

Minutes of the Core Group Meeting For Children

Date : 06th April' 2006, Thursday
Time : 4:45 pm to 6:45 pm
Venue : NCRC Office, Collect orate, Nagapattinam

Agenda:

1. Evaluation of the one day programme for 10th standard students
2. Visit to the service home and orphanages
3. Discussion about the workshop
4. Strengthening of the Core Group
5. The PM's schemes for Children affected by Tsunami
6. Summer camps for the children
7. others

One day programme for 10th standard students:

The NGOs had an experience sharing session of the one day programme conducted on 5th and 12th March'2006 (Sundays) for the 10th standard students at Vedaranyam and Tharangambadi.

- The efforts of TMSSS, the NGO-in-charge for the event at Vedaranyam, were appreciated.
- The event was a success in Tharangambadi also where OFFER had taken charge.
- It was stated that the students' participation was good in both places; students' found the programme useful and suggested that in future this programme should be conducted earlier.
- The various sessions like meditation & yoga, counseling were held to motivate and rejuvenate the energy levels of the students.
- Good Shepherd suggested that this programme will be more effective if conducted leisurely in the beginning of the academic year or just after the half yearly exams.

NCRC told that NEG faculty provides training to teachers or animators every year and through them reach the students. This was the first time when they directly interacted with students. He also mentioned about the four day workshop at Chennai conducted by CCRD and Black Theatre, who have developed tools and materials for child development. All the NGOs can also make use of it.

Visit to Service Home and Orphanages:

As decided in the previous meeting, Mr. Jerald of NCRC, area coordinators of the respective VICs, Ms. Dhanam and another staff of SNEHA visited few orphanages and service homes in Nagapattinam district on 6th March 2006. Mr. Jerald gave a brief account on the observations in each place.

- The first place visited was Anbagam, Mayiladurai, which has nearly 140 mentally and physically challenged children. It was observed that the orphanage is being run quite well but there is shortage of funds. The care takers need more training and specialization, keeping in mind the kind of children here.
- Next was an orphanage run by Lutheran Church in Mayiladurai. The place is very small, yet it accommodates 60 children. The visitors were prohibited from meeting the lady in the kitchen, who seems to be affected with leprosy.
- Annai Sathya, a government service home at Sirkali was also visited. It is exclusively for adolescent girls (14 – 18 years), orphaned by Tsunami. 30 girls are staying here and various life skills are also imparted for the girls to become independent in future.
- An orphanage in Vanagiri and a day care centre run by Divya Shanti was also visited.
- The VIC coordinators visited more orphanages and found out that most of them are not registered with the government. As a result, a discussion on this was held with the Social Welfare Officer, who is yet to reveal her decisions.

The NGOs suggested that the reasons behind the children staying in these places, despite both or one of their parents being alive, has to be found out. Also, measures should be taken to get all the orphanages registered and directly linked to the government.

- Good shepherd opined that the main concern of the NGOs is to make the orphanages a better place for the children and not dissolve the unregistered ones.
- PDA agreed that given the present situation, the orphanages do not meet the norms and conditions of the government and hence they will have to be dissolved. The NGOs should not become the cause for taking away even the little facilities the children are getting at present.
- Phoenix stated that a Child Welfare Committee (CWC) should be formed which can officially carry out all the activities. This body should exist for long, irrespective of whether the NGOs or NCRC stay in Nagapattinam. SOS is one of the NGOs suitable for this responsibility.
- Vanavil and Every Child expressed that the NGOs can suggest the orphanages to fulfill the basic needs and register. Beyond that, the government will have to take up the responsibility.
- Phoenix added that this is a sensitive issue – good or bad will directly affect the children. Hence, NGOs should be careful while doing the advocacy with both – government and the orphanage owners. Before proceeding any further, NCRC's VICs can do an in-depth fact analysis of all the homes & orphanages and prepare a consolidated report.
- Vanavil requested NCRC to send a formal letter to all the organizations, informing about the need to register, maintaining standards, etc – it will pressurize them to come forward. Also, the Mr. Saddiq of CWC, Mayiladurai can be approached for further assistance.

Discussion about the workshop – 30.03.06:

- Phoenix stated that the workshop was a good initiative with great participation from all in creating awareness about child rights and protection acts.
- Good shepherd told that follow up workshops should be held for effective learning and implementation. The child welfare committee can help in monitoring activities.
- Vanavil added that the purpose of such workshops should be ensured, i.e., the information should ultimately reach the parents and the children. Also, larger understanding of the child helpline needs to be created among the children.

