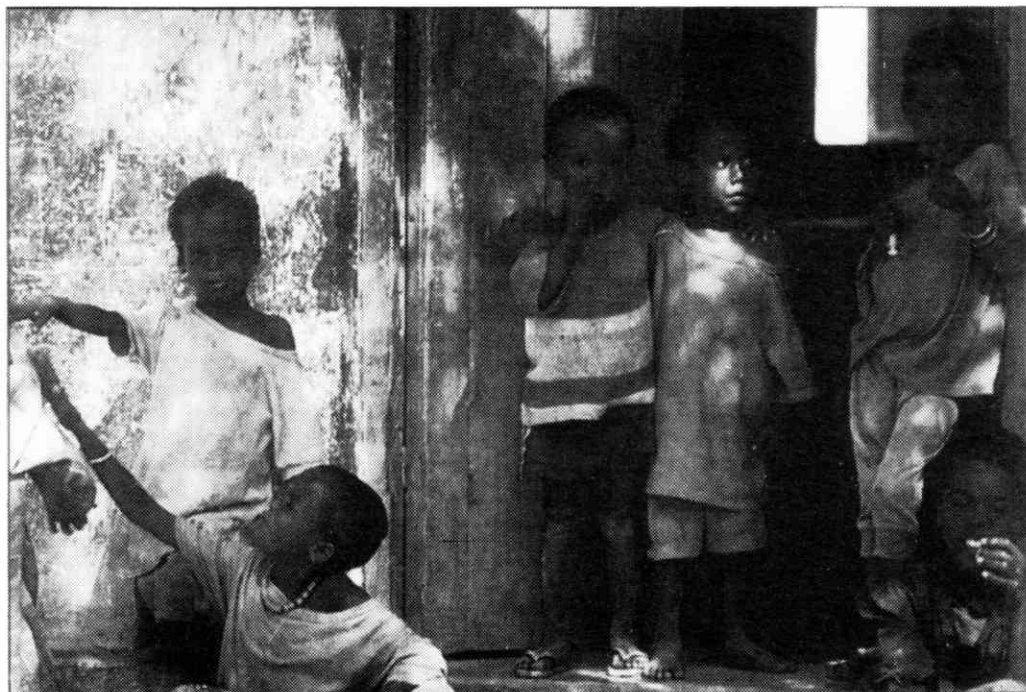


# *The child care worker*



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*Cover Picture: Children in an orphanage in Somalia. Photograph: Betty Press*

Journal of the  
National Association of  
Child Care Workers

**NACCW/NVK**

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# Three Million Lost Children

There was a chilling report from Mozambique this month that part of the clearing up task facing the nation was to care for the children lost or abandoned during the civil war. The number of these children was given as three million.

Finding the parents or families who might have survived the hostilities, the dislocation and the famine, would be virtually impossible given the terrain and the undeveloped or destroyed communications infrastructure. The only solution, says the report, will be for these children to be cared for in children's homes.

If any comment on this report is necessary, it might be to point out that child care facilities for three million children would represent a task *one hundred and fifty times* the size of South Africa's total existing child care service which cares for only 20 000 children. Such is one of the price tags of a civil war.

## A new forum for wider consultation within the NACCW

With extensive forward planning required, not only for the Biennial General Meeting and the constitutional changes to be made by Conference, but also for the Association's long-term future, the new idea of a National Executive Forum is being implemented in June this year.

The National Executive includes the elected Regional Chairpersons. The idea of the forum is that broader input and discussion through more regional representatives takes place prior to meetings of the National Executive Committee. Those who are sent to the Forum are elected by members and are given a mandate to discuss certain issues. This gives the National Executive a more representative viewpoint, and ensures that Regions are adequately 'heard' by the National Executive Committee as part of its decision-making.

Full Regions may send three representatives (in addition to their Regional Chairperson) and sub-regions may send a total of two. Representatives are elected for one Forum, and are expected to report

back to their Regions. The first of these National Executive Forums will meet in Durban on June 4th, prior to a meeting of the professional staff on the 5th and the National Executive meeting on the 6th June.

## Mountains, camping and child care methodology

Do take a shot at Jack Howell's article on adventure and empowerment starting on page 3. It reflects one of the few intervention models which tries to think through an education process from problem to goal, without getting too hung

up on how respectable everything looks in the mean time. There is strong relevance for the increasing number of adolescents and law-involved youngsters coming into care, with an honest attempt to understand *how* a method works and how it can be made to work a little better.

