

Open Day

Havana Soup Kitchen

June 18 th

11 o`clock, Zimbabwe street (Katutura)

Frieda Kemuiko Geiseb

Dear friends, all the invited guest, companies and people who showed their interest in this project, very welcome at this occasion. I want to thank Annegret- she is my best friend, mother to these vulnerable children, very committed person, she understands the situations around here, and she really supported me to make a meaningful beginning of this project in Havana.

The Havana Soup Kitchen is part of the BET-OSYAN project. BET-SYAN means basic education and training for out of school youths and adults in Namibia. Before you become tired of my speech, let me quickly read to you our vision and mission statement.

Vision

We are committed to serve the most neglected communities, to alleviate literacy and ignorance pertaining to issues on HIV/AIDS and information communication technology in the Republic of Namibia.

Mission

Our mission is to link literacy and HIV/AIDS with the primary aims of encouraging adults and out of school youth toward communication technology. BET-OSYAN seeks to achieve this through voluntary community participation with the trained staff in the field of education and to establish various partnerships with different stakeholders.

This project started way back 2005 and addressed the literacy needs of the under developed people. They gave literacy classes, computer classes in Babylon, Maxuilili Community Centre. Their activities stop due to the fact that the coordinators, who ran the project, resigned due to better job opportunities, lack of funds and other logistic reasons. Since they gave over the project to us, we started to begin with the project in Havana.

I am fulfilling the last objective of this organization, namely "To empower parents to assist their children in their education by providing literacy opportunities." We started with the soup kitchen, simply because we cannot teach hungry children.

There was a day in Havana, when I was touched emotionally; I encountered some hungry children in Havana. It was about five children, we gave them some food, had some discussions with them. We started doing it twice a week and the number of the children started to increase. Unfortunately we couldn't continue because of scarce resources. My heart was burning in passion for the children in Havana. We started to write letters for sponsorship, after we have obtained a small piece of ground to build our place of operation. Unfortunately these companies gave many excuses, why they cannot give the sponsorship. I was so fortunate to be introduced, by Ingrid who is employed by other welfare organization (Positive Vibes), to some German friends. There was a certain doctor Reimer Gronemeyer together with his German friends who came from Germany (Association Palium e. V.). They were physically involved in preparing the land. We put a fence around building the foundation for this beautiful structure! After two weeks the professor and the students left the country, but we **were able to** communicate by means of an e-mail. They introduced me to this lovely lady, Annegret Truebenbach. She is the one who contributed in wiping away my tears and given strength to continue with the activities. She took me to various business people in town and some of them pledged to give us their support. Currently we don't make use of wood, there is no electricity, but there is one company which promised to give us gas for the gas stove. We are very grateful for it. I can mention its name is Afrox.

There are many things we want to do in Havana:

We have young children who are at the age they are ready for school, they said they want to go to school, but they cannot due to poverty, alcoholism and so on. We want to prepare them for school next year. There are also many children outside who really needs school, because of the circumstances the children cannot continue with school. These children did not ask to come into this world they are innocent. If you were one of these kids.... how would you feel?

I want to encourage my friends here to continue the good job they are doing to bring a change into our underdeveloped communities. Thank you very much I will hand over to the next speaker.

There is other part of the project which will be done by one of my colleagues; it is to address the literacy needs of the young people who are out of school and adults. Some of them cannot find job, because they cannot read or write. We want to teach such people, subjects such as Basic English and Mathematics. Entrepreneurship will also be offered to them to make them self sufficient.