



SAP 2010: A New Position in the Market

Introduction

In the first week of January 2010, Special Attention Project (SAP) moved to a new location on the second floor of the Kaneshie Market Complex. It was a big change from the quiet road in North Kaneshie where we operated for the first two years. Kaneshie is hot, noisy and crowded. Instead of neighbours who hardly knew what our programme was about, we now had people walking in to find out what we were doing. For the children it was a great improvement: they now only have to climb the stairs and they are at SAP.



As we were preparing to physically move to Kaneshie, we also moved to begin work on our goals of doing research, creating awareness and training other people about caring for children with learning difficulties. The grant from Disability Rights Fund enabled us to add this preventive dimension to our work. This put SAP in a new position as an NGO that has expertise to share and that brings out a clear message about children who are at risk of dropping out of school because of learning difficulties.



SAP Centre during
and after renovation

The Educational Centre

In the weeks before the move the space that we had rented in the Market had to be renovated. It had been empty for many years, and had rather developed into a rubbish dump. The space was empty in terms of infrastructure, so we could design it according to the needs of our programme.

It was hard work to get everything ready in time. We had to construct toilets and bathrooms, place partitions for the classrooms and the office, and to make a ceiling to keep out the heat from the metal roof of the market building. On the day before we



SAP Choir at the Opening Ceremony

moved the last toilet was placed, and while we carried in our things, the carpenter was fixing the main door in its frame.

Marthe van Rijswijk Foundation and Haella Stichting, both from The Netherlands, sponsored the renovation.

On the 25th of March 2010 the Centre was officially opened by Mr. Edmund K. Duffour Addae, the Managing Director of Kaneshie Market.

Later in the year, we received a donation from the St. Bernardus School in The Netherlands to make a kitchen and storeroom, and to place a tank for storage of water.

Overview of children

In 2010, sixty-six (66) children were part of the programme of SAP, consisting of fifty-two (52) boys and fourteen (14) girls. Their ages ranged from 8 years to about 14, with a few 'old' children who have spent quite a longer time with SAP and by now are over 15 years of age.

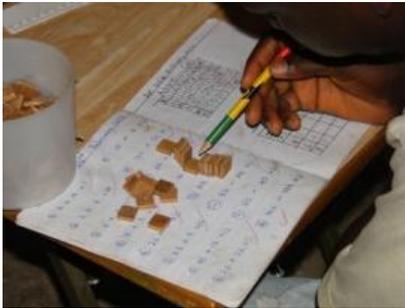
The average number of children per day was 14.3, which is nearly double the figure for 2009. This is a direct result of the new location.

Out of the 239 days that SAP was open in 2010, the highest attendance per child was 173 days for the boys, and 141 days for the girls.

The social worker of SAP conducted thirty-five (35) social surveys whereby the families of children were traced and visited. Nine (9) children (2 girls and 7 boys) were re-integrated with their families. Another four (4) boys went home but returned to Kaneshie within the year.

Two (2) girls aged 8 and 9 went to school after receiving remedial teaching for their learning difficulties at SAP for about eight months. Both are children of traders in the market and staying with their families.





Two (2) boys and one (1) girl were referred to other NGO's, one for medical reasons, another to go back to school and the girl because of a pregnancy. Six (6) children (5 boys and 1 girl) received either training in an external workplace or started an exposure period. The girl completed her training in cake decoration and one boy is stable as an auto-electronics apprentice. All other children opted out before the agreed period had expired.



The Education Programme

SAP offered education to the children on a daily basis. After washing, bathing and breakfast, the children spent each morning in class. The programme covered Reading, Writing, Drawing, Mathematics, Science and basic computer skills.

The educational team of SAP developed Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for each child. All children learned individually, according to their level and abilities. Nearly all children have serious reading problems, and majority is illiterate despite the fact that they all have been to school in the past.

SAP has developed a number of learning materials, but workbooks from mainstream education are used as much as possible. There is however the need to develop more materials, including workbooks, to meet the specific learning needs of the children. A model for repetition to re-enforce knowledge was developed, and the education staff was trained on how to use it.

Most children made some kind of progress; they learned how to write their names, they became familiar with the day's date, they learned basic mathematics and improved their writing skills. Reading is difficult for almost all children. We use the phonics method and a variety of materials, but remembering letter sounds and blending them into words is a major problem area.





Bead work



Dance class

A lot of the children will find it rather difficult to cope with conditions in a mainstream school set up. Not only are they often too old compared to their school level, they also would need a lot of extra support in the classroom. Concentration problems, hyperactivity and erratic memory patterns are realities that make it difficult to adjust to a mainstream classroom setting.

In the course of the year, we developed a vision for a longer term programme for the children. It became clear that full time apprenticeship or external training was beyond the abilities of most children, but at the same time the older boys outgrew the daily programme and bullying became an issue. We decided to include more practical activities like sport, music and dance as well as beadwork to create more variety and to make the programme more pre-vocational. We decided also to start with part time exposure periods, whereby children spend their class time in an external workplace. The aim is to become familiar with a trade and to have a first experience of learning in a setting different from SAP. We still have to adjust the concept further as so far none of the children has been able to complete the agreed three months. Preparation needs to be more gradual and a longer time frame is needed to make the process successful. The education programme was funded by Impulsis through the Stichting Aandacht for Speciale Kinderen (ASK), both from The Netherlands. We received computers for the children from Aurea Borealis (Switzerland), while Stichting Help Ghana from The Netherlands donated various educational materials.



Sports

Health

SAP registered six (6) new children for the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), and renewed the cards of nine (9) children. SAP only registers children who have hardly any family ties and who are expected to be at the Centre for a longer period of time. Families of children who still have some contact with their home are advised to take care of the health insurance of their child.

