

# **CHILDREN OF THE STREET WELFARE ASSOCIATION CHISWEA**

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Children of the Street Welfare Association** is a Non Governmental Organization that began working with street children in 1991 and officially registered in 1994 with ministry of Home Affairs under societies ordinance as an NGO and non-profit voluntary organization with a certificate of registration; SO. NO. 8207.

CHISWEA is an organization of volunteers who are actively engaged in the practice of the welfare of children in need of special protection measures.

**The central goal of CHISWEA is to provide children with education and encouragement they need in order to reintegrate each child into family and community living.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT:**

**CHISWEA is a voluntary, non governmental organization dedicated to improve the lives of street children in Arusha City with gender respect through relationship–building, care, support and education with the involvement of families and the community and networking with other organizations.**

## **VISION:**

### **SOCIETAL VISION.**

**CHISWEA envisages children grown into responsible, happy and caring adults.**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL VISION.**

**We want CHISWEA to become the best-managed child welfare agency in Arusha in the next five years and an excellent organization overall and be recognized as such.**

**We want CHISWEA to become a child service provider of choice in Arusha in the next five years.**

## **OBJECTIVES**

- 1. To increase access to education and vocational skills for street children in the City of Arusha**
- 2. To increase access to education on sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention and provide basic needs for the street children in Arusha.**
- 3. To reintegrate street children in Arusha City into the mainstream society in Tanzania**
- 4. To decrease the prevalence of traditional practices that lead to child abuse and neglect**

## **VALUES:**

CHISWEA believes that:-

- All children have the right to a caring family and community environment.
- Family and communities have the responsibility to safeguard the rights of children
- Street child shall not be discriminated against and need to be protected from harassment like any other children
- School dropouts must be supported with alternative basic education, life skills and work skills training where formal education is inappropriate

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

Arusha city has attracted a fair number of children living or working on its streets. It is estimated that about 450 - 500 children aged between 6 to 18 years are living and/or working in the streets of Arusha City. Some children maintain connection with their families while others spend all their time in street.

Causes for the street children are:-

-Family poverty forcing families to live in poor and congested slums like those of Unga Limited, Kambi ya fisi and other areas of the shanty town within Arusha municipality,

Broken marriages/ families.

Death of parents.

Unsafe and/or unhappy homes and

Rural urban migration and unemployment.

Due to the existing stigma, when parents die of AIDS, their children are left isolated and unprotected.

Children who do not feel valued by the society and who do not believe in a stable future for themselves often turn to begging and crime. Even those who do not turn to crime prove to be a drain on society because they do not have the skills for employment.

These children are exposed to an environment that puts their health at risk. They often have no access to basic needs. They get involved in or are forced to have unprotected sex exposing them to STDS, STI, including HIV/AIDS. They are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection, when they have sex with infected adults for money or because of threats and violence. These infections also spread through communities of street children because some have sex relations with each other. Both heterosexual and homosexual relationships are involved. HIV infection is not the most common sexually transmitted disease among street children, but it is one that has to attract the greatest attention.

In fact very little is actually known about the spread of HIV infection among street children. It is more than likely that they are particularly at risk of infection because:

- ◆ Sex with an adult can lead to genital injuries and bleeding, which makes the virus to be more easily transmitted.
- ◆ They may already have a history of sexually transmitted disease, which may increase their chances of HIV infection.
- ◆ Their health may already be poor, meaning they are more vulnerable to infection.
- ◆ They do not have knowledge about HIV/AIDS and do not know how to protect themselves;
- ◆ They cannot buy condoms, because they are children or because they cannot afford to;
- ◆ Because they are children, they do not have the power to insist that clients use condoms.

Additional problem for street children is that some existing projects concentrate on this problem to the exclusion of all others.

A statistical data base on the number of street children recorded at CHISWEA centre shows that among 118 children; about 20 had no fathers, 4 had no mothers and 5 had lost both parents.

It is therefore, much more sensible to consider HIV as one health problem among many for street children.

