



**THE LAND OF THE SINGING FISH
MENCAFEP – BATTICALOA
NEWSLETTER.**

Ministry of Social Welfare Registration Number – L – 120211.

**A PROJECT SPONSORED
TERRE DES HOMMES – NETHERLANDS.
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In all wars and disasters it is the disabled child that is the first to die; it is the disabled child that is the first to get disease and infection; it is the disabled child that is the last to get resources when they are handed out.

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MENCAFEP – Batticaloa Outreach Work.

With MENCAFEP – Batticaloa one year away from the end of its 3 year funding and months away from a Joint Evaluation, we thought in this newsletter to look at MENCAFEP – Batticaloa outreach work. Along with MENCAFEP's main centre in Batticaloa it also operates 7 satellite centres; The Hospital Clinic, every Tuesday afternoon at the Batticaloa Hospital; The MENCAFEP - Ozanam Social Care Centre, MENCAFEP – Human Vision School and Centre to the North of Batticaloa District at Oddamarvardy and at four Government schools again in the North of Batticaloa District, in the Varkari area, MENCAFEP in partnership with Arumbugal run 4 schools and centres for children and young people with special needs. These 4 schools and centres, along with the Oddamarvardy centre also run integrated play activities in the afternoon for able and disabled children.

To look at this work MENCAFEP thought Terre des homes – Netherlands would like to look at a survey that MENCAFEP carried out between December 2009 and January 2010. To see how its work was being seen by the people it was serving, the families of the children that attend the school and centres.



Enya with a child from the Oddamarvardy Centre.

We took the five centres to the North of Batticaloa District; Oddamarvady, Katherveli, Palenchanai, Varkari and Palakerni, as well as 4 Play Activities in Batticaloa Town, where MENCAFEP has been helping to integrate disabled children and rolled out a survey within these communities we work with. The above survey was conducted between December 15 2009 and January 15 2009. It was hindered by the adverse weather conditions during December and January which left most of the Batticaloa District under water for several weeks; the programme itself was also badly affected.

Programme workers and volunteers carried out the survey between the above dates, visiting and interviewing each individual family in their own homes.

The criteria for interviewed families are any family directly involved in the programme as of the December 15 2009. This would include families with children at the Special Centres, Play Activities and families on community committees.



Learning can be fun at MENCAFEP – Batticaloa Satellite Centres.



Dear parent or guardian:

In our work with your children, we value your feedback. Please help us fill out the following survey with our CBR workers, it will be returned to our Head Office for analysis to improve our work with your children. Your feedback is greatly appreciated as is your participation!

Date: 15 December 2009 to 15 January 2010.

Number of families visited: 873.

Number of Children: 842.

Area of Service.	QUALITY RATING					
	Strongly Agree.	Agree.	Neutral.	Disagree.	Strongly Disagree.	Don't Know.
OVERALL CENTRE AND PLAY ACTIVITY EXCELLENCE.						
1. Our centre and/or play activity program is of high quality.	618.	230.	25.			
2. Our centre and/or play activity is doing an excellent job of:						
a Improving the health of your child.	561.	308.	4.			
b Improving the Education of your child.	475.	379.	19.			
c Allowing able and disabled children to be educated and play together in the community.	575.	278.	20.			
CENTRE AND PLAY ACTIVITY RESOURCES.						
3. My child has access to a variety of resources to help him/her learn.	311.	399.	161.	2.		
4. Our centre/play activity facilities are clean and well maintained.	413.	455.	5.			
LIFE SKILLS TRAINING						
5. My child is being well prepared to find employment.	385.*	258.*	47.*	4.*	1.*	
6. Our centre/play activity is preparing my child to deal with issues and problems he or she will face in the future.	412.	437.	24.			
7. The centre/play activity programs are broad enough to meet the educational needs of all children and young people that attend.	453.	400.	20.			

