



The Casa Ioana Association's ACASĂ Programme

The **goal** of the programme is to reduce the effects of domestic violence on women and children experiencing domestic abuse and family homelessness through the provision of safe transitional housing coupled with a wide-range of support services that empower women to rebuild their lives.

Casa Ioana accomplishes this goal by providing:

- safe transitional accommodation for families and single women
- comprehensive support to improve the outcomes for women and children through comprehensive services that keep the family together whilst placing emphasis on empowering individuals: a process by which people are supported to take control of their daily lives and exercise choice
- Peer support: a natural human response to shared difficulties



1. Provision of safe transitional housing

Women and children experiencing domestic abuse and family homelessness need safe, affordable housing.

The ACASĂ progrmme provides two accommodation centres for 13 families and 6 single women, and 7 families and 2 single women respectively. While many need only short-term, emergency shelter, others face numerous barriers to achieving independence and require long-term housing assistance and a variety of support services. The transitional housing is designed:

- to promote social inclusion by allowing beneficiaries control over their daily lives and to increase their entitlement of wider citizen rights
- to be a residency programme that includes support services and acts as a bridge to self-dependency and permanent housing



2. Provision of comprehensive support

Support will be centred on the empowerment of women and children: to live self-dependant and safer lives, make informed decisions, undergo personal growth and participate in both self-help and peer-support for other survivors and their children.

Beneficiaries' experiences will inform and shape the services provided and beneficiaries will be involved at all levels of planning, development and implementation to help achieve this.

Casa loana builds on its existing network of support and resources to help transition, and this takes time.



Entry

Potential beneficiaries must express the desire to work or become economically self-sufficient and first complete an application form.

Service Duration

Generally, beneficiaries can stay for one year or more if necessary.

Termination and Completion

As the programme has a pre-set limit for offering services, Casa Ioana has policies to address participant completion of the programme together with rules and policies outlining acceptable reasons to terminate a beneficiary's participation in the programme.

Rules focus on ensuring the safety of beneficiaries and programme staff, and the expected level of participation in services such as case management and support groups.



Lease Agreement

Casa loana signs a lease-like agreement to protect both the beneficiary and Casa loana, and provide some legal recourse in the event of eviction. Moreover, it helps a beneficiary's transitioning into permanent housing, by mimicking the requirements of living in mainstream housing.

Services

Beneficiaries are offered a variety of supportive and practical services and are sometimes required to partake in certain services as a condition of receiving accommodation, such as meeting regularly with their social worker. Other services are voluntary and offered to each beneficiary on a case-by-case basis.



3. Peer support

Peer support is a natural human response to shared difficulties and most people who have been through hard times empathise with and have an urge to reach out to others who struggle with problems that feel similar to their own.

A "peer" is an equal, someone who has faced similar circumstances, such as experiencing domestic violence or social exclusion, In peer support, the people involved share similar experience.

In Casa Ioana, we place great reliance on the positive outcomes that peer support offers.





Financial literacy

Recognising that self dependency is intrinsically linked with employment, beneficiaries are helped with:

- CV writing
- job interview techniques
- ✤ job searches
- Employer liaison
- Childcare
- Savings bank







Our 2016 financial literacy training programme

To improve its financial literacy training, Casa Ioana has secured funding to improve a beneficiary's personal financial management by providing the necessary resources that will help her to cope with the responsibilities that come with managing money. This enhanced financial literacy training programme will:

- help a beneficiary's return to formal education
- provide a training needs assessment that determines the areas where a beneficiary needs most assistance
- provide training workshops to improve a beneficiary's present and long-term financial well-being
- provide practical advice on getting 'job-ready'
- improve the programme measurements to be more quantified and to track beneficiaries' long-term success



Return to Formal Education

Lack of formal education is a significant barrier to employment and job training, as many job-training programs require prospective trainees to have completed their high school education before they can access technical training.

However, everyone's situation is unique and returning to school requires a personal commitment. Many of the challenges facing beneficiaries who wish to go back to school are financial considerations.

Casa loana provides opportunities for qualifying beneficiaries to complete their high school education through the Ministry of Education's 'Back to School' Program.

The beneficiary receives a Learner's Allowance to help with educational materials, local travel and enable a beneficiary to provide for herself and her child (ren) whilst attending school. Casa Ioana arranges pro bono professional childcare for a learner's child (ren) while attending school.

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Soft Skills Training Workshops

To address any TNA deficiencies, week-long training workshops will deliver over 20 hours of training in total and are designed to complement other soft skills training (anger management, hygiene, parenting and social networking and substance misuse), along with individual casework.

SSERTIVENESS

TEAM SPIRIT

The workshop activities are designed to help beneficiaries develop a variety of skills for both communicating to others and learning how to interpret the information received from others.

The activities offer many opportunities for beneficiaries to practice communicating their strengths and assets while learning how to minimise any perceived barriers to employment.

INQUISITIVENESS + CREATIVITY



Personal Financial Management Training Workshop

Beneficiaries are offered an opportunity to develop their knowledge in relation to managing their personal finances in the areas of spending, saving, taking out loans and advice on how to make correct choices in regards to financial matters.

The pre-test questionnaire will include a variety of questions on each of the subjects covered in the personal financial management training workshops.

The results of the TNA will be shared with the respondents and the psychosocial team and an individual plan will be developed to address any training needs. The results will determine the training workshop modules that a beneficiary will be assigned to increase their knowledge in a particular area.



Personal Financial Management Training Workshop

With new financial regulations, complex financial products and services, and a lack of institutional support, beneficiaries can find it increasingly difficult to obtain the financial knowledge and discipline necessary to live an independent life.

Beneficiaries take a training needs assessment to test their knowledge in 21 aspects of personal financial management. The results of the TNA are shared with the respondents and the psychosocial team and an individual plan developed to address any training needs.

The results determine the training workshop modules required to increase knowledge in a particular area.



Getting Job Ready

Casa Ioana has created a formal network of business and industry volunteers to develop a programme that will help beneficiaries:

- Iay the right foundations for success
- create a resume and cover letter
- ✤ get that Job
- got the job, now what?

Sessions will be in the form of face-to-face meetings, workshops, roleplays, motivational speakers, team challenges and a host of other interactive activities to personal development. Beneficiaries will have the opportunity to meet and network with a range of professionals from companies in the city.