Of course the model won't fit into your existing framework today, but it may offer you some questions and criteria against which to test your existing framework.

Also, many of us already have the rudiments of the infrastructure required for this sort of programme in our holiday or camping facilities and traditions. We may be challenged to add some better purpose to these facilities — and Jack Howell's report may just encourage someone to break out of the existing mould and try something different ...



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The International Federation of Educative Communities



The International Association of Workers with Troubled Children

Jack Howell of Eckerd Family Youth Alternatives explains the use of adventure training in work with troubled youngsters

# Adventure Boosts Empowerment



Adolescent rebellion is not an inevitable phase in human development, according to psychologist Anne Wilson Schaef. She asserts that the power struggle between generations, which seems impossible to avoid, is a result of a patriarchal pecking order in our society which keeps teenagers at the bottom of the chain of command at the very time in their lives when the individuation process and the need for autonomy are at full bore.

When we take a careful look at the issue, it seems clear that parents — and adults in general — tend to set both themselves and the adolescents in their life up for unnecessary battles which, though usually beginning over a relatively insignificant issue, can often escalate into full scale war ultimately resulting in a domestic apocalypse. When such conflict continues to escalate without intervention, alienated, angry, frustrated youth may run away from home, become delinquent, turn to substance abuse, and/or require psychiatric hospitalization. While the failure of adults to properly respond to their adolescents' individuation process and autonomy needs is only one of many factors which can lead to delinquency, substance abuse and psychiatric disorders among adolescents, it may be the most common — and is certainly the most preventable.

## Prevention

The prevention strategy is simple: as adolescents begin to carve out their own space in the world, the adults who have controlled, sustained, and protected them begin to let go. In fact they do more than gradual passive concession; they proactively challenge their youth to challenge themselves. The reflex reaction of adults who are used to being in charge is to hold on harder when their youngsters begin to push the boundaries. This happens in part because adults, who have appropriately kept tight reins on their children in the past, are unable to adjust quickly enough to the rapid and often instantaneous changes as their children pass into puberty — and become adults in process. Teenagers sense instinctively that they are ready for a gradual increase in freedom, autonomy and responsibility. Adults have to be hit over the head with the same realization. Adults often tend to increase their teenager's *responsibilities* (such as adding more and more household chores) without increasing their *autonomy*. When teens defy the added expectations, parents assume they cannot handle added autonomy, when in reality it is likely that the expectations would have been fulfilled had added autonomy come with the package. Once adolescents are in crisis and require clinical and/or judicial intervention, the traditional

approach is also to hold on even harder, to break their will, to take the fight out of them, to wear them down into compliance, using rigidly structured behavior modification programmes. These programmes may often appear to be effective with many youth in the short term in the sense that they become "manageable" — but at what cost to their self-actualization? This is not to suggest that behaviourally oriented clinical programmes don't have their place, but rather to say that an attempt to control inappropriate behaviour *without at the same time addressing the adolescent's need and right to develop autonomy and individuality* is doomed to fail.

## The movement to empower

There is growing momentum in the movement to empower youth as a means of prevention and intervention. The student volunteer movement is spreading rapidly across the country, making community service of some sort a prerequisite for high school graduation. Progressive leaders in youth ministry in many churches are changing the format of their programmes from education and entertainment to inter-generational integration and leadership training. While initial results are non-conclusive, it would appear that where adolescents are offered progressively more control over their lives, more input into decisions and policies directly affecting them, more room to risk and more respect for their evolving beliefs and ideas, they are willing and able to accept more responsibility, achieve more academically, and contribute more to their families and their society.

## Application to child care

Assuming other factors continue to be helpful for healthy development, it would appear that adolescent rebellion can be avoided or minimized by offering appropriate opportunities for autonomy, individual expression and responsibility. This strategy seems equally promising as an intervention with youth already in crisis once other psychiatric issues, if possible, have been addressed. Empowerment programmes such as those used

by the Eckerd Therapeutic Wilderness Camping System, for example, serve to interrupt the cycle of adolescent acting out by offering them the very things they have struggled so violently to achieve. Instead of bearing down harder on residents as they struggle harder, and instead of simply letting them go to wreak havoc upon themselves and others, such an adventure offers a third alternative: the opportunity to take control of their lives within an appropriate structure. The structure serves as a wooden frame or mould might serve when cement is being poured. As the soft, malleable character forms and solidifies, the structure is there to offer support. Once the concrete is firm the external supports are extraneous and are removed. Once the programme succeeds, the structure is removed and the youth is able to use autonomy appropriately and become a functional and productive citizen. The structure in this case is composed of the confines and methods of the Eckerd camping programme. By removing young people from their homes and community environments and placing them in therapeutic residential wilderness settings, their potential for inappropriate behaviour is limited and the negative factors of poor family dynamics and home-peer influences are removed. Then, rather than making the emphasis of the programme on rules and restrictions, the focus shifts to challenges and opportunities.

