

Help & Shelter / EU
Child Protection Project
Project Coordinator's Report - February 2011

Overview:

The Child Protection Project which is strategically focused on empowering children and families, raising awareness on child related issues , enhancing the capabilities of health and care givers to report and recognize child abuse and networking in communities that harness safer environments for child and families from violence.

This reporting period covers the First Community Launch in Zeelugt, The launch was punctuated with in-depth interaction with those who attended, and some parents also remarked how timely the Project was for the community. The report also captures the other activities and engagements in the target communities. The intended impact of project implementation and the reflections of the people in the communities are also captured in this report.

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

*The first Parenting session was held in Zeelugt on Thursday 17th February. This session was requested by Ms. Deoworkie Sankar a resident in the community who always organizes women's activities. There was intense interaction on non- violent parenting methods, and though all the parents confessed to using corporal punishment as a form of discipline - "licks" does not really change children. The facilitator engaged the group of women in a discussion on the things that shape and influence a child's attitude and personality and introduced the five dimensions through which a child develops and the need for parents to recognize these stages. (**See Annex 1 for report**). The Participants were informed of their responsibility to report any incidence of abuse. Pictorial Posters and parenting handbooks were shared to the participants and the Childcare and Protection Agency Hotline Number was posted at the same shop where the session was held. Participants requested another session and it was scheduled for the following month.*

A parenting session was held at the Shree Rama Krishna Mandir on Saturday 26th February. This session was requested by the Latchmi Sabha, which is the women's group from the Mandir. This group of elderly women was very interested in methods of parenting which they said would equip them to deal with their young children who had now become parents, who they were finding it difficult to communicate with, especially on issues that related to parenting the grand children. The facilitator introduced the topic "examining early childhood" and "exploring self". The interaction on these topics caused some very emotional accounts by one particular participant, who at some time had to be consoled as she recounted her early life experiences. The influence of mass media was also posited by a participating parent. Information on reporting child abuse was given to the parents. There was a suggestion that the community's elderly need to benefit from counseling as some of them had some very painful early life experiences, which was now coupled with communication problems with their children, who were now parents too. **(see Annex 2 for report)** Printed material and handbooks were shared to the participants and the CPA hotline given.

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.

Handbooks on parenting and printed materials on child abuse and protection issues were placed at the Zeelugt Health Centre.

Guyana Nurses Association had agreed to incorporate in their training sessions, Child abuse detection and reporting procedures as part of training content. Dates for these sessions have been scheduled.

Child protection sessions are scheduled for parents who access health care at the Health outpost in Zeelugt.

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

A second counseling site has been identified in Zeelugt at the Primary school through the courtesy of the HM's understanding of the needs of the community's children.

Both Child Care Counselors are now working in two (2) Communities, Sophia and Zeelugt. The child care counselors also offer one on one parenting sessions for parents and coordinate support to children who need to be re-entered at school and parents with difficult circumstances. Alleged cases of Child abuse are assessed for authenticity prior to reporting to the CPA. To date 57 Children have been counseled on the Project. (CCC Reports Annex 3 & 4))

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

At the Community Launch in Zeelugt members of the PTA, Teachers, the faith based groups and the women's group have all committed to find common ground to deal with issues affecting children in the community. Through the CCCs work, especially with Parents there is increased understanding of how the government agencies also form part of a network that offers critical support once follow up is done. Links between the various groups in the community is evident especially among the women.

