church
- Zeelugt Cricket Club
- Community Policing Group

Parents and school students also attended.

The project coordinator presented a report of the Project activities which were rolled out over the first three months of the project.

Objective 1: Raising awareness of Parents and Guardians on alternative parenting methods and non violent discipline.

- Sessions were held with the Faith based groups (Muslims, Hindus and Christian)
- Parents at the Health Centre
- One on one sessions with parents
- Dissemination of literary and non literary materials within the community

Objective 2. Introducing Standard protocol for Health care providers Training in child abuse and recognizing cases of abuse in the health care system.

- Nurses via Guyana Nurses Association receive Training in Child abuse education.

Objective 3. Empowering children and families through counseling support services

- Two counseling sites established in Zeelugt
- Children reintegrated in the school system
- Strengthening parent–child relations through home visits
- Foster care placement of child in vulnerable situation.

Objective 4. Creating a network of persons, agencies and organizations that work to effect attitude change response to child care, protection and the welfare of children in the target community.

- Network of persons, Faith-based and community groups are building stronger links in response to issues affecting child welfare and support within the community
- Reporting and referrals being made to agencies that protect children from abuse.

Community Action

Reflecting on the comments and expectation that were made during the community launch, the stakeholders present at the Meeting decided that the community needed to combine there efforts to really benefit from the Project outputs. This resolution resulted in the agreement to form the Zeelugt Action Group (ZAG). The sole object was to mobilize and establish a Action Plan and activities that would positively impact the children in the community. With the use of a flip chart and markers provided by the Project Team a list of Actions were listed to be the initial focus of the Action Group. An agreement was reached to set a date for a formal meeting and

establishment of the Zeelugt Action Group and the Project team has pledged to support the group as it widened the scope of impact within the community.

Further community interaction at the Reporting meeting culminated in an outline of strategies and plans by the Action Group and solid commitment was echoed by the parents and others.

In response to the evidence of young children in the community who have no formal after school activities and are daily involved in loitering, truancy, gambling and alcohol use, the Action Group listed a plan of action:

- Follow up a proposal to upgrade the Playfield in the community
- Street lights and extended telephone service
- Create a Youth friendly Space at the Field's Pavilion
- Engage the "one Lap Top Per Family" office to submit application for the community
- Funds available for an income generating project in the community(follow up needed)
- Engage shop owners and request them to stop selling alcohol and cigarettes to children
- Get the media coverage for serious challenges in the Community

Children Response

The members of the Youths of Tomorrow Club who were seven in number then presented a list of needs and tasked the Zeelugt Action Group with helping them to achieve their listed goals and requirements.

This list included:

- Drama and Dance Activities
- Reading Classes & Library
- Games (outdoor & indoor)
- Computer Classes
- Formation of a Recreational Club

The meeting concluded with the members of the community expressing high expectations and while recommitting to work with each other to impact the lives of the community's youth.

Submitted by Colin Marks – Project Coordinator, Child Protection Project