Here, Every Child mentioned about a case in one of the matriculation schools in Nagapattinam – the school did not provide hall tickets to three students of standard 10, anticipating that they will spoil the overall pass percentage of the school! The NGO has heard that such instances occur every year and in many other schools too. This demoralizes the students and leads to school dropouts.

- The NGOs felt that evidences of such cases should be gathered and an agitation should be carried out. This is a very unfair act by the schools which is ruining future of many students..
- Every Child plans to approach the child helpline of AVVAI, along with the affected children and their parents and file a written complaint. If an immediate action is taken, the children can write at least few papers, though exams have already started.

Strengthening of the Core Group:

- A common opinion was that involvement of more NGOs interested in children and active participation of the ones in the group like SOS, PCI, AVVAI, GGF, etc., should be promoted.
- Real Plan, Create and Care are NGOs who are doing promotional activities for children. UNICEF is a popular body having the leverage to move things faster in government related issues. Involvement of these NGOs will help strengthen the committee and its activities.

The PM's schemes for Children affected by Tsunami:

- Phoenix found that few SBI officers had voluntarily gone to a Matriculation School and opened new accounts for the students for the PM's schemes. This contradicts the statement of the CEO that matriculation school students are not eligible for the scheme.
- NCRC added that almost all the government schools have been covered under this scheme and accounts for the students are also being opened. The NGOs have already spoken to the additional collector stating that no such problem is there in other tsunami affected districts.
- It was predicted that the enumeration of students for the schemes is probably based on the number of government school students who were given free books in July 2005 and therefore

the matriculation students are excluded.

- At this stage, few of the NGOs felt that the core group should do conceptual and result oriented activities, besides interaction sessions.
- NCRC responded that the NGOs were asked to give a list of the tsunami affected students in their areas but only few reciprocated. This, in turn, has not allowed any further progress.
- NCRC suggested that a formal letter, countersigned by the core group members, demanding for a quick action shall be sent to all the concerned officials and departments.
- It was decided that the letter will be drafted together by the NGOs, signed and sent immediately to the departments – the reaction shall be awaited.

Summer camps for the children:

- Good shepherd shared that such camps shall be conducted block wise in the district.
- PDA and Every Child stated that every block will easily have 1000 to 1200 children, which is also a huge crowd to manage. So, like inter collegiate, group events can be announced at each block and the children with caliber can come forward and the others can enjoy.
- It was decided that further talks on this and budgeting for the same shall be done in an exclusive meeting on 12th April 2006 (Wednesday), at 4.30pm in the same place.

#Others:

NCRC suggested that on 30 April (World Anti Child Labour Day), a photo gallery can be held at a common place displaying the activities carried out by the NGOs for children in the district.

- At the same time, all election candidates in Nagapattinam can be invited for this gathering to interact with children from across the district to know their 'Vision India' and expectations from their leaders.
- All the NGOs expressed their willingness to cooperate in making this idea come true. The NGOs shared that a prior meeting with the children to know their demands and with the candidates to make clear the concept, is necessary. Invitation to the media and arrangements for security is also needed.

At the end, NCRC informed about Annai Velankanni Raj Matriculation higher Secondary school in Trichy. This school is ready to adopt and support the education of 15 boys (8-12 years). The school has already been requested to provide more details – NGOs who are aware of boys, needing such support, shall contact NCRC.

Annexure A: List of Participants

List of participants for the Core Group meeting at NCRC Office, Collectorate, Nagapattinam on 06.04.2006 (Thursday)				
S. No.	Organisation	Name	Phone	E-mail
1.	Good Shepherd	Sr. Mercy Joseph	04365-240029, 98405-70122	srmercy_ngt@sancharnet.in
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4.	PDA	G. Deva Rajan	04365- 264048	<u>deva_raja123@yahoo.com</u>
5.	Karuna Karya Trust	R. Anandan	93809-54321	ranandam2004@rediffmail.com
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7.	Every Child	R. Karuppusamy	04365-247301, 98420-90035	everychild.nagapattinam@ everychildindia.org
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9.	Every Child	T.Prabu	98654-83336	<u>prabuyogi@gmail.com</u>
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