Persons reached by the Project to Date:

- To date the Project has engaged twenty eight (28) Teachers and an invitation for another session of the cluster group meeting has been requested and will be held March 8th at the Genevieve Primary School at Canal Number1.*
- 26 Parents - in parenting sessions and home Visits*
- 3 youths (unmarried & without children)*
- 3 Parents have benefited from interventions of the Project (got support from the Min. of Human Services, Min. of Housing and Food for The Poor).*

Project Impact:

The two Parenting sessions held in Zeelugt helped residents to focus on the status and needs of children in the community and there was one identifiable challenge, school age children who can be seen in the community just loitering, playing or gambling during school hours. Parents at both sessions also expressed the view that there is need for collaboration of parents, faith based organisations and others to find common ground in dealing with the root cause of issues that influence negative displays by the youths within the community. The information provided in the sessions also highlight to the parents how support and options can be explored with regard to getting out of school youths back into school, while the PTA was sited in the comments at the Community launch as having a vital role to play as part of a strong network that harness and protect children from vulnerable situations. Parents are much more sensitive to the actions that could be taken if they suspect a child is at risk or subject to abuse. This is largely due to the sharing of the CPA hotline number and they feel armed with relative information on how important Child Protection is to the general wellbeing of the community's youths.

Challenges:

Our CCCs had an encounter with a group of young men while traversing the Community. They observed the Counselors and noted that they were not from the community and engaged them in a somewhat confrontational manner, one of the group was clearly under the influence of alcohol, and he made physical contact with one of the Counselors. Having a Community Liaison assigned to accompany project personnel may be the only way to avoid any further incidences of this nature in the future.

In the absence of a Community Based Organization or NGO who may have helped to facilitate the cohesion of the various interest groups and persons. The Project team will have to mobilize groups to find a common action plan that involves empowerment of the children and youth in the community.

Community Launch:

The Community Launch for the Hague Community is scheduled for Saturday 5th March at the Hague Back Primary School.

Ms. Kala Seegopaul who runs a Children's group will access counseling service of the Project in Hague.

Project Plan:

A fore cast of Project activities

- o Community Launch*
- o Parenting session For Teachers*
- o Community Meeting*
- o Session with Guyana Nurses Association*
- o Dissemination of Printed materials*
- o Counseling sessions*
- o Production of Child Abuse Poster*

Project Coordinator
Colin Marks
March 01, 2011

Annex 1

Parenting Session

Facilitator: Colin Marks

Overview:

This Group of women were organized and selected for this session by Ms. Deowokie Sankar. She is a resident of Zeelugt who has a background in organizing women for various focus groups and skills engagements in the community. The persons who attended this session were Mothers and housewives, who could have only met at 10am Thursday 17th February 2011, as they had to take care of their daily routine chores at home. Two of the Participants, were young women who were actively involved in taking care of

their younger siblings. Also present was a child who accompanied her parent.

The session was held at a neighborhood shop owned by Ms. Sankar.

Topic: Raising the awareness of non-violent ways of parenting and alternative ways of discipline and Child protection issues.

After an introduction to the objectives of the Child Protection Project, the group was asked their opinion on whether licks were the best way to discipline children. The list of responses reflected:

- Sometimes licks don't work.*
- Children still don't hear.*
- Some children get accustomed to licks.*
- Some parents end up abusing their children.*
- Sometimes children get licks for very simple things.*
- Parents beat through frustration.*
- Parents beat because they too were beaten as a child*

After some interaction the participants were asked to examine the difference between discipline and punishment. There was total agreement that discipline meant to teach while punishment can cause resentment and sometimes confusion in a child's mind.

The facilitator then introduced a poster which illustrated what the different types of abuse were.

As participants and the Facilitator went through the depictions on the poster it became recognizable that the Child's Rights were really the Child's needs. There was in dept discussions and some parents remarked that they had not realized that children's need of Health, Education, Care, Attention, Safety, Supervision , Emotional attachment and leisure should always be a guarantee by the adults that are responsible for them.