## Giving responsibility

On extended wilderness trips, residents are responsible for meeting many of their own needs. By placing them in a vulnerable position in a safe but uncontrolled environment alien to them, and giving them the responsibility for providing for their own comfort and safety, three things occur. First, there is a shift in their own sense of priorities. Other things which previously seemed important to them, issues over which they were willing to fight to any extreme, suddenly seem quite insignificant when their own "perceived" survival is on their own shoulders. Then, by being challenged to care for their

basic needs, residents experience true autonomy for the first time and realize they have been given what they had been fighting for. Yet it wasn't by "fighting" that they gained it, and only by co-operation and appropriate behaviour will they keep it. Finally, because the role of staff in the camping programme is to work side by side with the residents as team-members (rather than direct them as authority figures) the residents begin to learn to trust adults, and are further reinforced in their sense of autonomy and individuality. This reinforcement by caring adults of the adolescent's newly-acquired sense of autonomy must not be minimized or confused with his or her capacity of "knowing" autonomy and translating it into action. In fact, after an empowering river trip (or any other wilderness adventure experience) residents still need help in interpreting the meanings and implications associated with being more fully in charge of their own lives.

#### Maximising experiences

The understandings that they gain solely from experiencing a "power of life" adventure are simply far from complete and mature. Two secondary extensions help to maximize the academic and therapeutic benefits inherent in the primary adventure:

1) drawing out from the residents the personal learnings associated with the adventure, and

2) exposing residents to the ideas and feelings of others who have also participated in the adventure or who have had a related experience in the past.

Both of these secondary experiences extend the first-hand base experience and further strengthen the resident's understanding of his or her own growing independence.

Calling forth and welcoming the residents' personal response is easily achieved by giving them individual time to talk about the experience and to express their ideas and feelings in a variety of ways. This sharing time allows opportunity for the resident to reorder the experience, give it shape, and integrate it into his or her thinking. (It is necessary in

this instance to recall that when residents are unable to express their understandings verbally, other avenues of expression must be made available to them, e.g., art, music, drama and writing.)

This added "sharing component" complements the "experience component" and further empowers residents who, in the process, also extend and strengthen their personal skills of communication (listening, speaking, writing, reading). 'Bathing residents' in a wardrobe of language, ideas, and values from others, takes them beyond themselves to places that are concerned with persons and their capabilities — capabilities that include being more aware of oneself, of being concerned about things in the world, and of ultimately living more authentically. This sense of additional empowerment is promoted as residents have multiple opportunities to hear the ideas and thinking of their counsellor-teachers and peer group members.

Through their reactions and responses to one another's ideas, a new dynamic for teaching emerges.

Learning is transformed and individual "knowing" is expanded as each group member pays attention to what the other has to say. By comparing and contrasting the variation of personal ideas associated with the primary adventure, residents retrieve alternative thoughts about success, recognition and importance, and are exposed to healthy interpretations of power and control. In the process of sharing with one another, residents are influenced as they continue to re-create, clarify, and expand their own personal perspectives. This additional opportunity for reflection represents a vital link to meaning. It is achieved by a two-way process of address and response to what the individual residents and supporting adults have to say about responsibility vs. irresponsibility, about dominance vs. submission, about dependence vs. independence, and, ultimately, about the power of love and compassion. These additional perspectives serve as springboards for ever widening knowledge and give residents options as they try them

out in the course of real life challenges and human interactions.

#### Adventure programmes

The Eckerd camping system pays attention to adolescents' desire and need for greater independence and responsibility. It recognizes that they demand to be treated as adults and that they want and need control over significant portions of their lives. This gaining of independence is, therefore, central in planning for the residents' needs.

