

**EMPOWERING STREETINVOLVED - OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN & VULNERABLE FAMILIES**  
**UITSIG (WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA)**  
*NEW LIFE - THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S TRUST*  
*January – December 2012*

**Project Summary:**

This project targets the Uitsig community in the townships of the Cape Flats (near Cape Town). Uitsig (approx. 8500 residents) is characterized by high levels of poverty (many live in 1 parent families), unemployment, gangsterism, violence and substance abuse. Many children experience severe parental neglect and/or other forms of abuse at home and on the street. The schools have high drop-out rates and children resort to life on the street, exposing themselves to drug and alcohol abuse and recruitment into gangs, prostitution and other forms of criminality. Families do not or are unable to access social and other public services either due to a lack of understanding of their children's needs, insufficient awareness of their own rights or services available, a lack of trust in and confidence to interact with public service providers as well as an inadequate response from service providers.

**Project Objective**

- Provide access to education and life opportunities to 75% of 24 street and out-of-school children (aged between 6 -14) within 12 months through informal schooling and individualized care
- Develop skills and capacity in the community to take responsibility for community development and child protection through workshops for at least 100 parents and 50 children from the community

**Project progress summary:**

The project has delivered strong results with the majority of their beneficiaries, despite the continuing budgetary restrictions, with 85% of children continuing in the home schools until the end of the year and successfully reintegrating into mainstream schools (those that did not had moved out of the Uitsig community and therefore were not able to continue in the program). 92% of the children improved their literacy skills and 96% improved their numeracy skills and of the 19 children that spent time on the streets at the start (either regularly or sometimes), 13 reduced their streetinvolvement of which 8 no longer spent any time on the streets.

The level of violence stabilised over the past few months after a number of high profile incidents in August in which 22 people were killed in the Uitsig community and the directly surrounding areas, including one just outside the New Life container. The staff were able to keep the children by following emergency safety procedures and taking from the schools into the container (which is away from the street and has a fence). Other than this, the children were able to attend the home schools in the actual homes of the teachers, as is intended.

Over the past 12 months, the project worked with 26 children in their home schools, while another 11 received on-street support and 73 children accessed the community on a daily basis for after-school support. New Life has provided support to parents through ad-hoc support at the container, facilitated life-skills workshops (mainly on health issues and parenting skills), community TV activities and supported families with individualized and group parenting and family relationship advice. New Life engaged the community through mass awareness raising activities as well as inviting children and parents from the community to participate in group activities.

**Project Activities:**

Home Schools:

In the past 6 months, 2 new Home School teachers were recruited to ensure the project had 4 home school teachers so that each child could benefit from more one to one time with their home school teacher. The two new recruits have been performing well. In addition to engaging with children in the Home Schools, New Life Staff conduct regular outreach through home visits with the parents and families of these children. The relationship with the parents and the increased understanding of the child's family situation helps New Life staff to better support the development of the children enrolled in the Home Schools, address the issues of family violence, and helps them in fostering the capacity of parents and families to assume responsibility for their children and sustain the changes made in the home schools once they are reintegrated into mainstream schools.

Throughout the months of February and March, after the start of the school year, 26 children were enrolled into the HSU schools: 13 girls and 13 boys, aged between 5 and 11. In the past 12 months, based on our detailed tracking of the children and their families, we know that the following has been achieved:

- 23 children continued taking part in the program (the 3 remaining children moved away from the Uitsig community), all of whom were successfully reintegrated into mainstream school at the start of 2013
- 92% had improved their literacy skills and 96% had improved their numeracy skills (none of the children had these skills at the start of the project)
- Of the 19 children that spent time on the street at the start of the project 68% had reduced their frequency of streetinvolvement, including 42% who no longer spent any time on the streets. Only one of those at risk of streetinvolvement is now spending some time on the streets
- 73% still live in a household that have 1 or more adults with an alcohol or drug dependency or both, although one family has stopped using drugs and now only sometimes uses alcohol
- While initially 13 children reported suffering from physical abuse, in the case of 2 children this was no longer the case at the end of the project and of the remaining 13 children at risk thereof, only 1 was actually experiencing physical abuse by project end.



