General report on abandoned children's in Awassa

On May 19, 2011, Agata and I visited Awassa City Administration Police Department to investigate the abandoned children cases. We met Assistant Sergeant Desta Umuro Madebo, the Zone Police Planning Expert. We asked him for general explanation about abandoned children in Awassa.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Barbara Nielsen, Senior Reviewer

A/Sergeant Desta Umuro is assigned by Awassa Police Department in 2001 with main functions of the Department of child protection. In addition, there are 8 sub city police station community police officers assigned, who work under his order. From 2001 up to 2003 May they found 144 abandoned children in Awassa city (not including other woredas) out of these, 5 children were deceased and 3 of them return to the family, with the others referred to the orphanages.

In Awassa there are 9 orphanages
- Shalom
- Children cross
- Ethio vision
- Infants (SOS)
- Tikuret for children and women
- Enatalem
- Yibera
- Helawi foundation
- Ajuja
- Mother Teresa

Mostly abandoned children found in Tabour and Hayke Dar sub cities these places are picnic and new village settler area it is easy to drop and to find the children.

When police get information from the public they sent police to the place of abandonment to pick up the child and to take hospital to evaluate his health. The police
investigator made all the efforts to get the families like search in the villages. After that they referred to the nearest orphanage.

Most of the orphanages interested to get abandoned children because there is no several processes to get the child and some orphanages approached him to get the abandoned children's.

Based on the officer information

- Most of the of the society believe that if the abandoned children were found he will go to abroad through adoption agency and he will get better life in the future. Because of this thought any women get unwanted pregnancy they are not look as a problem.
- When police get information from the public about abandoned children's police did not give priority to find the families, there is a lack of capacity and number.
- The orphanages broker agitate destitute families to give their children to orphanages
- The abandoned children's number increase from time to time and the number of orphanages also increases compare to others cities.

To minimize the problem

- Awareness to the society through FM radio, pamphlets, cultural association (Edre)
- The Police community officer needs capacity building like how to find the abandoned children's families and increases by numbers.
- Surprise visit orphanages, agencies and Police child protection office.

Thank you
Merid