*We believe that there is no easy substitute for primary wilderness experiences (ones that do not require reading and writing to be successful) for providing the raw material or launching pad for empowering young people.*

These experiences refresh and heighten their consciousness so they really see the things they look at and hear the things they listen to, in interaction with environments rather than in detachment from them. We also believe that caring adults and peers must be readily available to residents so that sharing of experience is facilitated.

We recognize that exercises and workbooks are poor substitutes for the "acts" of listening, speaking, singing, dancing, and writing out of experience and within real communication settings. When these efforts are further supported by bringing residents into contact with the wide range of literature that is available, residents discover new dimensions of selfhood and confirm and extend existence in relationship to others.

#### Adult leaders

Pro-actively empowering adolescents in these ways requires adult leaders within the camping system who are sensitive to developmental needs and individual differences among residents, and it entails providing structure when needed, and decreasing structure when it stifles growth. Empowering young people in the "Eckerd Way" involves both caring adults and peers encouraging one another to open environments that open the world. It involves working and talking together, so that experiences and words are ex-



***Teenagers sense instinctively that they are ready for a gradual increase in freedom, autonomy and responsibility. Adults have to be hit over the head with the same realization***

changed, for it is experience and shared words that are integral and indispensable parts of the process of teaching fuller understanding. It is in sharing that the door is open and the resident discovers new dimensions of his or her own emerging independent selfhood, and is simultaneously awakened to a sense of interdependence with others.

How significant it seems then to recognize that the individual adolescent has something to contribute! What an opportunity exists for the resident in the dialogue with peers! How encouraging and powerful when counsellor-teachers are deeply acquainted with residents and committed to creating conditions and experiences for them that foster human interaction, personal accountability, and boosts of empowerment!

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**Harry Secombe**, the popular singer and Goon Show comedian, reflects on children and learning about truth

# Little Lies

**Court Usher:** "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"

**Seagoon:** "Yes."

**Usher:** "You're going to be in a right mess then, mate."

This little extract from a Spike Milligan Goon Show script seems to sum up rather succinctly the prevalent attitude towards honesty. We live in the age of the half truth, the slightly bent statistic and the party manifesto, which is a combination of the other two. One can only write honestly about honesty where it applies to oneself and one's relations with others; so, on the somewhat overworked premise that the child is father of the man, let us look into some of my own youthful encounters with the truth. It's not a pretty sight, I warn you.

When I was a lad I was an avid reader of Arthur Mee's *Children's Newspaper* and *True Confessions*. The first was ordered for us by our parents — and the second was read secretly when they were out. One was full of tales of honour and Empire and biographies of people like Philip Sydney and Edith Cavell, and the other told of dishonour and seduction,

never explicit but hinted at by delicious dots. I must admit that I found the exploits of Mrs. X of Trenton, New Jersey far more exciting than the tribulations of St. Francis of Assisi, who must have spent too much time trying to get the bird lime off his habit to have naughty dishonest thoughts. However, we were brought up in the belief that it was better to tell the truth and face the consequences than to tell a lie. As a choirboy, I remember sitting through a sermon on this theme, nodding sagely with my Young Woodley face on, my mind switching rapidly from thoughts of what was for lunch to agonised speculation on whether I should tell my mother about being caught playing doctors and nurses with Elsie Thomas by her elder sister who now showed signs of wishing to be examined herself. At twelve years of age I was too young to cope with a full surgery, and was avoiding both girls, who, to my mother's surprise, had taken to calling at our house and asking if I could come out to play. I was a junior Dr. Jekyll who was forced to hide. I was saved from a head-on confrontation with the truth by a fortuitous bout of yellow jaundice, during which I abandoned *True Confessions* and settled instead for a less heady diet of *Film Fun* and

## *The Magnet*

Just after my illness the Thomas sisters discovered an embryonic gynaecologist living in the next street, and I was spared their attentions.

Featured in *The Magnet* were my favourite characters, Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton, two school boys of immaculate character and impeccable honesty, and upon whom I began to model myself. I became an insufferable prig at home, telling the truth about everyone and everything until even my father, the mildest of men, was forced to comment. "If young George Washington doesn't stop his self-sacrificing, I'll sacrifice him myself," he said, waving the carving knife one Sunday lunchtime after I had pointed out that there was more meat on my plate than on my brother's — a most uncharacteristic gesture. Mind you, calling him 'Pater' didn't help father-son relations much.