In total, the data of 32 siblings (14 female, 18 male) of home school children were tracked. Even though there is no direct therapeutic work with the siblings, the family visits and therapeutic work with the parents can also lead to changes for the siblings. In addition, tracking the information gives a more in-depth understanding of the family situation. Encouragingly, of the 14 siblings that were on the street either regularly or infrequently at the project start, by the end of the project, 5 were no longer spending time on the street and another 3 had reduced their frequency of streetinvolvement. None of the siblings that were of school-going age dropped out of school, although the only boy (14 years) who was not in school at project start did not return to school, which, given his age and the background of his household was not unexpected. 3 of the siblings were still using alcohol and drugs and one was abusing alcohol (although not on drugs).

One of the home schools had to deal with a particularly distressing case during the past 6 months. The Home School teacher started noticing that one of the girls in her group displayed specific behaviour traits (including not wanting to be touched) and alerted the community coordinator to her case. Her behaviour led the team to suspect the young girl (only 6 years old) had suffered sexual abuse, which was confirmed in the community health clinic, upon which social services and the police were informed. She was in fact the youngest daughter<sup>1</sup> of the family highlighted in the previous report. When they visited the home of the girl to report the case to the parents, the girl stated that her 14 year old brother had molested and raped her. Sadly, not only did her parents (both drug dependent) not believe her, they scolded and abused her. As the police and social workers witnessed both the confession and the family's reaction, it was decided the child should be taken into foster care, away from her family and the Uitsig community. While the family had not been willing to engage intensively in the New Life program, they had been agreeable to family visits, which now they are also no longer willing to accept. An open session for staff was held after the incident and the procedures were reviewed and staff acknowledged their agreement with the action taken.

#### Intense engagement with parents

New Life have continued to develop their program of intense engagement of parents with home school children. In addition to the Video program element described in the previous report, they have also focused heavily on improving their skills on how to develop a trusted relationship with parents, as this is a key success factor in achieving sustainable positive life outcomes for children. Nevertheless, this can be very difficult, often in the cases where support is needed most; parents are unwilling or unable to cooperate. In order for the parents/family to understand and accept the support New Life is willing to provide, there needs to be a trusted relationship first and most parents are quite reluctant to attend a workshop and/or divulge any real issues with people they don't have a trusted relationship yet, regardless of any good intentions. Developing such relationships through informal ways



<sup>1</sup> The girl was erroneously reported as a young boy in the report though reported correctly in the database

(often through playing board games) can be more effective and less threatening than focusing on the issues directly in the first instance.

All the parents of the children that were in the home schools have been taking part in the intense support program for parents and have demonstrated a keen interest in taking part. 10 families have been filmed to date (of which 3 families have had their second filming as well, all of whom displayed clear signs of improvement<sup>2</sup>). In addition to the actual filming, all the parents taking part in this program are also involved in workshops relating specifically to positive parent child interaction and 6 families are being offered individualized or family therapeutic support. As part of this program, the parents and children were also taken on an excursion to the nearby Strand to experience engaging and bonding with their children in a relaxing environment outside of the family home, which is often disorganised, chaotic and stressful or in the artificial environment of the container.

#### Further engagement with parents:

- 63 families are visited on a regular basis (including parents of Home School Children, as well as those of children at risk of dropping out of school or street involvement)
- 22 parents (all the parents of the children remaining in the home schools) regularly take part in intensive engagement program described above
- Over the past 6 months, an average of 36 parents (per month) visited the container for ad-hoc support.
- Parents also take part in the activities that are organised for the wider community (parents and children) as described below

#### Community activities:

New Life's container unit is a 24 hour staffed centre that acts as both a crisis and community centre. The container acts as a focal point of the Uitsig community, especially now that gang violence has gone up in the community. The Unit provides support, referrals to service providers, training and workshops for parents, children, and the whole community, and staff training to the New Life's community staff. Since the last report in July, 9 parent workshops were held at the container on themes such as "Effective communication with your child" and "attachment and child behaviour" and "Using games for an improved mother-child relationship", which between 9 and 17 parents attended. From July - December 2012, an average of 36 parents per month (including but not limited to those participating in other project activities) visited the container seeking support. New Life continued to provide after school care to 73 children, at the container, offering a combination of home-work support, life skills and informational workshops and/or leisure activities (dominoes, football etc.)

