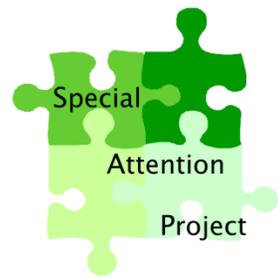




**Inclusion:**  
Fair isn't everyone  
getting the same thing;  
fair is everyone getting  
what they need in order  
to be successful.

## Special Attention Project (SAP)

## Annual Report 2015



## 1. Executive Summary

***“Fair isn’t everyone getting the same thing; fair is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful.”***



In the year 2015 SAP has again contributed towards a fairer society for children with learning difficulties. A child with learning difficulties has the same basic needs as every other child, but more is needed for this child to be successful in life. True inclusion means that systems provide what every individual needs to succeed, and Ghana's education system is not yet inclusive for children with learning difficulties. SAP **reached out** to children who have fallen out of the system by supplementing what the school system is not yet providing: education that connects with their learning needs and abilities. To help improve the system, SAP also **advocated and spread information** on the rights of children with learning difficulties. To make change possible, SAP started

designing practical learning solutions. **FonixGH**, an innovative reading method, saw the light of day and was brought to children who struggle to learn to read.

SAP's partners and sponsors gave their support: financial, in-kind and capacity building. Without them SAP could not have achieved any meaningful impact and the organization says: Thank You!

## 2. Excluded from Inclusion

Special Attention Project improves the lives of children with Specific Learning Difficulties by spreading information to the public, advocating for learning support for pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream schools, doing research and training, as well as providing practical support to out-of-school children with learning difficulties in the streets of Accra.

Specific Learning Difficulties refer to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. They include:

a. **Dyslexia:** difficulty in reading and spelling; affects reading and related language-based processing skills. The severity of this specific learning difficulty can differ in each individual but can affect reading fluency, encoding / decoding, reading comprehension, recall, writing, spelling, and sometimes speech, and can exist along with other related disorders. Dyslexia is sometimes referred to as a Language-Based Learning Disability. To include children with Dyslexia, don't score spelling mistakes in assignments for other subjects. Teach logic rather than memorising (rote). Allow alternative ways of demonstrating knowledge (eg oral test instead of written test). Allow the use of computer and present material in small units

the dog was in the water  
 the dog was in the water  
 the dog was in teh water  
 th bog was in m teh water

Writing exercise by child with Dyslexia

b. **Dyscalculia:** Affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts. Individuals with this type of Specific Learning Difficulty may also have poor comprehension of math symbols, may struggle

with memorizing and organizing numbers, have difficulty telling time, or have trouble with counting. Some children with dyscalculia can't grasp basic number concepts. They may know what to do in math class but don't understand why they're doing it. In other words, they miss the logic behind it. Other children understand the logic behind the math but

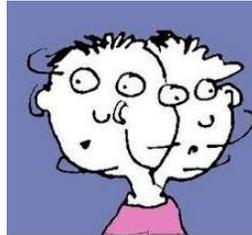
36 = 06 + 3  
 40 = 41 + 0  
 26 = 04 + 2  
 39 = 90 + 3  
 17 = 70 + 1

Maths exercise by child with Dyscalculia

aren't sure how and when to apply their knowledge to solving problems. To include children with Dyscalculia, teachers and parents should help them by playing math games. Boost confidence by doing other things the child is good at and help with learning how to keep track of time.

c. **Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD):** ADHD is a biological condition that makes it hard for children to sit still and concentrate. ADHD affects focus, attention and behavior and can make learning challenging. Although ADHD is in most countries not considered a learning disability, research indicates

that 30-50 percent of children with ADHD also have a Specific Learning Difficulty, and that the two conditions can interact to make learning extremely challenging. To help these children feel included, break their school work in small units and alternate with other activities.



ADHD: responding to so many stimuli at the same time...

Avoid distractions, for example a TV when the child has to do homework. Show acceptance, affection and give more positive than negative attention every day.

In Ghana, there is not much information and training on Specific Learning Difficulties for caregivers and teachers. The education system does not have programmes in place to support children who are affected. Children with Specific Learning Difficulties therefore do not receive the needed support and attention to improve their learning outcomes, and many drop out of school and eventually resort to streets. Others are subjected to abuse, neglect and stigma. Children with the condition

are often termed as spiritually possessed, lazy and as naturally incompetent.

SAP bridges the knowledge gap by empowering caregivers and teachers with information and training and advocates on behalf of these children. In 2015, SAP also started developing a learning-to-read methodology that helps children with to reading problems to read effectively. Since 2008, SAP supports out of school children in the streets of Accra through an individualized educational programme at Kaneshie Market, Accra.



### 3. Social change towards Inclusion – SAP’s strategic route

In 2015 SAP’s Board approved the organisation’s **Strategic Plan 2015-2019**. The Plan includes SAP’s new Vision, Mission and Core Values:



Values:

**SAP’s Vision:**

... All children with Specific Learning Difficulties are included in mainstream Education.