This phase came to an abrupt conclusion after an incident in school. I happened to be in a form which was noted for its exuberance, and its rough handling of the unwary teacher. One particular afternoon we decided to play a prank — a word not indigenous to a Swansea Secondary School; indeed until I read *The Magnet* I thought it was Chinese for a piece of wood.

The victim was the maths master, a bibulous gentleman who would come back from a liquid lunch, set us some work to do and promptly fall asleep with his mortar board over his face and his feet on the desk. On this day we waited impatiently for him to go to sleep. When he had done so we blew sneezing powder around the room, dropped two stink bombs, and, as a *pièce de résistance* placed a beautifully made imitation of a pile of dog droppings on his open book. Awakened by the sneezing and the smell, he took the mortar board from his face and prepared for battle. However, the sight of the mess on his book unhinged him and he fled the classroom whooping wildly like a Red Indian. Vengeance was swift, and

soon the Headmaster faced a flushed, frightened form: "Come out the boys who did this ..." he hissed, glasses glinting. In true Harry Wharton style I stood up and went forward to the front of the class. "I dropped the stink bomb, sir ..." I said. "Of course," said the Headmaster enigmatically. "Anybody else?" I moved aside to make room for the others but nobody volunteered. Twice the head repeated his request, and still no one came forward. "Am I to believe that there is only one honest boy in the form?" I held my head high, as the rest of the boys shuffled their feet and whistled tunelessly.

"All right," said the beak. "You're all on detention until further notice. You, Secombe, come with me." I left smugly, expecting a lecture and nothing more.

When we got to his study the head turned on me in fury. "You're not honest, you're damned stupid," he said. "Bend over." It was then that I realised that the truth does indeed hurt. I received on my behind what he thought the class should have had, and with each stroke of the cane I cursed Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry and the whole editorial staff of *The Magnet*.

Afterwards I found it prudent to compromise by crossing my fingers either behind my back or in my pockets whenever I was forced to tell a lie. This led to complications later when I worked in an office where one of my duties was to make tea for the other employees. I provided the tea, sugar and milk and charged a penny a cup. There was one snag: the head of the department would insist on drinking only Typhoo Tea which was expensive and cut down the profit margin. Eventually I hit on the idea of putting a cheaper blend into an empty Typhoo packet and spooning the tea from it into the pot whilst he watched. The first time I tried it, I brought the teacup and saucer over his desk on a little tray together with a packet of biscuits. He looked up from the huge ledger in which he was painstakingly writing in different inks all the month's out-



**Watch the next political broadcaster on television; if his hands drop out of sight when he's making a solemn promise to the electorate, don't believe him.**

put from the colliery.

"Are you sure that's Typhoo tea?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

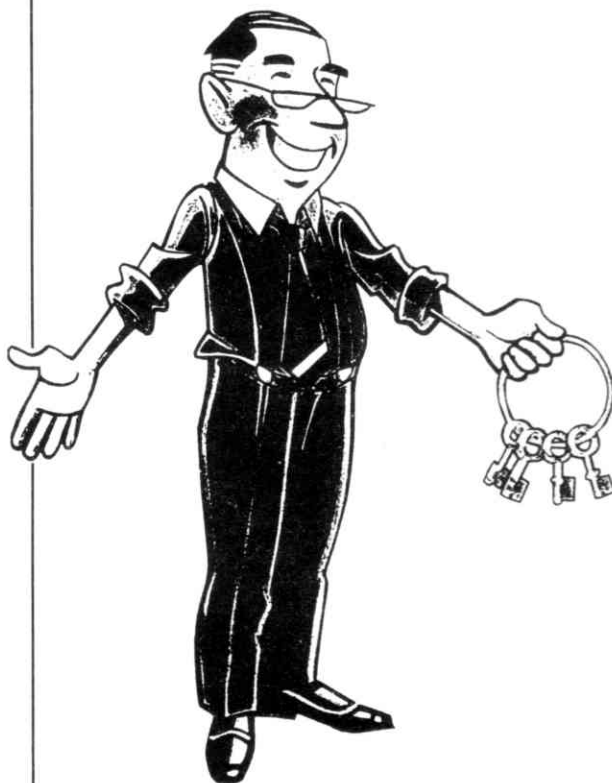
I don't know whether any readers have ever tried crossing their fingers whilst holding a full tea tray, but I can assure them that it is not possible.