Ignorance about the problem is a major factor that drives the epidemic. Though few adults attend seminars, children and youth are neglected. There is a gap of information that could bring about the change of attitude and behaviour change. It is education about the pandemic that would break the cycle of HIV infection and AIDS. Children need to know about HIV/AIDS and how best to be prepared for it.

We are working to give children information they need to know about what it is they are dealing with and how best to be prepared for it through strengthening street work and outdoor health education programmes to meet the needs of the many and by building the organizational capacity.

#### **EXISTING ACTIVITIES:**

In an effort to improve the lives of children living in difficult circumstances in Arusha City, CHISWEA has designed its activities into three programmes:-

1. Family & Reintegration Programme to enable the resettlement and reunification of the children with the families and the community and strengthen the family based care for street children and AIDS orphans.
2. Health care Programme to increase access to health education and basics needs for the neediest children living in difficult circumstance in the streets of Arusha municipality.
3. Education Programme to increase access to education and vocational skills for children living in difficult circumstances.

Among other activities, CHISWEA has been involved in improving the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents (7-24 years) in Arusha City through:-

1. Support and strengthening children centre and related activities using peer education approach.
2. First Aid facility with basic medical supplies
3. Improving children's access to government health services.
4. Building children's capacity to take better care of their own health.
5. Using child – to – child information to facilitate health learning.
6. Counselling on an innovative sexuality/HIV prevention programme among children.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

CHISWEA has been evolved into organizing sexual and reproductive health education, family and reintegration and basic education programmes in the City in collaboration with other organizations with the involvement of community and leaders. Health education programmes lessons involve awareness raising on drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, STDs and related diseases. Classes are currently held at the residential care centre at Sokon 1 in the City and at the contact centre in a church function hall. The classes involve basic counselling, reading, writing, mathematics, art work and life skills training.

Children receive simple meals and first aid at the contact centre and during the street work in the streets. CHISWEA is also involved in counselling, tracing and interviewing children's family members and strive to reintegrate children into family life. In an effort to strengthen the family bonds and family based care, staff members strive to place children with extended family members and non-formal foster parents and adoption when possible.

The organization has managed to provide support to 1870 street children as from 1991

In February 1993 CHISWEA members approached the social welfare and labour departments and asked to be able to use the back of its premises. A double car open garage with a rough cement floor has been the home of CHISWEA before the construction of Sokon 1 centre, where the children come each Monday, Wednesday and Friday for lessons in Maths, Reading, Kiswahili, Writing, English and Drawing.

Volunteers from Christian brothers, the Jesuits and Help to self Help projects and vision in action assisted in the years 1994 to 1998 and Social Welfare Officers (Social Workers) gave much assistance as well.

Basic medical care and some food and drinks were provided. Other people came from time to time. Each Tuesday and Thursday CHISWEA members and volunteers kept regular check of the sick children and others who had other problems such as court appearance.

In 1995, it was needless to say that the space behind the social welfare and labour offices was inadequate for the growing number of street children and professional functions of our work. We requested the government to allocate a plot for CHISWEA but upon the failure to get the land, CHISWEA organised a Charity Walk in May 1996 whereby Arusha R. C Hon. Daniel Ole Njoolay sponsored CHISWEA by being the guest of honour, who was for this reason being sponsored by the Arusha community for his participation in the walk from his office to the stadium. CHISWEA then purchased a plot with the funds raised from the charity walk.

During the construction of the centre one KIO, the Netherlands' organization donated about 19 million. and the City Council donated transport for sand and corrugated stones.

In 2001, Arusha City Council donated (900,000/-) to buy 15 double deck beds towards Sokon 1 Centre, Muslim Remtulah and group donated 50 mattresses, Arusha Art Ltd donated utensils, bowls, plates, spoons and cups, Steel Centre 50 blankets and 50 bed sheets, A to Z Textile 50 mosquito nets, and Golden Rose Hotel donated food while Bimel Enterprises donated Tshs.100, 000/-

The organisation receives food from the following local companies and organizations: Pop Vriend, Rotian Seed, Caritas, Gupta & Co. Supa food, J. Senya and individuals. Dorcas Aid International Tanzania supported community based Rehabilitation Programme for street children in Arusha City with training and child care aspects which were:-

- Sponsorship 15 children
- Teaching and learning materials
- Follow up and resettlement and
- Food, medicine and hygiene supplies.