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CENTRE AND PLAY ACTIVITY BEHAVIOUR.						
8. MENCAFEP and partner staff at our centre and play activity demonstrates sensitivity to your child's needs.	562.	304.	7.			
9. Our centre and play activity provides children and staff with a safe and orderly environment.	432.	431.	10.			
10. Staff at our centre and play activity demonstrate genuine concern for the well being of the children.	541.	324.	8.			
11. Children and young people at our centre and play activity demonstrate genuine concern for the well being of fellow students.	453.	411.	9.			
PARENT-COMMUNITY-CENTRE-PLAT ACTIVITY COMMUNICATION.						
12. Parents feel welcome in our centre and play activity.	488.	377.	8.			
13. Through home visits and support groups the centre and play activity helps sustain you and your child in the community.	361.	497.	15.			
14. The views of parents are seriously considered when centre and play activity decisions are made.	547.	287.	36.	2.	1.	
15. With the Government organisation providing space in their schools for our centres and play activities has helped in the care of your children.	254.#	334.#	5.#			
16. Since the centre and play activity has started your economic circumstances have changed for the better.	268.	459.	69.	66.	11.	
MORE COMMENTS?						
<p><i>If you wish, please expand upon your assessment of any areas in which our centres and play activities could improve. We welcome your suggestions and will hold a full parents meeting in February/March 2010 to discuss the results of this survey – Many thanks for your help.</i></p> <p>#This question only applies to the centres in the Varkari area, where they are all placed in Government schools. The rest of the centres are on private land or their own land.</p> <p>* This question only applies to centre were vocational training is available.</p>						



CARE FOR ALL AT THE SATELLITE CENTRES RUN BY MENCAFEP – BATTICALOA.



LEARNING NEW SKILLS AT THE MENCAFEP – BATTICALOA SATELLITE CENTRES.

Analysis of MENCAFEP Survey.	Remarks.
Area of Service.	
OVERALL CENTRE AND PLAY ACTIVITY EXCELLENCE.	
1. Our centre and/or play activity program is of high quality.	The majority of families in this project believe that the program is of high quality, 848 out of 873 families either strongly agree or agree. The main reason for this is the community involvement from the start of the project. The children, families and community have grown as the project has grown. They feel that they own the project along with MENCAFEP and her partners. Therefore the quality of the project is there quality.
2. Our centre and/or play activity is doing an excellent job of:	
a Improving the health of your child	With the belief in the community that the program is of high quality, then families and communities see the improvement in their children; 869 out of 873 interviewed see improved health in their children, due to the health clinics being organised, during the life of the project.
b Improving the Education of your child.	854 out of 873 see improvement in education.
c Allowing able and disabled children to be educated and play together in the community.	853 out of 873 like the idea of able and disabled being educated and playing together. However with the above 3 questions there are some families, 43 in the neutral column, that are not sure we are doing anything for their children.
CENTRE AND PLAY ACTIVITY RESOURCES.	
3. My child has access to a variety of resources to help him/her learn.	A majority of families 710 believe that their child has access to a variety of resources. However a significant minority 161, not sure and two families believing their children do not have access to variety resources. This will be taken up at community meetings in the New Year.
4. Our centre/play activity facilities are clean and well maintained.	868 out of 873 believe that the facilities are clean and well maintained.

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING	
5. My child is being well prepared to find employment.	As mentioned in the comments in the survey results, this question only applies to centres that have a vocational training component. The total families interviewed for this question was 690, of which 643 believe their child is being prepared for employment. Forty seven families are not sure, with 4 families disagreeing and one family strongly disagreeing. Although this will be talked about, MENCAFEP initial feeling is the families that are not sure and disagreeing are the families with severely disabled children.
6. Our centre/play activity is preparing my child to deal with issues and problems he or she will face in the future.	849 out of 873 agree with this question, showing that the programme is beginning to work for the families we are assisting.
7. The centre/play activity programs are broad enough to meet the educational needs of all children and young people that attend.	Again a large majority 853 out of 873 believe the programme is broad enough to meet all children's needs. This shows again, the programmes in place during the years are affecting children and their families.
CENTRE AND PLAY ACTIVITY BEHAVIOUR.	
8. MENCAFEP and partner staff at our centre and play activity demonstrates sensitivity to your child's needs.	An overwhelming majority 866 out of 873 who believe the staff demonstrate sensitivity to their children's needs. Which shows that the training that the staff are being given is working in the way they interact with the children in their care.
9. Our centre and play activity provides children and staff with a safe and orderly environment.	Training again seems to be giving results as far as the families and community see the staff and the programme with 863 out of 873 seeing the centres as a safe and orderly environment.
10. Staff at our centre and play activity demonstrate genuine concern for the well being of the children.	Families and community see that the staff in this project have genuine concern for the children they work with, 865 out of 873 families seem to see this.
11. Children and young people at our centre and play activity demonstrate genuine concern for the well being of fellow students.	Through the staff working with the children and the activities the programme provides, parents family and the community are seeing how, through the #child-to-child programme children are caring for each other with 864 out of 873 families agreeing with this question.