The resulting shambles would have had me fired had I not been called up that afternoon for service with the Territorial Army. I must have been one of the few people, apart from Mr. Krupps, who was glad when war broke out.

I still cross my fingers when I go backstage after a not particularly successful first night, and I know I am going to have to be dishonest with fellow actors in order to bolster sagging egos; or when a customs official says "Anything to declare?" My own youthful struggle and eventual compromise with the truth is obviously compatible with most other

people's. Which brings me to the inevitable conclusion that all world leaders and statesmen were young themselves once, and must have carried into adult life some childhood superstitions. When Chamberlain waved that piece of paper in the air after Munich, crying "Peace in our time" were his fingers crossed? Why did Napoleon always have one hand inside his jacket? Watch the next political broadcaster on television; if his hands drop out of sight when he's making a solemn promise to the electorate, don't believe him.

A thought has just struck me: if you can see that his fingers are at rest, he might be crossing his toes instead. I feel there's no hope for any of us.



## Integrating a new staff member

**You have reworked your budget to create a much needed position and have plowed through a blizzard of resumes.**

You completed routine work at night to free up time for interviews. All your efforts are just a beginning as you hire this new person for a vital position.

The new staff person has experienced the difficulties of finding a job and is anxious to succeed. Your staff has been overburdened and may expect too much of the new person.

The Research Institution of America in *Creating and Motivating a Superior, Loyal Staff* notes that there are some key actions that you as

a manager can take to help the newcomer produce the results you want both quickly and smoothly.

**Bring the new person into your organisation yourself**

This approach indicates your support for the newcomer to your staff. You need to communicate through a memo or staff meeting the following information:

1. The background and qualifications the new person brings to the position;
  2. An explanation as to why he or she was selected; and
  3. Your expectation that staff will help the new comer.
- Staff should understand how highly you will value this support.

**Conduct an introductory tour**

By doing this yourself you demonstrate how important immediate rapport and good working relationship are to you. When you mention responsibilities and tasks that people will share, as well as names and titles, you help to establish relationships as quickly as possible.

**Go beyond providing office essentials**

The newcomer needs an internal telephone list, a table of organisation reports and files relevant to the position and description of your program's philosophy, mission, and goals. Both supply and explain schedules, forms, and other essentials.

**Include the Newcomer in Both Formal and Informal Meetings**

The newcomer sees you staff in action and thus gets to know them. You should encourage the newcomer to participate at every appropriate opportunity. Everyone then has a common base of experience.

**Consider Training Possibilities**

Design a program appropriate to the particular demands of the position. You may assign initial projects to provide a broad experience base or you might suggest specific reading — journals or books that will be immediately relevant. Consider providing another staff person as a guide where a mentor relationship may develop with the new person.

**Maintain regular contact.**

Plan for a regular scheduled time with your new staff person. You may hold a brief daily meeting or schedule a half hour weekly. Provide the newcomer with the option of contacting you. As a manager you know how difficult it is to work short staffed. You know how important it is to ensure that the new staff person succeed. Your time and effort now will pay off in the future.

*Acknowledgements: The Child & Youth Care Administrator, Nova University USA*

# Ons Plek: A Shelter for girls

A Project of Child Welfare Society, described  
by Unit Manager Pam Jackson



MICHAEL GRADY

In 1988 two thin, dirty fifteen-year-old girls came timidly into Ons Plek Shelter for help. Both lived on the streets with an older female pimp who gave them food and protected them while they worked for her as prostitutes. They had escaped temporarily, but on a subsequent occasion Ons Plek staff found them cowering in a corner while the old

woman tried to beat them out onto the streets again. On arrival both children were welcomed by the child care worker, given a shower and clean second-hand clothes, and their hair was gradually cleared of lice.

