

Monthly report – January 2012

ACCRA, GHANA

SOCIAL JUSTICE		LEGAL SERVICES	RESEARCH
HR Clubs	Community Police Unit Training	Case Work	Mental Health
HR Focal	Shelter Work	Resource Development	

Social Justice

Community Police Unit Training

CPU Training has been running successfully for the past few months. PAHO has developed a strong relationship with the Community Police and continue to provide training to their neighbourhood watch committees. The aim is to develop good civil policing. At the beginning of the month an evaluation was completed to assess the project. Three training sessions were scheduled for January across Accra. This project has always been very popular with volunteers.

HR Clubs

For the past year PAHO has been facilitating weekly clubs in three of Accra's High Schools with a focus on human rights education over a five week period. At the end of the term, students are engaged in a human rights debate to test their new-found knowledge and understanding of human rights.

Over January, PAHO volunteers put a lot into developing new materials and lesson plan ideas for the re-launch of the project. Following a series of meetings held with the school executives, volunteers entered the schools on the last Friday of the month. This will be the third program for Accra High and the second for Pre-Sec and Accra Girls.

Shelter Work

Over the month of January volunteers engaged with the children and staff of Osu Children's Home. Weekly, PAHO visited the home to observe the routines, relationships, work and importantly monitor the state of human rights protection in the institute. This project was instigated by a social working volunteer. By February we hope to have collected our observations and provide human rights/ care training to the staff of the home.

This monitoring and advocacy project requires the experience of a social worker. Over the month of February we will be introducing two volunteers with such backgrounds to the home. It is a good example of how we marry human rights promotion with the skills of a social worker and highlights the need to continue bringing the two areas of work together.

HR Focal

This month PAHO volunteers provided Human Rights Focal Person Training to teachers in the Ashaiman area of Accra. The training focused on issues of child protection; specifically child labour, child maintenance, child trafficking and punishment. Teachers are well placed to influence and identify issues child protection. It is important they are provided with the necessary informative tools to protect and promote the rights of children in their care. Following a presentation which forms the basis of our

programme, a scenario is put to the group. This gives our volunteers the opportunity to relate child protection information to the concerns on the ground.

Legal Services

Over the month of November volunteers restructured the legal services and re-implemented a previous plan to increase volunteer involvement. The day-to-day running of the legal services was subject to the greatest overhaul. The management of cases from client intake to case numbering was addressed and over the past few weeks volunteers have become well practiced in such procedures. Volunteers are now able to client intake themselves before a case is passed onto Mr. Hans.

The legal database we began working with during the summer was not adequately programmed to allow maximum volunteer involvement and so, Prageeth very kindly fixed it for us. Cases have been uploaded and we are now working from the Database for all legal work.

A decision was reached on the status of our refugee applicant at the beginning of the month but the Refugee Board of Ghana has yet to announce it. Over January two of our legal volunteers worked closely with our client to build legal arguments around his case which may be needed should his application be rejected.

Two cases have been running in PAHO this month at High court and Magistrates levels. While all the paper work including applications, affidavits etc. can be prepared by volunteers they are limited in involvement by nature of the work. Obviously volunteers cannot represent in court. We are hoping to begin developing legal outreaches and clinics in the coming months to tackle this issue.

Resource Development

Over December and January PAHO volunteers completed the following resource developments:

- Intestacy and Wills
- Legal Handbook
- PAHO Legal Manual

The Legal Handbook has been included in the induction process and it has been proving particularly helpful. Please find the resources attached.

Research

Mental Health

In October, research began on our Mental Health Project. Our findings over the past few months have highlighted a hostile legal and social backdrop for mental instability and illness in Ghana. PAHO had scheduled to host a seminar on the 26th of January to raise awareness through publishing our concerns. The date was changed to the 2nd of February. We are advocating for a change of perception and call for support to mental health in Ghana.

Other Work

Parliamentary Sitings

During the month of January volunteers visited the House of Parliament. This generated a lot of excitement in most of the volunteers who are interested in politics.

Court Visits

Normally after induction all volunteers are taken on a tour of the high courts but this month all 'non-legal' volunteers attended the high courts of Ghana to actually sit in on a case. The Supreme Court, the High

Court and the Domestic Violence Court were all visited. It is a very useful outing to help volunteers understand some of the frustrations and difficulties attached in accessing justice in Ghana.

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

January has continued to be quiet in terms of projects as many of them are still on shut down from the Christmas and New Year period. Volunteer numbers however have been at one of our highest we've seen in January and we've had a lot of people working hard on legal cases as well as planning for future workshops for the projects that continued to run.

Social Justice

Bonnytown

The New Year at Bonnytown has started well. Volunteers have been coming up with some great ideas for workshops and these have been received well by the boys. One workshop involved the volunteers teaching the boys something about their home countries. It was stated by the boys that they wanted to learn about world affairs and what other countries are like as well as learn some simple phrases in some different languages. Volunteers have been trying to incorporate workshops around the requests of the boys and have begun to show them currency from their home countries as well as music from around the world (with a bit of dancing for good measure!)

The Women's Shelters

St Anne's – Volunteers have been working hard to come up with a 6 week programme for *St Anne's*. The women seem to be enjoying the sessions with such topics discussed this month as police powers and the rights of the individual, role models with famous inspiring quotes and then leading on to what the ladies want to achieve in 5 years. A lot of these workshops are aimed at helping to build up the confidence of the women who are staying there. All of the women have a story to tell and a background many of us could never imagine, therefore it is important to build on their confidence.

Legal Services

Lavender Hill Legal Clinic

Clients have been attending our legal clinic with a number of varied matters. This month there have been a number of cases which involve divorce. Volunteers have been assisting clients with filling out the necessary forms and offering them advice on how to claim for child maintenance.

Case file's within the office

We have had a very busy month in terms of new clients coming to the office. We have been assisting many refugees to apply for their permanent residency papers a long with assisting women with gaining protection orders against their partners. Volunteers have been attending court with some of our clients to support them with filing documents or to offer support during their trials.