Although New Life specifically works through home schools and after school care in the container, they also frequently arrange activities for all the children and parents in the whole community. Over the past 6 months, this include a range of activities including arts and crafts, face painting, dominoes, soccer, a treasure hunt, a fitness day and a modelling show as well an information day about " the importance of education". Environmental topics were addressed through information sessions about "caring for the environment" and a tree planting session was also held. 80 women from the community attended a high tea, held with the intention of bringing together the women from the community so they can share their experiences, challenges and needs as well as offer support to each other. New Life also held an event on Women's Day celebrations which had the topic "Women also have rights" which was attended by 49 women and another 47



ladies attended the information session with the topic "Important Roles that Woman play in the Community". At the start of the Christmas holidays, New Life ran a Holiday program for the children with fun and games, as well as receiving small Christmas presents donated through the Cape Town - based initiative "Santa's Shoe Box". New Life also held a special information session about "Safety during the holiday season". The latter is a recurring session which happens each end of year, to warn children of the particular safety issues that exist in the holidays, with the city and surrounding areas full of visiting people that could pose a threat to the children, in particular as this is also a period where parents are more prone to neglect their children as they take to drink and drugs during the holidays.

<sup>2</sup> It was intended for all families to have their re-take done by the end of 2012, but this has been delayed until Feb 2013.



### On Street Children

New Life also works with older on-street children who due to their age and the number of years they have been out of school would no longer agree to take part in the home schools. During the past 12 months, they have worked with a group of 11 children (9 boys, 2 girls) aged 12 to 18. As all were on the street on a regular basis, most of the interaction with them is on the street, where the security situation allows this, but 8 also regularly attended the container. Although the interaction with these children is a much later stage of their development and negative life cycle and many are already involved in drugs, change is much harder to achieve. In spite of this, some progress was made.

By the end of the 12 months, 5 of the remaining 10 children were no longer on the streets (one child moved out of Uitsig), of which one (an 18 year old girl) had a baby and was being cared for by her mother. The other 4 (boys) were holding down jobs, either selling fruit or as a scrap collector or other regular employment. Unfortunately, the 16 year old boy that was living on the street was arrested for burglary and sent to a juvenile centre.

Despite the progress made on street involvement and finding jobs, 5 of the 11 original on-street children were still recorded as regular drug users and 5 out of the 11 were still living in household where violence levels are high and frequent, with the violence being perpetrated both by the parents and the children in these cases (both unchanged since the last report). 8 out of 11 live in households that have 1 or more adult with an alcohol or drug dependency and in most of these cases, their sibling take drugs as well.

#### **Staff training:**

Training for home school educators and community workers every 2 - 4 weeks, with home school educators receiving additional training on specific teaching elements, with a total of 8 training workshops taking place between July and December 2012 (bringing the total of staff workshops during 2012 to 17) Training is provided by either the Project Director or the Project Administrator. To date, staff training, attended by all staff has covered topics such as:

- The value of family therapy
- Understanding family connections
- Understanding the child living in an abusive family
- Action Learning Cycle

Home School teachers also received refresher training on emergency procedures and how to secure the children when shootings take place (following the August incidents), how to evaluate a child's progress and stress management. Staff meetings were held on a fortnightly basis regarding project planning (including M&E), upcoming visits of funders and/or other authorities and/or review thereof.