## Cynthia and Carol

One of the girls Cynthia (not her real name) had been

asked by her alcoholic mother to leave home when her father died three years previously. As the oldest child she was the one who would be most likely to survive on her own. Cynthia trembled most of the time, wet her bed every night and would not talk to staff except to answer questions in monosyllables. In the beginning she gobbled her food down even if it meant burning her throat, to ensure that no-one else ate her food. When Cynthia left Ons Plek two-and-a-half years later, the bedwetting had decreased to once a fortnight. She could express her needs on her own initiative, had made it her responsibility to do certain tasks, and had been reunited with her family. During this time she had never attended school because she did not have the confidence to do so. Throughout her stay at Ons Plek she maintained her relationships with street friends. Today, Cynthia qualifies for a disability grant and sheltered workshop employment due to her inability to be employed in the open market. However, she has returned of her own choice to live off the streets, the world she knows. During the day she does odd jobs for market stall holders, and begs a little. At night she sleeps with her family. Has Ons Plek failed with her? Definitely not! This child came to the shelter a frightened victim of the streets and life. She left with self-confidence and self-respect, able to hold her own in life — even though she chose the streets. Carol (again, not her real name) was the other fifteen-year-old who arrived with Cynthia. She had lived on the street with her mother for much of her life until her mother disappeared. More confident than Cynthia and more socialised, she attended a sewing course sponsored by the Department of Manpower. Today she works and lives with a family in the community.

## Profile of a street child

Street children (often referred to as strollers) are defined by Cape Town Child Welfare Society as children who live independently of adult caretakers. They find their own place to sleep, their own food and

clothes.

Street children range in age from six to eighteen years old, though female strollers tend to appear only at twelve years, probably because girls are more vulnerable on the streets and also because they are taught to be more subservient than boys and therefore may tolerate abuse at home longer than boys might. They are also traditionally more useful at home and may feel more compelled to remain there in order to help.

Educationally the children range from no education at all to about standard seven — with a few exceptions. On the whole few have graduated to high school.

The children fall into roughly three categories:

Firstly, there are the broken, battered, frightened children who lack self-esteem and feel powerless to help themselves. The second group consists of survivors. This group will not tolerate abuse. They have an almost overriding interest in self-protection and can be difficult to help because they reject adult intervention.

The third group is made up of children who had reasonably good parenting up to a certain age and who are fairly well adjusted. They may have left home because of a change in family circumstances.

Male strollers are untidy, frequently dirty, and have a care-free attitude to life. The female strollers differ markedly from the boys. They keep themselves and their clothes clean, to the extent that they are often unidentifiable to the public eye as strollers. Health is often a problem for strollers in that their immune systems are weak. Most noticeably they suffer from skin disorders and infections.

Most street children come from poverty-stricken homes characterised by overcrowding, violence, alcoholism and unemployment.

## The streets

Most street children are running away from intolerable home circumstances. Some run from "strict" parents to the freedom of the street and forbidden pleasures. Others like those in the case study, leave to enable their family to survive.

Life on the street has its positive and negative aspects. It consists of earning one's daily bread through begging, doing odd jobs, stealing if the opportunity arises, or perhaps meeting the sexual needs of a wealthier member of the public. Contrary to expectations, few girls prostitute themselves. Only three out of seventeen girls questioned by UCT researcher Jane Keen had ever prostituted themselves. Relaxation time includes resting on a grassy patch, in a doorway, in the games room or local cinema, drinking or sniffing solvents. A considerable amount of time is spent just sitting, walking long distances to favourite sleeping spots, or begging on corners. On the positive side, street children report being better off on the street than at home, having money to spend, and finding street life exciting. On the negative side, street children have nowhere to sleep or leave their clothes safely, sometimes have no money or food and experience violence from the police, the public, and even other street people. Eleven out of the seventeen girls in Jane Keen's study had been raped on the street. Possible useful facilities in South African cities include soup kitchens, alternative educational facilities focusing on the three R's and life-skills, night shelters, first-stage residential shelters, second-stage residential shelters for more settled children, and medical facilities.

#### **Treatment**

Treatment programmes are similar to those in children's homes. They must, however, be applied at a slower pace and with less intensity with children who are less trusting or receptive — or more suspicious of helpers. Concentration on a set task is difficult for children who have not stuck to one activity for any length of time and who have always been free of any form of supervision. In addition formal education is not always appropriate. Some objectives of treatment are:

To offer the child an opportunity to move off the streets and participate in formal or in-

formal education programmes in order to prepare that child for the future;

To give the child a belief that he/she can make decisions which will affect his/her life and thereby teach life responsibility;

To reunite the child with the family or community where possible. The primary treatment medium is the relationship between staff and children. Due to a profound mistrust of adults, this is often difficult to establish. With children who can feed, clothe and "house" themselves, discipline cannot be based on the common practice of withholding of privileges. A strong relationship is the cement that holds a child in a programme. An innovative mind is essential to devise helpful rules and treatment programmes.