**SAP’s Mission:**

... To take the lead in Inclusion of children with Specific Learning Difficulties in mainstream education by doing research, awareness creation, training and advocacy on Specific Learning Difficulties and preparing children who are out-of-school as a result of learning problems for mainstreaming.



**SAP’s Core Values:**

1. Inclusion
2. Positive Commitment
3. Professionalism
4. Teamwork
5. Open Mindedness

### 4. Milestones on the road towards Inclusion

#### a. Children Support Programme

David is thirteen years and has lived all his life in Accra. He dropped out of Primary class two and came to the streets when he was about eleven years. This was due to unidentified learning difficulties and an unstable family environment.

David was identified and recruited by SAP's Children's' Support Team and brought to the education centre at Kaneshie. He did not know sounds of the letters of the alphabet and could not write them either.



*In class @ SAP*

He was helped by FonixGH whenever he was present at SAP. The Special Educators took him through all the systematic activities of the FonixGH book. The activities involved picture discussion, introduction and repetition of sounds, tracing of letters by finger, in sand, the air and with chalk and cutting out the letter shape. He learned to identify individual letters by circling them and through writing practice.

With the FonixGH practice, David now knows the letter sounds, can differentiate the various letters and can read two and three letter words.

David also learned numbers from 1-100, addition and 'carry forward' concept. He learned to write his name and

participated in practical lessons such as bead making, cooking, dance, drama and football. Through daily training and instruction his personal hygiene habits improved. David also has improved on his inter personal relationship skills and ability to take instructions.



*Learning bead work*

David's current education assessment stands that he can go back to school at the level of primary class one.

SAP's Education Team designed and produced a number of learning materials for specific learning areas: reading, fine motor skills, attention and concentration, handwriting and mathematics.



*For children with Dyslexia*



*For fine motor skills*



In 2015, SAP reached out to out-of-school children in the streets and a total of 101 children attended the centre at Kaneshie. This included 25 girls and 76 boys. Their ages range from nine to fourteen years. The attendance patterns were as follows:

<b>Girls</b>	<b>548 attendances</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>1610 attendances</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2158</b>
<b>Average attendance per month - girls</b>	<b>1.83</b>
<b>Average attendance per month - boys</b>	<b>1.77</b>
<b>Average attendance per day</b>	<b>8.74</b>
<b>Number of days open (year)</b>	<b>247</b>

The above statistics show that over-all attendance per child is low (less than 2 days per month), which reflects the living situation of the children: they move between various areas in the city. Girls are averagely slightly more stable in attending SAP's programme than boys. Average attendance per day was similar to 2014.

Nine children were reintegrated and two referrals were made to other NGO's. Many of their family members and caregivers do have no idea of what learning difficulties are and therefore they did not offer much help. Another finding is that there is a lot of stigmatization and abuse on children with learning difficulties.

Similarly, only a few teachers know about learning difficulties and therefore cannot provide the needed help for these children with special needs.

**b. Homework Support Programme**

SAP started a Homework Support Programme for in-school children at the beginning of 2015. The aim is to generate income to sustain the Support Programme for out-of-school children, while at the same time assisting in-school children with any learning difficulty they may have. By the end of 2015 more than fifty children had been attending the classes, with about sixteen being very punctual. Out of the sixteen, five were identified as showing clear signs of learning difficulties: they are in primary school but some cannot read and spell according to their grade level, while others have challenges in maths, show



*SAP's Homework class*

memory problems or cannot concentrate for long. During the vacation period they were helped with FonixGH to improve their reading skills.

### c. Awareness Creation Programme

SAP's Awareness Programme aims at filling in the knowledge gap on learning and behavioural difficulties in children in terms of causes, symptoms and management of Specific Learning Difficulties. In so doing, SAP empowers parents, teachers and caregivers to advocate on behalf of children with Specific Learning Difficulties in Ghana. This helps reduce stigma and abuse, school drop-out and promotes inclusive education for children with learning difficulties.

In 2015, community sessions interacted with fifty teachers, 39 parents and fourteen volunteers on alternative behavior patterns and advocacy for children with learning difficulties.

SAP also partnered with both national and international media to raise awareness on Specific Learning Difficulties:

- **Find a Home for my Brother, with Amal Fashanu, produced for BBC3, UK**

SAP featured in this BBC3 documentary to highlight the state of support and recognition for lesser known disabilities in West Africa.

- **Living with Dyslexia - a Ghanaian Story; produced by Joy News TV, Accra**

The documentary portrays the life story of a child at SAP who has dropped out of school due to his inability to read and write, and is now living in the streets.



- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Produced by Citi fm Online, Accra**

SAP and CitiFM partnered to advocate for better support for persons with disabilities, including learning disabilities.

SAP also had ten media presentations (both on radio and TV) on Specific Learning Difficulties and to promote inclusive education in Ghana.



#### d. FonixGH: Learning to Read through Phonics and everyday Twi

In May 2015 SAP was a winner!

The Organisation participated in the [Imagine Ghana Challenge by Reach for Change/UNICEF](#). The competition identifies social innovators from Ghana with the passion and potential to make a strong positive impact on the lives of children. During the competition, participants had to demonstrate that their ideas have a social impact on the lives of children, that it is scalable, financially sustainable and ultimately system changing. SAP, in the person of Ishmael Hammond steadily progressed to the final round of the competition. In the end, Ishmael came out as one of the three top winners!