#### **Engaging with other stakeholders:**

New Life also frequently reaches out to service providers and key officials to share the success of their work, ensure the communities access to services and education, and bring resources to the Uitsig community. Project staff met with the Ministry of Social Development on a quarterly basis to discuss their current funding of the project and continue dialogue on improving service delivery and practices for the Uitsig community. In particular, in the past few months they have met with the Ministry representative to discuss the possibility of a night shelter for emergency abuse cases in the community. The community coordinator and other staff members regularly attend the Community Policy Forum.

#### **Budget:**

The shortfall of 25% of the funding highlighted in the previous report remained outstanding as the former funder decided finally not to extend further funding<sup>3</sup>. Despite efforts to attract new funders for the current project period, we were unsuccessful although this was not unexpected given the short time frame left for the project and the turnaround time for new applications by most trusts. However, following a successful monitoring visit by Comic Relief at the end of August to the New Life project in Beaufort West (which they are currently funding), at the end of September the ICT and New Life applied for new funding for the Uitsig program, for which they received the approval at the end of 2012. This funding has started in January 2013

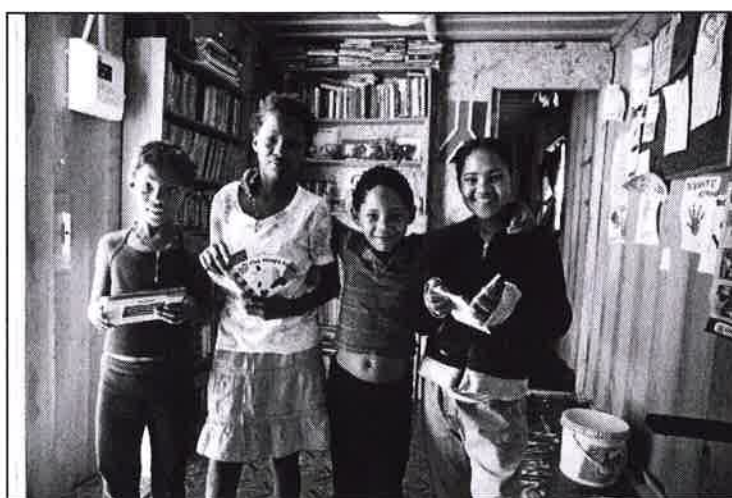
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<sup>3</sup> Although they are still funding one of the ICT's Asia programs

and provides funding for a multi-year program along the same lines as the current Uitsig work as well as containing a strong emphasis on action research as well as building New Life's capacity to raise their profile and attract local funding.

For the remainder of 2012, the project was managed on a slightly reduced budget. The required replacement of 2 staff members<sup>4</sup> was delayed, with the 2 replacements only starting in July and August respectively (following which they were also not paid full salary until the end of their probation period). Other savings were made by small reductions in the activity budgets as well as voluntary salary reductions of senior staff. Despite substantial efficiency savings through only offering breakfast and lunch at home schools, with no refreshments offered at any other activities as well as a heavier reliance on in-kind donations, the food budget was not sufficient as originally anticipated, resulting in an overspend although not to the same extent as in the first 6 months. Any other additional expenditure was paid for by New Life's reserves.

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget (GBP)</b>	<b>Actual (GBP)</b>
Project Leader - for overall project supervision	4,727	3,601
Community-based coordinator - responsible for the community centre	2,727	2,479
3 community-based field workers - streetoutreach, family work, community centre activities	5,455	4,589
4 Home School Support Educators	8,727	5,138
Administrative, financial and support staff	3,436	2,619
Ongoing training of field staff	1,640	1,250
Parent and family training sessions	1,964	1,497
Community workshops	982	749
Local travel for field-based work and staff training	1,064	814
Educational Material	455	333
Food and refreshments for HSU and centre	545	1,697
Communications	928	708
Contribution to audit	655	655
ICT Admin and Monitoring Costs (7.5%)	2,498	1,456
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>£35,802</b>	<b>£27,585</b>



**With our Thanks to the British Foreign School Society!**

<sup>4</sup> One was made redundant due to non-performance and the other did not return for family reasons following maternity leave