

## OAC-WA MENTOR ME RE-CONNECT (FAMILY) QUARTERLY REPORT - SEPT - DEC 2019



### INTRODUCTION

Mentor me re-connect (Family) is an initiative of the Organisation of African Communities in Western Australia (OAC-WA) which is a new approach in tackling the causes of crime to provide a viable option as our prison expansion costs become unsustainable. It re-directs money spent on prisons to community-based initiatives which aim to address the underlying causes of crime, promising to cut crime and save money. This programme is to assist young Africans who are released from prison to re-integrate properly into the society preventing re-offending.

As the OAC-WA works towards impacting the lives of our youth and changing the narrative of crime perpetration, funding was sought from the West Australian Police Force as a means of alleviating the current trend of crime and to minimize the rate of Africans been incarcerated. The project was funded and a trainer was hired to train mentors as fathers and mother figures to work with our youth who have been incarcerated and released with nowhere to call home. To give them hope and assurance when they are reconnected to their families or placed in employments where they will be trained to become better citizens of tomorrow.

This quarterly report highlights on things that have been put in place and evaluates the process this project has undertaken. The report also contains initial plans on the community education proposed before the funding was received. Summary discussions on the fortnightly training of the identified elders and mentors who have volunteered to take up this mantle are also included as well as our 2020 action plan which will reflect tasks and responsibilities of our mentors.

This project's coordination office is aware of the fact that the trainees who will be potential mentors are volunteers who have given their time to assist our African youth in maintaining a foreseeable future for the building of a vibrant African Community, through inspiration, community engagement, consultation and promoting unity.

### INITIAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION PLAN MODULES

The OAC **men 2 men** workshop program was going to look at the following topics as an introduction to mentor me re-connect project:

1. **On cultural and family issues: Who's who and Bloodline**
2. **Physical and Psychological: hurt and Pain**
  - Turning your hurt and pain into power
  - Knowing thy self and
  - My mother and my father
3. **What does it mean to be a man?** Looking at the following as a way of understanding self in distinguishing between the following:
  - Individual Leadership Vs Ethical leadership

- Being a father Vs being a Son
4. **The Stuck Cycle:** Discussions around getting stuck and been unstuck
  5. **The Life map:** Issues surrounding the raw road map which addresses issues around your life. It says: "A good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination." (Carl Rogers, 2014).
  6. Being your brother's Keeper: People you most admire and how to be a positive role model. How we can learn from our peers, mentors and people of influence.
  7. **Role Play:** On your Actions. How you act or react. Body language and behaviour. Role play on the chair game.
  8. **Trans Analysis Training:** This module looked at the Effective and pro-active methods of communication. It looks at personal growth and development, maintaining your interest and growth through workshops, conferences, and activities that empowers you as an individual.
  9. **Asset Based Community Development:** This discussion focused on what do we have amongst us and what can we do with it. Asset-based community development (ABCD), or asset-based community-driven development as it is sometimes called, is a bottom-up way of working with communities that focuses on community strengths and assets rather than on deficits and problems.

## HIGHLIGHTS, MEETINGS AND SUMMARY OF MINUTES

### Highlights that are expected outcomes of this project:

- A boost in self-esteem and development amongst the youth.
- Significant reduction in crime
- Self-identity
- Identification with role models
- Identify opportunities in their respective communities and beyond.

### Meetings and summary of minutes:

The initial meeting to introduce this project was a teleconference that was attended by five people and three apologies on the **4<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 1800hrs**. The president highlighted the need to have father figures to assist our youth that are been incarcerated and have nobody to visit them in prisons. The mentor me reconnect project was then introduced to participants which was looking for fathers and mothers to be volunteer trainees that will then be mentors.

On the **18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 17:15hrs**, another meeting was convened by the president and was attended by eight people and three apologies, asking all the advisory committee members to volunteer into such a project. Fruitful deliberations emanated from this meeting and few members of the Advisory board including four pastors accepted the call and were invited for the training. A date was then scheduled for the pre-training brain storming.

