
Monthly report – May 2011

ACCRA, GHANA

SOCIAL JUSTICE		LEGAL SERVICES	RESEARCH
Police: Your Rights and Access to Justice	Mining	Legal Clinic	Child Trafficking
Intestate and Property Rights	Child Labour/Trafficking	Case Work	

Social Justice

Police: Your Rights and Access to Justice

This month we had one workshop in this project. We visited Nima, a community which has expressed serious issues relating to local policing and violations of offender's rights. Our volunteers presented the UN's 10 Suspect Rights and a general statement on current police behaviour with reference to corruption and extortion. The community leaders were very interested, engaged and grateful for the training. We will continue to work with this community and facilitate a better relationship between the police and the public.

Intestacy and Property Rights

This is a project we ran last month and due to its success decided to continue work on this issue, visiting various affected communities over June. The clinic combines focal group discussions and legal services to tackle violations of individual's intestacy rights and break the trend of such abuses in the communities we target. In May we visited two affected communities.

Child Trafficking and Labour

Following research carried out last month we began to launch our child trafficking project at the beginning of May. Our Project is two- fold; we plan to work on the following intentions;

- Community Awareness
- Rehabilitation and Monitoring.

In May we conducted an initial fact-finding mission in Ningo, a district East of Accra we believed had been struck by issues surrounding child trafficking in the past. All of our volunteers took part in this outreach. We visited two villages; Old Ningo and Anwhiam. While the community of Old Ningo seemed to be knowledgeable on Child Trafficking, Anwhiam's lack of sensitisation on the issue was very obvious. In both communities it was evident that there is not a sufficient rehabilitation or re-integration program for victims of trafficking or a network of support for their families. From these findings we have decided to proceed with sensitising the community of Anwhiam on Child Trafficking and Labour. For both Old Ningo and Anwhiam we have proposed to set up an educational and social program for victims of trafficking with the help of the local community. We hope to work with local volunteers in providing extra classes to previously trafficked children while ensuring their school facilitates their special needs. We will give advocacy in these schools on issues of child trafficking and

labour and run this program at the weekends. We will be travelling to Old Ningo next week to discuss our proposal with the community.

Alongside our community outreach work we intend to work with the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit and victims shelters within Accra. Under the guidance of an experienced youth worker we hope to adopt a rehabilitation programme which has already been implemented by IOM; the International Organisation for Migration. We will restructure this for the use of Project Abroad Human Rights Organisation and begin work in the shelters. We will also begin to profile all the residing children in the hope of creating a live database for the benefit of the Unit and all stakeholders involved in eradicating child trafficking.

We have also proposed that we create a website for the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit to better publicise their work; help to identify trafficked children and perpetrators and highlight the issue of trafficking all over Ghana.

Mining:

Our work in the mining community of Obuasi recommenced this month and our team of volunteers travelled to the Ashanti region to monitor development in the area and investigate water and sanitation issues. This trip was a four day mission where volunteers held forums in two affected communities.

The communities have not sufficient access to safe water. In the community of Fenaso there are 2 boreholes for 1500 people. Usually 1 borehole is meant for 150 people. Furthermore, due to the mining industry in the area, streams and water sources are heavily contaminated creating problems for everyday life, particularly in farming homes where crops and live-stock live a short and unproductive existence.

Another frightening issue was the lack of health care available to the community. Fenaso has a small medical center; on investigation we discovered that this clinic did not have basic Malaria medication. If members of the community get seriously ill, they have to go to the hospital in Obuasi, which is 25 km away.

Having investigated the scenes our team held a meeting with the stakeholders involved in bringing change to these communities. In attendance were members of PAHO, our partners WACAM, representatives from both communities and representatives from AGA (Anglo Gold Ashanti- Mining Company).

We hope to continue working towards the achievement of even basic necessities for the communities surrounding Obuasi. We will return to the community in the coming weeks after we have reviewed our findings and proposed a beneficial plan of action. Mid- June we will return to take part in another stakeholder meeting and hopefully continue and progress negotiations.

Legal Services

Legal Clinic

This month PAHO attended the monthly clinic on child maintenance with Legal Aid. It took place at the beginning of the month. We do not project this to continue for the month of June.

Case Work

Mr. Hans and the volunteers are currently creating case profiles. When this is ready I will forward the details of all of our running cases. I cannot emphasize enough the added dimension our legal service has added to both our work and volunteer satisfaction.

This month we have worked on 8 cases dealing with issues of defilement, rape, child maintenance, torture and refuge, intestacy and property rights. Here are some examples;

Mid-May PAHO managed to free a man who had been wrongfully charged of defilement (the rape of a minor). Mr. Pat's case had been referred to us by DVVSU (Domestic Violence and

Victim Support Unit of the Police). Before he came to us he had been in custody for 5 months waiting for his hearing in appalling conditions. After two months it was clear the evidence was inconsistent and often simply not there so Mr. Hans made a plea of no submission. Mr. Pat was charged on foot of a medical report which the charging officer admittedly did not understand, furthermore the said report showed no sign of interference with the 'victim'. The case was acquitted and Mr. Pat has returned to his daughters in Kasso.

At the moment we are seeking child maintenance for a client who had been kicked out of her home and beaten by her spouse. The separation came after the husband was convinced by a 'Pastor' that his wife was possessed by 7 'evil and stubborn spirits'.

