

5th Civil Society Forum Meeting 28 June 2008 Minutes. 12:00-14:30

- I. Introductions and Welcome
- II. Reports:
 - a. The need to collect consistent, regular data from all the sites housing refugees was identified and an assessment plan was formulated.
 - b. Recruited volunteers to go out and fill out standardized assessments and data was entered onto an online database.
 - c. Baseline, twice weekly questionnaire
 - i. Information is being/will be used to distribute supplies and needs. Also being used and incorporated into legal affidavits and monitoring of the government.
 - d. This last week was focused on collecting baseline surveys and combining the SHADE database online. Logistics.
 - e. There is now a need to streamline the kinds of questions and the numbers of people that are coming in and assessing the same things.
 - f. Concern was expressed about the numbers of disparate “assessment teams” that were being conducted by different organizations, which has caused some issues and confusion with refugees because there is little coming back to them from assessors.
 - i. HRC is giving out pamphlets to explain happenings
 - g. Tracey Saunders (Soetwater and HRC volunteer) suggests that HRC data could be shared with TAC assessment database to get a better picture and streamline process
 - h. Who do we know is going to camps and assessing?
 - i. HRC, TAC volunteers, Forced Migration (Vicki) through Oxfam
 - ii. Must figure out if city and province and who all else is asking questions
 - i. Agreed that it is extremely important that people know why we are all going in. Anyone going in must be able to articulate that.
 - j. Need to put together a letter/one pager explaining to refugees how the previous week’s data is being used.
- III. Draft Memo of General Needs (Packet Item #2)
 - a. In each section, the current situation is generally outlined and then needs and/or norms and standards outlined
 - i. Food

- ii. Medical – collection of anecdotal evidence
 - iii. Shelter—particular issues with privacy and protection from weather
 - iv. Transports
 - v. Non-food issues have been missing in previous assessments but are crucial needs (esp. diapers and sanitary towels).
 - vi. Cleanliness and Hygiene
 - vii. Toilets
 - viii. Safety – lighting to toilets, separation of men and female
 - ix. Drainage
 - x. Water
 - xi. Security
 - xii. Site Management
- b. Now we have the method of data collection and now will be translating the raw data and analyzing it to produce it in a readable way.
- c. Health Dept had a comprehensive plan to collect this data and they are obviously in breach of that plan (it will be put into the legal case we are filing by Monday)

IV. Reports:

- a. Klipfontein
 - i. Not much assessment in this area other than doing site assessments on Bonne Esperance (Vicki).
 - ii. Daroo Islam Mosque has been having difficulty getting the Imam for follow up, apparently there is another mosque in the area sheltering refugees as well (*need to follow up*).
- b. Khayelitsha
 - i. Report that people in SOLOMON MAHLANGU were told by government officials last night at 9:30 pm that they would be moved in the morning (Saturday). Not told where to.
 - ii. Visited 7 sites and there is a common lack of general coordination among the sites... some have committees and some don't
 - iii. Residence feel that they are not receiving the donations... cooks stealing their food
 - iv. No real health care presence – only TAC and MSF volunteers
 - v. Food is an issue and only 2 meals a day: kids are receiving the same time and amounts as adults, which is obviously not healthy
 - vi. Andile Msizi patient was refused from Site B clinic. The nurse asked why they were still in the community hall and refused to provide care. TAC volunteer had come in to take care of the person's sores.
 - vii. One child stopped going to school because there has stopped going to school because of xenophobia.
 - viii. There are cases reported in KTC and Zolani community halls that people have fled Zimbabwe and have come directly to the community halls.
 - ix. Generally volunteers and assessors feel that these sites are awful and maybe there should be a call to put them into other sites?

- x. Need **regular visits of health care**: 2-3 times a week to check on the health conditions of refugees
 - xi. Need **better supply of food: timing, amount, variety, etc**
 - xii. Particularly important for the children at the sites as well as those on chronic medication
 - xiii. Further, it was suggested that refugees should be made aware of these meetings or given updates because they receive very little information about what is being done.
- c. Northwestern
- i. Very similar to last week: variety of food and transport are still big problems
 - ii. Discovered that there are churches along Voertrekker road which have popped up and the church volunteers have been strained because they do not receive help from government.
 - iii. It was observed that they seem to have a good reintegration approach for those who wish to do so.
 - iv. Lots of new people that are showing up in the halls and there is a thought that people are simply entering the country from neighbors to go straight to community halls.
 - v. Richwood: the council has given the security force has had instructions that there (from Mr. Dankers) are **no new people to come into the halls** (*follow up?*)
- d. Mitchell's Plain
- i. Blue Water – there were altercations between the Congolese and Zimbabweans but they have seemed to have sorted out their problems with the help of mediators.
 - ii. **Key problem: amount of food is dwindling... and each day there is less and less provided. Sentiment among refugees that the government is trying to force them out of the camps by skimping on food supplies.**
 - iii. 120 children kids: 86 under five years old and they only receive food (bread) in the morning. No formula and there is a baby who is 10 days old.
 - iv. People waiting for reintegration (*will follow up with Zelda, ALP*)
- e. Nysna
- i. Impossible to get an honest answer from government or Disaster Management
 - ii. Red Cross food has been stopped because the location is so far away.
 - iii. No ground sheets, only stoves provided by the community.
- f. Soetwater
- i. Mohammad denied access at first and after much phone calling could only get a tour in a vehicle, he was not allowed to get out and talk with refugees.
 - ii. About 1100 refugees currently at Soetwater.
 - iii. Bread and milk breakfast is only coming in at 3 pm.