### PRE-TRAINING BRAINSTORMING

On the 12th October 2019. A pre-training brain storming meeting was held at 246 Vincent St, Leederville WA 6007. Nine elders attended and some of the topics mentioned on the initial community education plan modules were discussed. Participants were given the opportunity to contribute ideas on what and how they

want to see things happen in the training. Participants came up with the following suggestions and topics that could help to develop modules for future training:

- Cultural competence and awareness for both police and citizens. This will include community profiling to better understand the cultures where these African youth are coming from and the reasons behind their behaviours.
- Government to revisit the issues of deporting African youth that were either born here or in countries where they fled for refuge before migrating to Australia.
- Training to include Spiritual leadership and their roles in crime prevention. (Both Christians and Muslims to work out ways of assisting the police in alleviating these issues through their churches and Mosques)
- Most of the topics to be role played to demonstrate the reality we face
- Divide the mentors into groups to visit the Prisons to reassure those that are about to be released to know that there is hope.
- Conduct community forums, workshops and activities to target street boys that have lost hope in themselves as a means of preventing the occurrence of crime and imprisonment. Develop an African rehabilitation Centre.
- Set up a sub-committee amongst the mentors to be proactive in assisting the youth to get accommodation and employment. If possible, borrow the methodology and model of G.R.A.C.E. Ministries International.
- Develop a code of conduct for all the mentors as a means of maintaining confidentiality.
- Organise sporting activities and assist youth on their apprenticeship programs.
- Finally, Mentor me reconnect project to be evaluating its progress every three months to measure its success or failure.

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> Nov 2019 AT 15:00 (3:00pm) a second training was held and 14 people participated, 8 of which are trainee to be mentors. Discussions around employment sprang up again from participants. Caution was given by one of the participants on how to handle the youth especially in their need's identification.

Questions How do we connect with the young People in terms of technology were posed. The following answers were given by participants:

- If there is no awareness or education on the technology they use, then there's a disconnect.
- To research on what the young people are into whether it's their favourite music, artist, sports so that you can relate as a parent or mentor to build connection. (Needs assessment)
- To take genuine interest and acknowledge what the young people are doing before jumping into conclusion.

As a way of encouraging participation, the young audience who would be potential mentees were asked to open up and tell the mentors what their expectations and desired relationship would look like between them and the parents or mentors.

The following answers were also noted:

- to stop comparison amongst their children or cousins and focus on the positive goods that child has achieved and to understand the phases the child is going through and finding solution to help them instead of criticising them.
- Rather than being closed minded, the parents should start taking interest in what the kids are into and the type of friend they hang out with. Instead of demanding the youth to get to their level, it's better to give out tips, pros and cons as to why a child should do the things they're doing.
- That A lot of parents, elders don't like to speak about sexual life, boyfriend and girlfriends to their kids. It's better to have a friendly discussion with your children at an early stage to fore warn them rather than distressing them.

ROLE PLAYS; ACTIVITY 1. The participants were split into two groups with one group aged 28 and under and the other group 29 and above.

Each group was asked to write down what they think about the other group. And the things they feel the other group says about them. Here are some interesting Responses

What the Young People think		What the Adults think	
Negatives	Positives	Negatives	Positives
1. Controlling 2. Out dated 3. No Concept of fun 4. Closed minded 5. Prehistoric Dinosaurs in regard to their mindset 6. Guilt Trip 7. Over dramatic 8. Oppressive 9. Insensitive 10. Set in their way	1.Hard working 2. Caring	1. Spoiled 2. Know all's 3. Addicted to technology 4. Irresponsible 5. Energetic 6. Too fast 7. Short sighted 8. Live in the now 9. Short attention span 10. Self-centred 11. Opinionated 12. Manipulative 13. Over stimulated	1. Creative 2. Passionate 3. Smart

**ACTIVITY 2,** This activity had two role plays and scenarios.

**Scenario 1:** A girl is failing in school and does not know how to communicate what she is going through with her parents. Her parents are concerned and on top of all the problem they already have, this is just another one. **(What is going on here?)**

**Scenario 2:** A young girl is dependent on alcohol and drugs; she spends her time with people who encourages the consumption and make her believe she needs the alcohol and drugs to keep her happy. When under the influence she gets into trouble, then relapses continuously. She has been picked up by the police multiple times and is currently intoxicated at the mentor me session. **(What are we dealing with here?)**

In concluding the role plays, vital discussions were held as a way of letting the audience gain better understanding of what the positive and negative responses, we should use to handle situations in the scenarios.