The Southern African AIDS Trust –SAT is partly supporting running cost for the Transit centre (a half way home) at Sokon 1 and the contact centre in town.

The community in general is sponsoring the activities of CHISWEA.

In addition to non-formal and basic education, children receive food, first Aid and accommodation at Sokon I centre. CHISWEA is also involved in child and family counselling including on HIV/AIDS awareness, drug abuse, hygiene and adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues as well as reinstating or enrolling children into primary school and vocational training. There were 114 children under the care of CHISWEA as at September 2005; 79 in primary school, 6 children in vocational training 8 in secondary school and 21 were attending non-formal education programme at the centre and an average of other 32 children attends at the Day Care Centre (contact centre) in Town.

In additional to the existing buildings, two room-dormitory and a dining hall, Laundry Veranda and a Kitchen with an energy saver cooker have been built. This facility is a solution to the problem of overcrowding and enables the organization to separate children from the youth/ young persons.

It is planned to buy land for the expansion of the work and construct a centre for street children in which children without parents and/or parental care will absorb, a place where they may find shelter, health care, education and counselling and guidance.

CHISWEA is searching for funding to buy a piece of land about 8 acres and construct a centre to be able to provide for, including other needs, accommodation for both boys and girls, the training on different skills, production activities like vegetable gardens, poultry, livestock keeping and a workshop to enable the centre to sustain its self and playgrounds and facilities to enable indoor games to take place as part of rehabilitation activities.

### **NEW DESIGNED ACTIVITIES:**

In order to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS and improve the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and HIV/AIDS prevention among children in Arusha City the following activities have been designed:-

1. Prepare awareness creation materials like articles, pamphlets, street papers, audiotapes, leaflets and posters at low cost.
2. Train peer educators to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS among children. This will be a team of children, staff, volunteers and CHISWEA members.
3. Set up and regularly update an interactive learning display at the centre using photographs children's drawings, role-plays, music and discussions.
4. Write a simple practical guide book for HIV/AIDS counsellors/children workers
5. Initiate children discussion about HIV/AIDS and behaviour change through theatre.
6. Understand the situation of children orphaned by AIDS and investigate strategies for community based responses.
7. Give social support to orphans
8. Set up a small resource collection of HIV/AIDS materials for children.
9. Strengthen programme on HIV/AIDS video show and outdoor programmes to meet the needs of the many children including children in schools and in institutions.

CHISWEA want to reduce the rate of HIV infection and AIDS among children and street children in Arusha by ½ by the year 2008.

The rate of HIV infection according to the research conducted in Arusha by FOCNA (Forum For Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha) in 2003 as derived from the National AIDS control programme in 2000 is said to be 8% per year and that children are 50% of the Tanzania population according to 2002 census.

#### **ORGANIZATION:**

CHISWEA is managed by the Executive Council consisting of Chairman (Mr. Simon B. Panga – Social Worker), Secretary/Treasurer (Zita Fernandez – Florist), Deputy Chairman (Fr. Philip Massawe – Sociologist & Priest), Publicity Secretary (Rev. Amon Sekajingo – Journalist), and six other members (Ms Fatma Hussein – Social Worker), Mrs. Salome S. Mollel – Sociologist, Mr. Samson E. Munuo – Social Worker, Mr. Godwin E. Ndonde – Labour studies, Mrs. Martina Siara – Teacher and Mr. Amir Somji – Pharmacist).

The organization has employed 5 staff at the position of Project Director, Education programme coordinator, Health Care Programme Coordinator, Family & Reintegration Programme Coordinator and Administrative Secretary.

The organization has also invited volunteers to assist with the teaching, emergency care and fundraising. The organization will continue to provide psychosocial support to orphans and vulnerable children who qualify for both primary and secondary education while others would be sent to vocational training centres.

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