*A SAP teacher conducting the FonixGH pre-test for a child in one of the pilot schools*

SAP's winning idea was the FonixGH reading method. The method teaches the skill of reading through phonics and local language vocabulary (Twi), and was originally developed

because many out-of-school children in SAP's programme found it difficult to learn to read in English.

With the grant and training through the Incubator Programme of Reach for Change/UNICEF, SAP has upgraded the original method into a pilot edition.

A pilot involving 140 children is currently ongoing in five (5) schools near Kaneshie and generates user feedback



which now informs the *Learning to read with FonixGH* design of the final edition. The next stage will be to produce FonixGH in an electronic app. Ultimately, FonixGH should be accessible for all beginning readers in Ghana, as well as learners with reading problems and adult learners who want to become literate.

# FonixGH

### e. Inclusiveness in Juvenile Justice sector

SAP reached out for the first time to children in conflict with the law in 2011. carried out a survey that confirmed our hypothesis: there was a correlation between learning problems and juvenile law offending behaviour. The life stories of the children on remand and in the Correctional Centres were very similar to those of children in the streets: learning challenges, school drop-out and inadequate family support structures.

In 2015, with the Open Society Human Rights Initiative as a partner, SAP built capacity of personnel in the juvenile justice sector. Focus was

at 'hidden disabilities' like Specific Learning Difficulties as causal factors in juvenile delinquency, but also as an important issue in rehabilitation and reintegration after detention.

Training workshops were conducted for officers from the Probation Unit, the Remand Home of the Department of Social Welfare and teachers from the Senior Correctional Centre. The



*Training of Officers at the Senior Correctional Centre*

project was concluded by a workshop with key stakeholders in the sector.

Key recommendations:

- Education in juvenile detention facilities needs to be made more inclusive, especially for children with 'hidden disabilities'.
- Rights of juvenile law offenders with disabilities according to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) need to be included in national legislation, followed by policy reforms and programme implementation.



## 5. Organisational Developments

Since January 2015 SAP works through a Management Team that sees to the day-to-day running of the Organisation. The Management Team members are:

1. Margaretha Ubels- Project Coordinator
2. Ishmael Hammond- Deputy Project Coordinator/  
Awareness Officer & Deputy Project Coordinator
3. Barbara Asante- Children Support Programme Officer

In July and August 2015 SAP received interns from the Social Work Department and Psychology Department of the University of Ghana, Legon. They spent about two months and participated in all SAP's programmes.



*Team SAP with interns*

## 6. Message from SAP's Board



Dear Partner,

In 2015, SAP's Board met 4 times according to SAP's constitution. As Board Members of SAP, our focus in 2015 was to strengthen our organization to better meet the needs and standards of its target group and partners respectively. These efforts included:

- Approval of SAP's strategic plan 2015-2019 including the new Vision, Mission and Core values
  - Review of Personnel Guide
  - Review of framework for conflict management in the organization
  - Development of appraisal system tool for Project Coordinator
- For 2016 and beyond, we are committed to maintaining the required standards needed to meet the overall objectives for the Organisation. We are much grateful to all our donors, partners and volunteers. To those of you who are not yet involved in our quest to promoting inclusive education for all children in Ghana, I ask that you consider volunteering, and/or financially contributing to our organization, so that together we can create a lasting impact in the lives of all children with learning difficulties in Ghana.

Mr. Hamidu Sulemana, Senior Social Development Officer,  
Department of Social Welfare  
Chairman, Board of Advisors SAP

In 2015 SAP partnered with the following organizations:

- ASK Foundation – The Netherlands
- Open Society Human Rights Initiative
- Reach for Change / UNICEF
- Vodafone Foundation

SAP also received in-kind support from:

- Kofi Archer Foundation
- Dr. Linda A. Vanotoo, Promise Ghana
- Kalyppo Fruit juice
- Mrs. Lydia Bonah Asamoah
- Brightest Image Publications
- Lakeside Marina Park



*Vodafone Staff donating learning materials and financial support for children at SAP*

SAP is grateful to the Management and Security Department of Kaneshie Market for their continued support and cooperation for the Children's Centre.

A big Thank You to all private sponsors and donors! Supporting SAP's work is now very easy:



Bank account 030141-0000001091732 Barclays Bank, Circle Branch, Accra SWIFT code: BARCGHAC



**Special Attention Project (SAP)**

P.O.Box AN 11636 Accra-North  
 Accra, Ghana  
 Loc.: Kaneshie Market Complex,  
 SD1, 2nd floor  
 www.sapghana.com  
 sap@sapghana.com  
 sapghana@gmail.com  
 +233 (0)20 6526444

SAP is a registered Non Governmental Organisation (not for profit), registered with the Registrar General of Ghana, number G.21,429 (9th August 2007)  
 SAP is recognised by the Department of Social Welfare, registration number DSW/3484  
 SAP is recognised by the Ghana Education Service as an Organisation of Special Needs Education in Ghana, number SpED/GES/CR/0002