As stated in the beginning, this training was meant to equip all the mentors to be able to handle situations as they arise. Getting into prison and been released does not mean the individual is totally changed. It takes a methodological approach to address such issues as they present themselves.

Future role plays were planned for next sessions in 2020. The following scenario will be looked at in the next training:

1. Someone who is very bad, tough headed young man (Gangster)
2. A young boy/girl who has been converted and uses his/her challenges to mentor other people. (the raw road map and life experiences)

As a way of encouraging and showing love to the youth, the mentor me reconnect project team and the youth department of OACWA organised a Christmas BBQ at the Stirling Civic grounds on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 to let the youth have some fun and interact with friends and some elders of the community.

#### **PROJECT PLAN OF WORK FOR 2020.**

*As stated at the introduction of this report, Mentor me re-connect (Family) will be focusing its attention on three main things in the first quarter of the year with an aim to address the issues raised at the pre-training brain storming meeting.*

The mentors will be divided into 3 main groups after a skills enhancement assessment and needs analysis is done. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that the skills enhancement and development process fully meets our organisational needs to address the following issues that constitutes our focus:

1. **Visits to primary and secondary schools/colleges in partnership with Let's Make it happens (OAC Peer Mentors)** to work with African kids and their teachers to identify areas that present challenging behaviours to these schools. The visits will also identify and assess skill requirements for the teachers to be able to handle such issues as they present themselves. Mentors in this group will be working with graduated youth from the stop the violence project to facilitate "LETS MAKE IT HAPPEN" in the lives of these young ones.
2. **Visits to Prisons:** A plan will be developed by mentors on this group to organise regular visits to all the WA prisons where Africans have been incarcerated to preach to them a message of hope and to assurance. This group will consist of both faiths. (Christians and Muslims). And they will work closely with group 3 for community rehabs and accommodation, Employment and training.
3. **Assets Based Community group:** This group of mentors will be given the responsibilities of organising community forums, workshops, sporting

activities, conduct appreciative inquiry which identifies and analyses the community's past successes. This strengthens people's confidence in their own capacities and inspires them to take action. This group will liaise with group two to assist on accommodation, employment and training of these youth that are released from prisons. They will be working on presenting a matrix of crime prevention to mitigate against crime perpetration that leads to imprisonments. The group will be liaising with parents to get their participation in the mentor me reconnect project. Parents are also expected to be partially trained or made aware of the purpose of mentor me reconnect.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)**

At the end of the first quarter of 2020, all appointed leaders of the three groups should be able to develop a business and activity plan for their group and set up goals of how they will achieve their allocated tasks.

All business and activity plans should include the following:

- GOALS
- STRATEGIES
- INDICATORS
- ACTION PLAN
- RESPONSIBILITY
- TIME FRAME
- EXPECTED OUTCOME

Please Note; that the KPI's of this project are based on adopting, embracing and implementing what you can expect. This actually defines critical success factors and related performance measures resulting in a competitive advantage relevant to and consistent with the project's vision, strategy and performance outcome. (Also bear in mind that performance indicators are not performance outcomes).

## **CONCLUSION**

As we end 2019 with a mindset of proactively working towards achieving the highlighted goals of mentor me re-connect (Family), It is imperative that participants and mentors of this project focus on putting all their human resources together to see that the African youth that are in the WA prisons are provided with their specific needs as mothers and father figures to alleviate the crime rate amongst African youth.

Our 2020 focus will be mainly on visiting primary and secondary schools/colleges to work with African kids and their teachers to identify areas that present challenging behaviours. Group of mentors will visit prisons to deliver messages of hope and assurance, while others will be preparing the community to receive these youth back into the community after rehabilitation. This can only be possible through strategic planning that leads to expected outcomes with key performance indicators.