During the year there were several visits to the Polyclinic, and two admissions to a hospital. First aid was administered by SAP staff for minor health problems.



Kaneshie Station

Streetwork

Streetwork was conducted averagely twice a week in and around Kaneshie market. The strategy was to get to know children below the age of thirteen who are living independently in the streets. During the interaction, information was gained about the educational level of the child, which was at a later stage compared to the abilities of the child in reading, writing and mathematics. If the academic performance was clearly below the stated academic level the child was introduced to the Centre and further assessed, before a decision was made about admission.

Another aspect of streetwork was education of the traders and other people about the work of SAP and about the importance of education for their own children and the children they employ.

For streetwork at night, SAP cooperated with Chance for Children and Kinder Paradise. The streetworkers went out together and visited Konkomba, Bukom, CMB, Railways, Kantamanto, Agbogbloshie and Kaneshie.



Planning the research

Research

In May and June we carried out a research into the history and background of twenty-three (23) children who participated in our programme. The aim was to find out if these children were having learning problems and difficult behaviour before they came to the streets. We trained four (4) research assistants to visit the schools where the children attended before they dropped out. The social worker of SAP visited and interviewed the families. On most occasions the child accompanied the researcher, though a few children were not willing to go.

The data showed that majority of children were having problems in school, while many families indicated that they did not know what to do with the child because of the difficult behaviour. School assessments mostly corresponded with the observed behaviour and performance of the child at SAP.

The research was funded by Disability Rights Fund.



Daily Graphic 27th July 2010

Awareness and Advocacy

In 2010, SAP made eight (8) media appearances, out of which six (6) were in print, one on radio and one on national television. All items were about the programme of SAP and the need for more support for children with learning disabilities in mainstream education.

SAP organised Community Awareness Programmes to spread more information about learning disabilities. For this purpose stickers and flyers were printed and distributed. Parents of the children at SAP were also educated and encouraged to adjust their attitude to the specific learning needs of their children. Four workshops were organised in the course of the year, in which about thirty (30) parents participated. SAP maintained its membership of Inclusion Ghana (IG) and the Accra Chapter of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) in 2010.



Participants and Trainers

Training

Forty-eight (48) Resource Teachers from the Ghana Education Service received training from SAP about identification and management of specific learning disabilities in children in mainstream schools. The training programmes were organised in collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service.

The first group received the training in three sessions, which were held in the conference room adjacent to SAP (the National Susu Office). This training was funded by Disability Rights Fund.

Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) financed the training of the second group, which was held at the GNAT-Hall in Adabraka. This was a 5-day programme for which Resource Teachers from outside Accra were residential.

Trainers for both programmes were Mr. Mawuli Tetteh and Mr. Bernard Boaheng (SAP).

Staff

In 2010, the team of SAP consisted of three (3) Special Educators, one (1) part time Social Worker, one (1) Advocacy Officer, one (1) Caterer and one (1) Project Coordinator. One of the Special Educators doubled as Trainer and Head of the Education Programme.

In May 2010 the staff started a welfare fund, called 'SAP Welfare Fund'. A constitution was written and the organisation provided seed money as well as administrative support. SAP also contracted a Group Personal Accident Policy for the entire staff.



Team study day, Abokobi
July 2010



Staff training

One member of staff was sponsored to do a course in Specific Learning Difficulties at Teachers College, Accra. Two other members attended a two-day training in the phonics method for reading (Jolly Phonics).

Two members of staff attended a training programme about 'Lobby & Advocacy', organised and sponsored by the Ghana Alliance, a group of donors from The Netherlands.

One member of staff spent one week on exposure in The Netherlands. He visited several schools for children with learning difficulties at different levels, and also a few interventions for re-integration and employment of homeless youth. Stichting ASK Ghana organised the programme. We are also grateful to LEV Denmark for their flexibility in allowing our staff to continue to the Netherlands after participating in the congress of Inclusion International in Berlin.

Board

The Board of Advisors of SAP met the constitutional four (4) times in 2010. Two members resigned in the course of the year, and two new members joined. The Board is now made up as follows:

- Bro. Jos van Dinther, Director of Catholic Action for Street children (CAS) - chairman
- Mrs. Irene Engmann, Deputy Director of Street girls Aid (S.Aid)
- Mr. Emmanuel Kobina Baidoo, Special Education Division (Sp.Ed.) of the Ghana Education Service (GES)
- A representative from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) - Okaikoi zone.
- Mrs. Bridget Owusu Mattoney, Catholic Action for Street children (CAS)
- Margaretha Ubels, Project Coordinator SAP – secretary

We say a Thank You to our partner Organisations for their cooperation:

- Catholic Action for Street children (CAS)
- Streetgirls Aid
- Chance for Children
- Kinder Paradise
- The Management of Kaneshie Market

And a Big Thank You to our Donors:

- Impulsis (The Netherlands)
- Stichting ASK Ghana (The Netherlands)
- Disability Rights Fund (USA)
- Marthe van Rijswijck Stichting (The Netherlands)
- Haella Stichting (The Netherlands)
- Aurea Borealis (Switzerland)
- Stichting Help Ghana (The Netherlands)
- Ebeneco Enterprise (Accra)
- Kojo Allen (USA)
- Madam Lizzy (our neighbour)
- Gift for Ghana (UK)
- Voluntary Services Overseas (Ghana/UK)
- And all private individuals who made a donation!

It is only through your support that SAP has been able to carry out all the activities that made a difference in the lives of the children!



SAP Office