Shapers:

Participants were then asked to discuss how abuse influence and shape negative reactions and attitudes in Children. The verbal reactions were:

- Most parents abuse because they have no knowledge.*
- Parents or adults just react to children without thinking.*
- Children would forget the abuse they suffer.*
- The level of education makes Parents abusive.*
- Sometimes alcohol plays a role.*
- The child grows up very angry.*

S.P.I.C.E:

Parents and children communication and relationships was then introduced as a talking point. Parents and the other participants who were not parents yet were advised how important it was to encourage their children to express their feeling without feeling either intimidated or fearful. The facilitator explained further that if children are encouraged to express themselves it makes it easier for them to disclose if they are at risk and been exposed to any form of abuse especially outside of the home. Understanding how to communicate with young children and also how they communicate to adults was also highlighted by the facilitators as the discussions and interactions continued.

*The Facilitator then introduced the five dimensions of development of young children: **S**ocial - **P**hysical-**I**ntellectual- **C**reative- **E**motional*

It was further explained that a child's early experiences influences how they adjust to their natural growth through puberty and adolescence and even to adulthood.

Also highlighted and agreed to by the participants was that an abused child is more likely to become an abuser or to continue to be abused well into their adult years.

Each participant was also given a Parenting handbook.

Reporting Child Abuse:

A few posters depicting the types of Child Abuse were placed at the neighborhood shop where the session was held and also posted up was the hotline number of the Childcare and Protection Agency.

- Participants were made aware that they have a right and responsibility to report any cases of child abuse or about any child in a vulnerable or at risk situation.
- Even if the hotline number is busy, hang up and call again.

Counseling Support:

Participants were informed of the counseling services the Child Protection Project offers and they were given the schedule of when the counseling site operates.

THE ORGANISER Ms. Sankar asked Facilitator to return for another session with the women and a date was tentatively agreed upon for another session.

Women's Group - Parenting Session

Thursday 17th February 2011 - Zeelugt

Facilitator - Colin Marks

Written Evaluation

Indicators	Outcomes	Comments
Materials use was clear and understandable.	100%	Both Literary and illustrative materials were used effectively.
Able to recognize a Child in an abusive situation.	60%	Participants identified cases that needed intervention
Support Child protection initiatives.	100%	Community needs the Project impact in the community
Know the CPA Hotline Number.	40%	CPA hotline number will be published in other public places.
Learned something new about Parenting.	90%	Learning to acknowledging new methods of parenting

<i>Increase sessions to spread the awareness.</i>	<i>90 %</i>	<i>More awareness sessions will build capacity</i>
<i>Understanding of how, and the responsibility to report a case of child abuse.</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>New information for most</i>
<i>Average Impact of the session</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>Invitation to do another session with group</i>

Verbal Comments at the conclusion of the session:

- 1. We have to be careful how we speak to our children*
- 2. I now know the types of child abuse*
- 3. I thought child rights would put children in trouble*
- 4. We got to train up our children*
- 5. Children are not too young to understand things*
- 6. Beat less and talk more to children*
- 7. Need to spread the information in the whole community*
- 8. Too much children out of school because of parents slackness*

List of Participants at Session

- 1) Bibi Zulika Khan - Parent*
- 2) Amanda Ali - Parent*
- 3) Deowokie Sankar- Organizer*
- 4) Jasmatie Arjune - Parent*
- 5) Rafeena Rahaman - Youth*

- 6) *Basmatie Rahaman - Parent*
- 7) *Sony Joeseeph - Youth*
- 8) *Gomatie Singh - Parent*
- 9) *Sheliza Ali - Parent*
- 10) *Baby Persaud - Parent*
- 11) *Shafena Inshan - Community liaison*
- 12) *Shirmeila jibson - Youth*

Colin Marks - Project Coordinator

Annex 2

Parenting Session

Facilitator: Colin Marks

Overview:

This session was requested by the Latchmie Saba, which is the women's group of the Shree Rama Krishna Mandir of Zeelugt. The group comprised of elderly women some of whom had attended the Community Launch of the Project. Their primary concern was that they wanted to be part of any initiative that addressed the issues of children and youths in their community.

Topic: Raising the awareness of non-violent ways of parenting and alternative ways of discipline and Child protection issues.

