

## 9<sup>TH</sup>. ECD COORDINATION MEETING HELD ON JULY 27, 2009 IN AVSI OFFICE-KITGUM

### Attendance

| Nr                            | Name               | Institution/Organization             | Tel                   | E-mail                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| School representatives        |                    |                                      |                       |                           |
| 1                             | Ocaya Charles      | Dok child care                       | 0777223422            |                           |
| 3                             | Amito Joyce        | Horizon Nursery School.              | 0774347350            |                           |
| 4                             | Obonyo Jackson     | Watoto Wazuri Nursery School         |                       |                           |
| 6                             | Akech Lucy         | Green Acres nursery school.          | 0774240569            | Lucybeeks88@yahoo.com     |
| 7                             | Akwero Florence    | Our lady good counsel nursery school | 0774559949            |                           |
| 8                             | Atim Rose Mary     | Horizon International Quarters       | 0782321626            |                           |
| CBO, NGO & UN representatives |                    |                                      |                       |                           |
| 9                             | Okumu Geoffrey     | Mothers' Union                       | 0712209320/0772471032 | jeffkums@yahoo.co.uk      |
| 10                            | Amony Dorothy      | AVSI                                 | 0782160190            | avsiedu.dorothy@gmail.com |
| 11                            | Amony Agness       | AVSI                                 | 0775593099            | avsiedu.agness@gmail.com  |
|                               | Acan Grace Rachael | ACDA                                 | 0772479638            | Graceachan68@yahoo.com    |

### Agenda

1. Opening prayer
2. Communication from the chair
3. Action points from the previous meeting
4. Activity updates
5. Action points until the next meeting

Min. 01/27/2009: Communication from the chair

AVSI representative stood in as the chair for the meeting, she welcomed members and informed them that the chair person (DIS) sent her apology for not being in position to come for the meeting. She remarked that the attendance is going down yet minutes were sent to all the schools and agencies concerned. She urged members to always send their apology incase one is unable to come for the meeting as was done BRAC.

She added that data on ECD centres and nursery schools have been collected, but participation from members during the data collection was poor. This is because the telephone contacts that were left behind for coordination was not always available and some few members who were called never turned up for the monitoring visit.

Min. 02/27/2009: Action points from the previous minutes

#### 1. AVSI to share findings of interviews in the nursery centres

The interviews were carried out in 8 sub-counties hosting 10 ECD centres, with a total of 820 interviewees (311 children, 435 parents, 37 caregivers, and 37 local leaders). Six of the centres are located within IDP Camps, three are located in resettlement sites and one is within Kitgum Town Council.

Interviews with children:

According to the children, the most common activities in the centre are singing, writing, reading and counting.

Majority of the children reported that when they do something wrong, they are beaten by their care givers. Misbehavior of the children usually is punished by beating or slapping or the children are given advice, some children said they are usually stopped, or they are warned, other children said they are sent away when doing something wrong, and others said the caregiver calls them when misbehaving.

## Reaction

A member noted that beating children as a way of punishment is still very rampant in nursery schools. She said complete eradication of corporal punishment is still a challenge, these children are still very young and beating them will never make them learn but to feel bad. Nursery school teachers should look for an alternative way of correcting the children when they misbehave.

A teacher added that on punishment, children are very stubborn and inquisitive, if a child is too stubborn, the teacher should not simply beat that child but should try to follow-up the child at home, some children stay with step mothers who do not give them time to play and this child will find the centre the only place where he/she can exercise freedom. In this way, the teacher should talk to the child slowly. She added that some teachers already know that children respond fast when they are threatened with a stick, and some times if the children see the teacher holding a stick, they will think that the teacher wants to beat them.

Some members said in the African culture, children's ears are believed to be in their buttocks, this is one of the reasons why some teachers resort to beating as a way of correcting the child which is not right.

A member suggested if refresher training can be given to the nursery teachers to make them improve on corporal punishment.

### Interviews with parents/caretakers:

The most striking issue that arose from the parents was on feeding and payment of the care givers, they requested if NGOS can support feeding and paying the care givers.

### Interviews with the caregivers:

Care givers reported that the cooperation between the local leaders and the centre is very poor, they said that some local leaders are very reluctant on the issues that concerns ECD centres, that they don't turn up for meetings of the centre and in case some problem occurs in the centre, the local leaders are reluctant to settle it.

They also commented that the parents do not understand the importance of ECD centre and they do not want to pay fees, some deliberately don't send the children to school.

## Reaction

A member thanked AVSI for their struggle to expand the knowledge on the ECD through radio talk shows. He said many people are now seeing the benefit of ECD centres and encouraged AVSI to continue with the radio talk show.

A teacher said to motivate the parents to send children to school, they should be made to see the benefit of ECD, and this can be done by organizing parents' day and displaying the skills that the children have acquired from the centre. Also a form of music dance and drama should be formed in nursery schools where children can learn their cultures; this will help to motivate parents to send their children to the centre.