- iv. Must call refugee leadership and then also the camp managers to get in. The refugee leadership is trying to want to streamline the process.
 - v. Refugee rep update:
 - 1. The newspapers are writing that the camp will be closed and that everyone will be moved tomorrow or after tomorrow... we don't know why and we don't want to go out because we are scared. There is no reason given for why they are doing anything.
 - vi. Sunday meeting with the other camp leaders to facilitate discussion and communication and create a more united refugee force.
 - vii. **Very concerned about the mental health of people on the ground:** don't know if and or when the camp will be closed. People who left Soetwater for Blue Waters are now asking to come back because they are having such a hard time
 - viii. Children report: the situation at Soetwater is same at other camps where there is not enough/adequate food or stimulation.
 - ix. From today this morning the camp leadership has decided to let volunteers in.
 - x. **If you would like to gain access to Soetwater, there are two people you must get in contact with:**
 - 1. **Camp manager (Cecil or David) and**
 - 2. **One of the refugee leaders**
 - xi. Waiting for document to work with camp management and volunteers and there are standards signed on
- g. **IDASA is trying get the refugee leaders from other camps and Soetwater a place on the parliament docket with their memorandum**
- h. Youngsfield
- i. Home Affairs has not been in to visit or assess since the first weekend...
 - ii. Do not want to be moved because they feel safe, despite the bad conditions
 - iii. Everyone is expecting resettlement Needs to be a clearer, more informative line of communication about the issues around this.
 - iv. Major concern: **sanitation**... digging pits, not changing portable toilets, etc.
 - 1. One block of showers and men and women are sharing
 - 2. No facilities for washing hands. No soap.
 - v. Same concern as others with the kinds of food. Want a kitchen so that they can make their own food while the supplied
 - vi. Nurse and medical students within the camp as refugees... the medical kit is lacking, the volunteer and government doctor and nurses are not adequate and so they are trying to arrange for the displaced medical students and nurses to be able to provide medical care.
 - vii. Have a teacher and they are trying to get through to UNICEF to get books so that they can attend to the needs of the children
- i. Silverstroom
- i. No one present for an update.

- j. Harmony Park
 - i. See document pack for situation update.
- V. General point made by **PHM** that there is not enough information on children and their specific needs.
 - a. They are one of the most vulnerable populations we are dealing with and are the quickest to experience a deterioration of health.
 - b. Important to obtain robust data on their condition not only to ensure their well being but it would be a particularly resonant part of the court case.
 - c. Children's needs are not being looked at adequately
 - d. Must look at the UN Children's Charter to see about the rights and needs of children
 - e. Further, better, more accurate data must be collected if the case is to stand up in courts. Children's situation could be the key.
- VI. Don't need to get more data to prove that the health department has completely messed up and missed the boat on their plan and duties. They made a plan in the beginning to do this work and they haven't.
- VII. Political Report – Fatima Hassan**
 - a. Tuesday (24 June) Province decided it was going to take control of all the material needs to all of the sites and that civil society would not have to provide the assistance any longer
 - b. While we think this is not possible, the Province must be tested.
 - c. Have to accept that they will take over because it's how should be but have to not let things slip.
 - d. Made a choice to assess and get information to get the picture (last week) assessment and compiling into a list of demands
 - i. Long term needs (infrastructure: showers, toilets)
 - ii. Ongoing daily needs
 - e. Friday morning the list of the infrastructural needs was giving to province for the 27 sites. We are expecting a report back on Tuesday.
 - f. Urgent food needs: list of five sites on Thursday – urgent food needs should be on the same day at an absolute max of 12 hours.... We then followed up with those sites and none of the needs were met.
 - i. We send those needs out. But now have concrete evidence that government didn't fulfill their promises
 - g. MONDAY: Chair of JOC to develop a proper flow of information, timeframe to expect answers, confusion about who we should be submitting needs to.
 - h. Our plan is to get the needs to province immediately and then if there is no response to fulfill those needs ourselves and use it as a failure of the Province
- VIII. Biweekly Civil Society meetings at Human Rights Commission:
 - a. Agreement that civil society can go to JOC (Elroy form BS has been sitting on this) but we don't have speaking rights and cannot truly participate
 - b. Dave went to the JOC and explain the assessment – civil society can only sit and present and discuss but cannot hear what the decisions that the JOC made