'The importance of good parenting' was introduced as a talking point by the facilitator, after he had explained how the Child Protection project was being implemented in the Communities.

Comments:

- *There is a big difference between how we were raised and the children of these days*
- *Sometimes young parents encourage child to misbehave*
- *We would like children to follow our foot steps*
- *Children need good parents to provide for them*
- *Children need to have good examples in adults*
- *When parents don't agree on how to raise the children the children end up spoiled*
- *Good parenting is about discipline.*

These were some of the comments by the parents in the session. What was observed by this group was that because of their age they all seemed to agree that children were not getting the parenting experience that they were exposed to. The members of the group explained that they find it hard to communicate with their grand children because it is even worse communicating with their own children who are grown.

The group was then asked to share on self and to examine how the past has the power to influence the present life. One member of the group began to share (she asked for her name not be published), how culture, teenage infatuation and bad communication with her parents pushed her into a life of abuse. The results of years of struggle, abuse and emotional issues has now affected the relationship with her children and grand children. She recounted in tears how she even considered suicide. Her out-pouring caused the other participants to request of the Facilitator to find some way of reaching other persons in the community with similar issues with counseling also, even though they were not children. However, when she was asked if she would see a counselor she was very apprehensive. (A one on one meeting is scheduled for her).The Chairman of the Mandir who was present posited that he was of the opinion that two (2) main factors were affecting parents in the community (1) Most of the children were living in an extended family situation, and the adults do not confirm to any particular method of parenting so the child is sometimes exposed to licks (beatings) as a quick fix

for discipline only. (2) The Media (television, Ads. music, and the cell phone) has negative influence.)

The facilitator then asked, what was the community's way of reacting to this reality? and some of the comments were:

- *Need ways to reach the youths directly*
- *Older folks not getting through to the children*
- *Children have learned to manipulate their parents*
- *Everybody has to come together and work on the youths*
- *Adults have to become role models.*

There was common agreement that there is an absence of many activities that involve children and youths. A member of the group remarked that maybe the project will help the adults to help the children in some way.

A printed poster depicting the various types of Child abuse and a parenting had book was shared to the group and the Facilitator then explained how important it was for anyone who witnesses the abuse of a child, or knows that a child is in a vulnerable situation, to report it or to tell someone who can report. The CPA hotline Number was given out to all present.

The group was asked whether they think they have learned something new at the conclusion of the session, and this was the verbal evaluation:

- *I didn't know that the past can affect me even though I'm older now*
- *When you don't communicate with children in the home, they can go astray*
- *Grand parent too can Protect a child*
- *Child rights is not to hurt Parents, is just a list of what a child needs to be safe.*

The group was reminded that counseling was available every Wednesday right in the community and they were also told of the new counseling site at the Primary School on the same day (Wednesday).

The leader of the group asked that another session be scheduled and they would try to invite more persons.

Session Participants

Names	Designation
<i>Dharmattie Persaud</i>	<i>Member - Latchmie Saba</i>
<i>Poonawattie Sankar</i>	<i>Member - Latchmie Saba</i>
<i>Dhanmerai Harrypersaud</i>	<i>President -Latchmie Saba</i>
<i>Jemet Persaud</i>	<i>Member - Latchmie Saba</i>
<i>RajKumarie Persaud</i>	<i>Member - Latchmie Saba</i>
<i>Latchman Patram</i>	<i>Mandir President</i>
<i>Sandy Sugrim</i>	<i>Member - Latchmie Saba</i>

Colin Marks - Project Coordinator

Annex 3

Child Protection Project

Child Care Counselor's Report for the February , 2011

In month of February, the following were accomplished:

Counseling:

- *Total Caseload Forty-four (44) of which twenty (20) cases are counseling, one (1) case with the school welfare, fourteen (14) cases with Child Protection and nine (9) cases are monitoring.*
- *Fourteen (14) children received counseling.*
- *New cases four (4).*
- *Five (5) cases closed.*

Child Protection Awareness Session:

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- *Be Safe sessions continues at the Sophia Primary School with the Grade 1 classes. To date a total of sixty-two children have attended the sessions.*

Home Visits:

Five (5) homes were visited.