Research

This month all of our research has been in-house and for the purpose of our running projects.

Other Work

Alongside our projects volunteers have been visiting various organisations, observing how governmental and non- governmental bodies involved in Human Rights run, the impact they make and how they fit in with our own mission. On the 13th of May we attended Amnesty's International Annual Report Launch which the volunteers found extremely beneficial and interesting.

On the 18th of May we attended CHRAJ's NGO forum. Here we had an opportunity to discuss the scope of human rights in Ghana and involve ourselves in discussions. We will part-take in the organising of and attend International Day in Support of Victims of Torture at the end of June.

Last Saturday all of our volunteers attended a public forum to celebrate Amnesty's 50th Anniversary, one of our team Harry presented a message of solidarity on behalf of PAHO.

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

May has seen some fresh faces bringing some fresh ideas for workshops and areas of research. One of the projects seeing the most action this month was the work we have been doing alongside Free Gender, an organisation we have not long begun working with. They are an organisation from Khayelitsha who are tackling the issue of homophobia and corrective rape, stories of which are becoming more and more common here in South Africa. Within our legal services area, we had a lull in the number of clients requesting our assistance at the beginning of the month, however towards the end we saw the numbers start to increase and we opened some new case files for new clients.

Social Justice

Bonnytown – This month began with volunteers showing the boys a program called 'The Wire'. This is an American crime drama which focuses on a number of issues including corruption, violence, gun crime and drugs. The idea was to discuss with the boys the negative aspects of such behaviour, however the boys focused more on glorifying it and struggled to spot the negatives. Volunteers then reverted back to the music workshops which had seemed to make an impact on the boys last month. Volunteers are currently trying to arrange for some local Cape Town musicians/rappers to attend Bonnytown. The idea is for them to talk to the boys about their own struggles growing up and how they turned their own lives around, turning negative influences into positives through their music. We are hoping this will be welcomed by the boys and they will learn a lot from inspirational people who come from similar backgrounds to them.

The Women's Shelters: Sisters Incorporated and St' Anne's – Visits to the women's shelters have been continuing this month with volunteers holding discussions about women from all over the world and talking to the women in the shelter about their own countries and how women are treated there. They also discussed inspirational women who dedicated their lives to helping others, for example Mother Teresa. The women were also shown an

inspirational movie with the plan next month of doing something more practical with the women as this always encourages them to open up more.

Khayelitsha – Siya Khathala – We currently have two volunteers who are focusing on improving the marketing of Siya Khathala. They have been meeting with the leader of the organisation and have begun designing a new logo, letterheads and business cards as well as pamphlets and the forms to be used to organise the cases. They have also spent time researching into claiming donations from other organisations and they begun to draw up a donation request letter which the organisation will be able to use for future requests.

Free Gender – A lot of time was spent at this project over the past month with some passionate volunteers really putting their all in to bringing the issue of corrective rape to people's attention. This month volunteers carried out a marketing and advertising campaign for a panel discussion that Free Gender were hosting. Advertisements were put in papers and on the radio whilst volunteers also looked into sourcing films that could be shown to the public in an evening before the discussion to gain recognition of this awful crime. The panel discussion went well although not all of the invited organisations turned up.

Manenberg Boys – The beginning of May began with a meeting with the organisers of Self Help Manenberg. Here we were able to agree on having a program that would run every 2 months for the next year. The content of which will be discussed and agreed upon with the organisers at the beginning of each 2 month period. This has created a much more structured role for us and means that we have a bit more freedom with our program in that we no longer have to run each workshop past Self Help Manenberg.

Manenberg Girls – Volunteers also had a meeting with the girls from Manenberg at the beginning of the month which gave them the chance to chat to the women and find out the sorts of activities they would like to be involved in. It was a common desire that they wanted to experience Cape Town and go on more trips to museums and so on to find out more about their country and their heritage. These are opportunities they have never had growing up. This month there has been a visit to the slave lodge museum which enabled the girls to learn more about the history of their City. Volunteers are planning to begin a business project with the girls next month in which they will learn new skills. Ideas such as a bake sale have been put forward which would enable the girls to make a bit of profit as well as increase business opportunities for them. Also getting the girls set up with their own internships is something we are also looking to do. Volunteers are also working hard to organise a netball tournament between all the netball teams within Manenberg for Youth Day on the 16th June.

Legal Services

Lavender Hill – Visits to Lavender Hill have been continuing throughout May however work has at times been slow this month with fewer clients attending the sessions compared to previous months. This however has meant that back at the office we have been able to catch up on the backlog of cases we have had from Lavender Hill and ensure that everyone's issue is being dealt with. We are now ready to take on the next influx of cases we receive from here.

LOME, TOGO

WILDAF - Our only volunteer in our Human Rights field in May has been working with WILDAF. She is in Togo to conduct a case study about Women's Rights in Africa for her thesis in Law and being placed at WILDAF Togo gives her full insight into the struggles facing women.

Often she represents the organisation at meetings, where she also had the chance to meet with an official of the Ministry of Promotion of Women in Togo, whom later briefed her on several areas of interest in his office.

She has chosen to focus on the right to inherit land, an issue that often excludes the widow by the dead husband's family or sometimes her own sons. She is analysing reports and preparing to conduct interviews in a couple of villages next week.