



A Chance To Play Southern Africa : Newsletter May-June Edition (2014)

“ Empowering children through Play”



Editor's Note

Greetings!

Currently, most parts of Southern Africa are experiencing the winter season that is always associated with cold and uncomfortable temperatures. Unfortunately, this has a huge impact on outside play and most children prefer playing indoors. This winter, however, comes with the exciting spectacle of Soccer World Cup in Brazil, which on its own affords children enjoyment as they spend time watching. Other forms of indoor games such as board games , television and computer are most likely to be played in most homes and organisations. These games involve less exercise.

With the above scenario in mind, A Chance to Play Southern Africa held several activities in the month of April and May. We hosted our first Southern African Play Conference in the region and it was a success. We are currently working on the advocacy strategy for play which was an end product of the conference and is at its final stage. World Play Day was celebrated by all the members and more awareness is taking place with regards to play in Southern Africa and the world at large. From the youth that were trained as play facilitators in April most of them managed to form play clubs in their communities, hence promoting play at grassroots level.

The ACTPSA board of management had their first meeting this year; their main focus for this year is to enable ACTPSA to convince funders that play has an impact in communities through research and indicators. Training, monitoring and evaluating tools were also discussed in the agenda.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning."

—Mr. Rogers



Southern Africa Play Conference



The Southern Africa Play Conference was hosted by Cotlands in partnership with ACTPSA with the support of terre des homes from the 12-16 of May 2014. It was aimed at increasing an understanding of the importance of play and providing evidence on play and strategies that promote and stimulate safe play as an essential right towards the holistic development of children.

Presentations were done to show the significance of play and evidence was also given on the impact of play on children. The evidences and benefits of play were documented and shared amongst the people who attended the conference. A common understanding on the focus and strategy of work in the next three years through the development of a joint advocacy plan on the right to play was drafted. Currently, A Chance to Play Southern Africa with the help of Cotlands is finalising the plan by the end of June and action will be taken to implement the strategy. The strategy will be focusing on 3 objectives which are:

- To promote the value and importance of play and recreation activities for children at all levels of society.
- Increase play opportunities at local community level by promoting access to play models and safe play spaces
- National, provincial and local government meets their international and regional obligation on the right to play in upholding the provisions in Article 31 of the UNCRC and Article 12 of the ACRWC.

There were a total of eighty-six participants who attended the conference. Fifty were from South Africa and thirty six were from other southern African countries (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia). All ACTPSA members attended as well as government representatives from 3 countries.



Youth Facilitators Training

Twenty six youths received training that was designed to equip them with play facilitation skills as well as enabling them to promote play in their communities by forming clubs. The training also encouraged youth to take part in communal activities. It is envisioned that such participation in communal activities, instils a sense of belonging in youth. This would also help them to avoid delinquency. Play keeps both youth and children healthy, happy, they learn new skills and are capacitated to cope with challenges they meet in daily lives.

Organizations from Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa sent their youth to this training. It was their first play training and everyone enjoyed it. For example, Thandeka from Sophakama highlighted that the exercise of drawing childhood memory games made her to get in touch with her own childhood memories.

Apparently, there were some of the games that the trainees enjoyed more than others. Such games are balloon and newspaper fight, tug of war and many song games such as zip zap. One of the youth (Edward from Zambia Christian Youth Centre) openly expressed deep emotions as he said, "these games touched me to the core". This was a great sense of appreciation of his participation in these games.

Trainees were taught how to make play kits with waste material such as newspapers, toilet paper rolls, bottle tops and strings. The most crucial activity that the facilitator engaged them in was to teach them to become better facilitators. He made reference to the ACTP Play Manual page 32 which clearly states that the qualities of a good facilitator include being able to prepare play before engaging children in terms of mastering the game, to accommodate every child, having enough play equipment and space and ensuring that the children are enjoying the game.

In conclusion they were asked to come up with play plans for the month. It was an interesting activity because this was meant to equip them when they go back to their communities. From the organisations that were trained 60% have already started their school clubs and some are still in the process of initiating them. (Contact us if you want to know more about school clubs)



Are you in need of youth or adult play facilitators training? Please contact us !!!

World Play Day

History

The Founder of World Play Day, Dr Freda Kim, developed the concept of World Play Day in 1996 while attending an international toy library conference in Switzerland. The vision of the World Play Day is ,
“to be a day of total attention to each other from generation to generation. A day that is fun shows adults and children in interactive situations promoting the health growth of each other. If everyone in the world would do this in the same day each year we will have a world play day” (Dr Freda Kim).

As play ambassadors , together with our members and communities we commemorated the World Play Day with the rest of the world. We celebrated World Play Day in different styles. We had much fun and play. Some of our partners like Johannesburg Child Welfare , Oosterland and Christian Youth Volunteers Association Trust indicated that the number of children that attended doubled as compared to last year. More awareness on play was shared on that day and most parents and caregivers participated in ensuring that children’s right to play is observed.

Our World of play in Pictures



FIFA World Cup 2014

The World Cup soccer tournament is being hosted in Brazil this year. In line with the basics of play, the world at large joins our Brazilian counterpart “A chance to play - O direito de brincar' Brasil” in enjoying this exciting and captivating event. Taking advantage of this magnificent event, A Chance to Play Brazil has also joined forces with other civil organization and communities in ensuring that the children are protected during this time of the year. They have come up with activities that entertain children while adults are watching soccer. More information will feature in our next article.

Your feedback is valuable. Please share with us your opinions. Also share with us your stories and pictures. Send them to; coordination-sa@a-chance-to-play.org

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George Bernard Shaw