PARENT-COMMUNITY-CENTRE-PLAY ACTIVITY COMMUNICATION.	
12. Parents feel welcome in our centre and play activity.	Due to the way the programme is functioning parents and families feel comfortable within the project with 865 families out of 873, agreeing.
13. Through home visits and support groups the centre and play activity helps sustain you and your child in the community.	According to families, a very important aspect of this programme, home visits and support group meetings are helping families cope in difficult situations, 858 out of 873 seeing this as very positive.
14. The views of parents are seriously considered when centre and play activity decisions are made.	Although a large majority 843 out of 873 sees this question in a positive light, there are a few who are not sure 36 and 3 that disagree. This again needs to be looked at in the New Year.
15. With the Government organisation providing space in their schools for our centres and play activities has helped in the care of your children.	As mentioned in the comments in the survey results, this question only applies to centres that are based in Government schools; this is for the 4 centres in the Varkari area. The total families interviewed for this question was 593, of which 588 believe their child has been helped by the Government providing space in schools.
16. Since the centre and play activity has started your economic circumstances have changed for the better.	It is obvious from this question that not every family's economic circumstances have changed for the better. Yes a majority 727 believe their circumstances have got better, but 69 are not sure and 77 say their economic circumstances have not changed, MENCAFEP needs to address this.

A child-to-child programme promotes child-centred, active learning approaches that engage children on education, health and development issues. Children then disseminate their learning to other children, their families and their wider communities through participatory activities.

This approach enables and empowers children and young people to reach their full potential and achieve their rights by promoting the holistic education, health, well-being and development of themselves, their families and their communities.



What's going on in these satellite centres?

Conclusion:

A very positive survey of this project, although it is obvious from the results, that not all families are feeling the benefits of the programme, especially on the economic front. These families need to be looked at and their problems addressed.

As mentioned above, depending on what disability a child has determines how quickly a child can progress, over a given period of time. The more severe the disability the longer the rehabilitation time and in some cases a child with profound disabilities, may only reach a certain

development point and go no further. Initial findings from the survey would suggest that the negativity of some families in the survey (this includes the neutrals) falls into two categories:

1. Families with one or more profoundly disabled children in the family. They are not seeing an immediate improvement in their child as this takes time and in some cases many, many years. Therefore some negativity about the programme can be expressed. If this is the case, then the project needs to look at ways to get its message across.
2. Families whose economic circumstances have not changed within the last 12 months, the majority of these families seem to come from centres where there is no vocational training attached. As mentioned through the support group meetings and home visits, MENCAFEP and her partners need to find out how this can be rectified and what needs assessment has to be put in place.

The above shows that through the support that Tdh-Netherlands gives to MENCAFEP – Batticaloa, results are being produced that are seeing real improvements in the lives of disabled children, young people and their families. These improvements are being seen throughout the communities that the survey was done; able children learning and playing with disabled children; young people both disabled and able training together in Vocational Training; economic benefits to families where previously these remunerations were but dreams, although MENCAFEP is very aware that this aspect of its work needs to be built on.

Real results, real improvements for real people – thank you Tdh-Netherlands and be full of pride for what you have helped MENCAFEP achieve – thank you.

Chris and Ranji Stubbs – March 2010.