



THE HOUSE GROUP
P O Box 18557
Hillbrow, Johannesburg
2038, South Africa

January 30, 2001

Department of Social Services and Population Development
61 Rissik Street
Johannesburg

Att: **Dorothy van der Spuy**

Re: **What do to with this crazy world? – Chapter two**

Hallo Dorothy

Trust that you are keeping well. Good, then herewith your new year's parcel (or shall I call it chapter two?)

1. Full-time staff and volunteers

- December/January was sorted out to some degree. Members of the advisory committee and previous full-time staff members were contacted and between them, and casual helpers, the projects were kept open and the children cared for.
(Being a volunteer means that your heart is in the right place, working at The House Group of Projects ... and especially in Hillbrow, is not a job, it is more of a calling and without compassion, or heart, you are of no benefit to the projects or the children in the projects).
- Three well-known and trusted previously full-time staff members were appointed as full-time staff.
- One of the 'on holiday' full-time staff returned from holiday, she's been with us since '97.
- Two volunteers applied for full-time staff positions and will be evaluated in a few days to determine if they should become full-time staff.
- Two other staff members, during their respective 3rd and 2nd day of employment at the projects, marched all the children down to your intake offices on the 16th January, demanding (?) that the children be sent home and to school! Needless to say they were told that their services will no longer be needed.
- One of the 'on holiday' full-time staff members (the manager), returned late from holiday and due to many other and more serious problems a decision was made that her services is no longer required
- Have not yet replaced the social worker and are seriously considering not to employ a social worker, but make use of 2-3 social workers that can assist the projects on a consulting/contract basis. I will give you a call to ask advice about this issue.

2. **Management Committee**

The management committee collapsed. No great damage was done, and that which has been done can be fixed without too much pain. There was no mismanagement of funds, just neglect of the premises and paperwork. Much help is received from the advisory/old committee and I will keep you posted.

Major volunteer drive must be launched. As you know we recruit and train volunteers to be involved in the projects, they then become members and only then can they be elected to the management committee = a management committee with hands-on experience and that knows what the projects are about and most important, who the children are that the projects are working with. This drive may take some time as the local community (that is where the projects are based) consist mainly of drug dealers, crooked government officers, illegal immigrants, brothel owners and then the sex-buyers. Will talk to you about other possibilities of creating awareness and getting volunteers with 'heart' and not 'crotches' involved in the projects.

3. **Changes**

Oops! ☺ Putting the drop-in and shelter children together at night does not work, therefore the girls will be once again be on the two premises at night, meaning additional full-time night staff. More efforts will be made to keep the two groups separate during the day as well, as the older and drop-in group really are not such a good influence on the shelter girls.

In addition, instead of using just the one kitchen that prepares meals for both the projects, we will have two kitchens. The drop-in children refuse to clean and the shelter children are complaining that they are the 'servant's of the drop-in children who just wants to eat without doing their share of the preparation of the meals or the cleaning. Each project will have its own kitchen, menu, cooking and cleaning. This problem is easy to fix and by mid February we should have the two kitchens in place.

4. **Repairs**

No general maintenance was done by the new committee, and the properties being old, neglect and mismanagement shows very quickly. Old properties must be maintained on a daily basis and much of this will be done asap.

The bathrooms are in a serious state of mismanagement and sections will be retiled, showers fixed, etc. This also will be done by early February.

Damage control will be relatively easy, although it is going to take lots of time and effort.

- Ensuring the children that all is going to be ok, and that their programmes will be back to program/normal by the end of February.
- Except for one, all the full-time staff are new and training must be done.
- Recruitment and training must begin to establish a new management committee according to the Departments requirements.
- Repairs and maintenance to the premises.
- Paperwork, yard work, hard work, etc., etc.
- We must find the time to do the necessary work (that is advisory committee)

Kulula Skills Centre is doing ok. But, we will have to get in there and help them, a meeting is scheduled with them for the 1st February. Kulula is petrified to spend their money and we cannot blame them as the Department Welfare is so erratic in their payments and they are worried that if they spend their money ... when will they get money again?

Talk to you soon and thanks that we can turn to you for guidance and help. Knowing that you and Elzabe are there really help.

Warm regards

Adèle du Plessis
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