Parenting Session:

One to one sessions were held with three (3) parents addressing parental issues such as alternative discipline methods, guidance and boundaries.

Case Study

A family was referred to the Child Care Counselor for intervention for domestic violence and child abuse. The family consisted of mother, father and six children; two girls and four boys and they reside in small room of the home of their extended family.

On the CCC first visit to the home, the father who is a cane harvester was at work, his wife was somewhere in the community and the children were at school.

The extended family disclosed to the CCC of incidences of domestic violence and alcohol abuse. The elderly woman also disclosed that her husband and

son constantly verbal abuse whenever they are under the influence of alcohol.

The CCC subsequently met the family. The father expressed frustration with the unavailability of frequent work and therefore he is experiencing difficulties providing for his family. He is in the process of building a home but that is going at a slow pace due to lack of money to purchase building materials. His wife who had moved out of the home on many occasions expressed disgust with her husband alcohol abuse and domestic violence. She is concerned and uncomfortable that her thirteen year old daughter is exposed to their sexual activities and therefore when she refuses to engage in sexual intercourse, her husband accuses her of unfaithfulness. She is willing to seek employment but she has no one to care for the six months old baby. The family and the extended relatives share a strain relationship. Their fourteen years old son had begun smoking marijuana (one of the many social issues prevalent in this community) and they sent him to live with relatives in another community. Their two younger sons are smoking cigarette and eight year old daughter has developed the habit of gambling on the street corner.

Intervention

- Parents were referred to the domestic violence counselor and family planning clinic.
- Recommended that parents use a blind to separate the sleeping area, therefore avoiding their children being exposed to their sexual activities.
- Parental sessions with the parent on alternative discipline methods (non-violent).
- Children to attend counseling session to address social issues.

- *Children were referred to the Community Mobilizer for assistance with reading and homework since it is recognized that they are below literacy level.*

Challenges

- *Community lacks resources such as youth group/club and constructive leisure activities to counter act negative behavioral issues.*
- *No facility available within the Region for intervention of alcohol abuse.*
- *To date, parents have not visited the Domestic violence counselor.*

CCC continues intervention with the family.

Impact

A nine year old girl who is presently receiving counseling support brought her seven year old friend to the CCC for intervention. The child had disclosed to her that her mother who is an alcoholic sends her to purchase alcohol and she is uncomfortable doing so.

Prepared and submitted:

Karen Shaw

Child Care Counselor

Annex 4

Child Protection Project

Report for the month of February , 2011

Counseling:

Number on Case load thirteen (13), Number of new cases three (3)

Regular visits have been made to the Zeelugt area with Ms Shaw to familiarize myself with the area; counseling should begin in this area in the upcoming month (March). However one on one counseling have continued in Sophia Primary School every Mondays, Sophia Special School every Tuesdays and Wednesdays Zeelugt Primary School.

Awareness Sessions

Be-Safe sessions are continuing in the Sophia Primary school. In this month a total of three (3) sessions was held, view details below:-

<i>Cards #</i>	<i># of students attended</i>	<i># of boys</i>	<i># of girls</i>
1-3	19	8	11

4-6	26	11	15
7-9	20	6	14

Parenting Session

Parenting sessions have now been coordinating in the Sophia Primary School. In my view this would be more time consuming to meet the parents of the children I am counseling, in the school in which they are attending. Contact numbers have been received from the headmistress of the school for the students that are on my caseload. In discussion I would share the reason for counseling, alternative methods of discipline, hygiene care and give support whenever necessary. In this month two (2) parents have been seen from my new cases.

Submitted By:

Child Care Counselor: Chabela Lord