A member also reacted that AVSI should not involve themselves too much in the nursery centre but should prepare the parents and the local leaders to run the centre on their own.

### Interviews with the local leaders:

Most of the local leaders said they have the responsibility of lobbying for funds from other NGOs to run the centre if AVSI stops the support, others said they will allocate percentage of the sub county budget to run the centre, while some said they will engage in crop production as a way of sustaining the centre.

## Min. 03/27/2009: Discussions

### 1. Nursery centre being supported by Mother's Union in Labongo Layamo not open:

Mother's union came up with an issue of concern that they have put a structure for an ECD in Labongo Layamo Sub County, at one point, the policemen occupied the building by putting up their office. Since the term began, Mother's union has been requesting the policemen to move away from the building because the children have to use it for their studies. The policemen are now hesitant to leave the building and consultations with the sub county authority never yield any fruit. The local leaders seem to be reluctant about ECD centres and its importance. The school has not yet been open since the building is still occupied by the policemen. A joint meeting has been organized by the sub county officials where all the NGOs operating within the sub county will be involved; this is the time mother's union plans to hire out the problem. The care givers and the CMCs have complained that parents are not cooperating with them whenever any issue arises concerning the nursery centre. This is the challenge that Mother's Union has and is looking for solution to the problem.

#### Reaction

A member reacted to this that a meeting can be organized with the sub county officials to discuss a way forward, and afterwards, the parents can also be called for a meeting where they will be sensitized on the importance of ECD centre. It was also suggested that local leaders should be involved in any activity that concerns the centre, and this should start right from the planning stage. In case of any programme in the centre, the leaders can be called to either open or close the function; this will also make them active and interested in the centre activities.

A representative Mother's Union noted that the involvement of local leaders in ECD is becoming a big challenge; if possible, some monitoring tool should be designed to check on the participation of the leaders in the ECD centres.

### 2. Joint examination for nursery schools set from Kampala:

It was reported that some nursery schools from Kitgum Town Council give children examination that have been set to a certain standard from Kampala, according to the head teacher of our lady of good counsel nursery school, this exams is being set by group of qualified nursery school teachers who are based in Kampala. The exams are not difficult because they cover the same syllabus in the ECD learning framework. She elaborated that the examiners set exams basing on the coverage of the syllabus and that children in her school have been sitting that exams and are passing well.

#### Reaction

Members reacted to this that the environmental setting of the examination is not equal and so nursery children from Kitgum can not be subjected to that kind of exams, members agreed that it is better to set examination basing on the materials that our children are used to, it was discussed that children from Kampala have wider access to many things such as play materials, pictures and many others compared to children from north. This makes it unfair to give the children exams from Kampala.

A teacher from one of the nursery schools said parents sometimes force nursery teachers to teach the children and give a standard exams and yet it is not right, also when they see the children playing on the compound, they complain that the school does nothing except sending children to play outside. She added that the directors of the nursery schools too, do not know how to run the nursery school because they think that these children should be taught like those in primary schools. This makes some teachers to confine these nursery kids in the classroom all the time to please the parents. She said at the training institutes, nursery teachers are warned not to give exams the children but give them enough time to play. Many of the parents do not understand this and at the end of the term, they want to see the scores

that the child has made in the report cards. Ideally, there should be no examination given to the children in the nursery centre but children should be given opportunity to play as much as they can.

The parents should be made to know this through sensitization; also, teachers' should labor to explain this to the parents other than following their interest.

A member said nursery teachers can call for parents' day and use that day to explain to the parents the nature of teaching in nursery schools. It was also suggested that when the children are playing, at least a teacher has to be with them to guide their play; this will make the parents to know that the children are not simply left to play but it is part of teaching.

For the directors, they should be involved in the radio talk shows on ECD so that they get to know how children should be taught. Some sensitization meeting can also be organized to give the directors more knowledge of how to handle children in the nursery centre.

It was concluded that a committee be set to make a follow-up to see the examination that is being set from Kampala to assess and evaluate if it suits the standard of our children here in Kitgum.

### 3. Nursery schools to form head teaches association

The District Education Officer sent invitation letter to all the head teachers of nursery schools to form an association. This is to prepare them for the celebration of the international teachers' day. So far, a committee comprising of the chairperson, secretary and the finance have been formed and the head teachers are hopeful that if this association will be formed than it will open a way forward for the nursery schools. Another meeting was scheduled to take place soon and more information would be given in the next meeting.

### ACDA

Agoro Community Development Association has opened up one ECD centre in Agoro under funding from the peace project. And the centre has 20 pupils, age between 3-5 years

Min. 04/27/2009: Action points until the next meeting

1. AVSI and the committee formed to visit our lady of good counsel nursery school to assess the usefulness of the joint exams and its benefits to the nursery children in Kitgum.
2. AVSI, UNICEF and the District sit together to plan to disseminate the ECD policy guidelines to members.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday August 31, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in AVSI