- c. TUESDAY meeting was just to get the civil society to calm down... and it was a sudden meeting (TAC COSATU and ALP held lines)
- IX. "There is no deliberative plan to put on the table now. There will not be now or ever a joint plan" – Lionel Louw.... Tried to put all blame on Mayor.
- X. Another Joint Civil Society and Province meeting on Tuesday at HRC
 - a. "Was it asked why it has taken so long and what their interim plans are?" (in the meeting about taking over from civil society)
 - b. Pointed out to the government that we gave them a detailed memo that says nicely what needs to be done and that we were willing to help
 - c. There was a continued washing of their hands of the camps and the situation
 - d. At the meeting the province have their lawyers working on drafting regulations about opening up community halls → don't know when they will come or if they will be challenges by city
 - e. Heard there was an urgent meeting of Home Affairs regarding Zimbabwe
 - i. DHA is considering giving anyone who is affected by the violence temporary permits, but we have concerns and questions about the details: open 24 hrs?, people coming back into camps just to get their documents, etc
 - f. The issue of Zimbabweans coming straight into the community halls was brought up and the need for planning about the situation to come.
- XI. NCOP has approved the Refugee bill has taken out the express right to health... put the ball in Dept Health without increasing their budget.
- XII. Send **Fatima** or **Scott** (dunlop70@gmail.com) an email if you would like to endorse the memos to UNHCR and Province about the refugee rule....
- XIII. UN issued a memo to refugees (see pack), which was it was undated but now we're told it was dated 20 June. Has been translated into 6 languages. Should get copies from UNHCR because we should not have to pay
 - a. Concerns about which countries are considered "safe"
 - i. Ask UCT law clinic because they are our legal advisors about which are unsafe.
- XIV. Drafting a letter to be submitted Monday... endorsements?
- XV. Elroy was called personally that because he was the chair he could attend the JOC... sinister effort to divide.
 - a. Must have consistent Civil Society voice. We must have 3 people who are going to be working on rotation at least to represent CS at the JOC
- XVI. Salt River/Caledon/Muizenburg group have no changes and their need

- XVII. Sent legal teams sent to get people processed to get docs back and
- a. Going to start evening visits: to get people who work captured....
 - i. Bothasig, Summers Green Monday...
 - ii. Richwood wants us to come

XVIII. FRIDAY DIRECTIVE to issue cards to refugees???????????????? ALP to follow up.

- XIX. Security issue to be taken up by ISS so send to ctviolence and we will collate and

XX. Legal Case

- a. What is trying to be done: lawyers and advocates have a draft founding affidavit that includes assessments, individual testaments (15-20 supporting affidavits)
- b. People required to go to every camp every day and put on affidavit about the conditions so that it creates a checks and balances.
- c. Ready to be put on Monday... sent lots of time NOT going to court and nothing is being dealt with. Have to go to court
- d. Getting expert affidavits about why the norms and why they aren't being met
- e. What we need from you: give short supporting affidavits to tell why you support this action, what the conditions are....
- f. **EARLIEST WE CAN ARGUE THE CASE IS NEXT WEEK...** don't know the outcome, the time is right because we've been waiting too long.
- g. Lawyers for Human Rights (Jacob) is working on the grants, refer questions to them.
- h. Health rights: you cannot be turned away

- XXI. Q: Is the city and the province able over their head or do we have to raise a public effort, start civil disobedience campaign?

- a. Must focus on the court case because that allows us to publically mobilize people.... The very fact that there is a public paper will mean that things will be changed, but they don't change it properly so we know we will have to mobilize (Z)
- b. There's a real constraints in health dept as is.... Shouldn't let them off the hook but there are real institutional (Z)
- c. The reason I raised the issue of having very tight evidence, we will be much more successful if we have very strong evidence that children (PHM)
- d. We can't let them off the hook – they do have the capacity... we ought to be doing a lot better not just for the displaced.... They ought to be better for the entire population
- e. The problem is that they are not doing their work. I think that we should use this to expose the inadequacy....

- XXII. POLITICAL NOTE: we have to tighten up this structure... if we are going to be elected to the JOC

- a. Must get a list of the organizations here so that we can have stuff to back up.... Get a name down so that we can say that this is what we supported these actions: have to get a coordinating system so that we can get rapid endorsements (DAVE)

- b. We must agree a set of pressure/demands for the week that we all sign onto if we can and then we can sign organizations names
- c. Not sure on a practical level how we are supposed to get support

SUMMARY:

XXIII. Highlight our key advocacy weekly pressure.

XXIV. Key Issues/Themes:

- a. Food → 1 meal to 3 MUST BE ACHIEVED/AIM FOR PRESSURE
- b. Baby and child care MUST BE ACHIEVED/ AIM FOR PRESSURE
- c. Forced removal
- d. Sanitation
- e. Urgency in documentation

XXV. MEANS:

- a. JOC, memo, court papers,