#### **Legal and financial aspects**

The Child Care Act, 1983, is geared towards children being removed from parental care and placed in residential care by social workers. However street children have removed themselves from parental care and chosen their own form of care.

Due to the distrust the children have for adults, it can take two weeks or more to find out relevant information about the child. The courts do not always accept detention orders with such scanty information as is initially available from the child. The child is often unwilling to divulge the location of the parents, and the failure of the parents to attend the court hearing also delays the processing of detention orders. The shelter therefore receives no state subsidy and must foot the bill for the period it takes to compile the necessary information for the courts.

Shelters are further compromised by the Act: if children are placed on Detention Orders at the shelter, they cannot come and go as they please, which restricts our initial contact with street children considerably.

The alternative is for the shelters to be subsidised per child per day until the child starts to work, and for a Children's Court Inquiry to be held after four months when a permanency plan for the child has

been drawn up.

It is a sign of progress if a street child finds and maintains work. But then to remove that subsidy again subverts the work of the shelter. The shelter has the choice of discouraging the child from working (and hiding the child's progress from the relevant authority) or bearing the full cost of that child's care (or the balance after receiving a proportion of the salary as rent). From the above examples it is clear that the Child Care Act urgently has to be adapted if it is to meet the needs of street children.

#### **Facilities**

The lack of facilities for "Coloured" and black children seriously hampers those dealing with children from these groups. The long wait for vacancies in children's homes and industrial schools make recommendations to such facilities ineffective. The children may simply wait in prison or in a place of safety for a year or more. Black girls are at an even greater disadvantage because they have the fewest facilities. (Because only ten per cent of strollers are girls, they are given the least attention in almost all projects catering for street children.) Children's homes often compound these difficulties by being extremely fussy about the type or race of child they will admit.

As a result of the lack of facilities strollers often end up in prison instead of care. On March 1, 1991, 115 children, (five whites, seventy-eight "Coloureds" and thirty-seven blacks) up to the age of seventeen, were in prison — mostly because there were no vacancies in places of safety.

At a meeting held in March 1992 between the Department

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food and experience  
violence from the  
police, the public, and  
even other street  
people.*

of Health Services and Welfare, the prison authorities, Nicro and the Child Welfare Society, the Department said they would be able to accommodate another fifty boys at Bonnytown in Cape Town by April 1992. Another thirty girls will eventually be accommodated at Huis Vredelus. Although this would reduce the number of children in prison, it is still not sufficient.

The problem of a lack of facilities remains urgent despite the attention the department is able to devote to it. There is a need to liaise with children's homes with respect to tailoring their services to children according to existing real needs, rather than to historical factors. The provision of sufficient facilities for all street children remains a priority.



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# Nepal's Child Workers Have Tattered Hopes

**Alison Wright, Kathmandu, Nepal**

*These youngsters often must choose between hard farm labour or garbage-picking in the streets of Kathmandu*

Thirteen-year-old Shyam Tamang and his 15-year-old brother Deepak live under a bridge in Kathmandu the capital of Nepal, where they work as ragpickers. Sometimes they quarrel and separate, but they always manage to find their way back to each other. Originally from the village of Deurali, Shyam ran away from home when his mother eloped a few days after his father died. He came to Kathmandu to find his brother who was already working here as a rag-picker. Every day the barefoot boys comb the city, sifting through the garbage picking out pieces of rags, paper, metal and plastics to sell. Unlike other street children who can sell to any junk dealer these boys must sell to one particular person in exchange for the privilege of

sleeping under the bridge at night. They average about 15-20 rupees (45-50 cents) per day and eat the food cooked by local people who make their living roasting peanuts under the same bridge.

## **Child labour**

A quiet, serious boy, Shyam used to work as a hotel *kancha* (servant) but enjoys the freedom and independence of this job more. He has dropped out of school and is illiterate. Mostly he spends his spare time playing marbles and throwing coins. His brother is often found gambling and playing cards with his friends. In 1984 when Guari Pradhan, a Nepali university student, attended a meeting in Bangkok regarding human rights for youths, child labour in Nepal

was one of the topics raised. Mr. Pradhan found that no studies had been written on this subject and began to research it. This was the beginning of Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), an organisation formed by Pradhan and ten other university students in January of 1987. According to a Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Nepal issued by UNICEF, "Very little research has been done in the field of child labour and insufficient data makes it difficult to assess the magnitude of the problem. The 1981 population census showed that 4.5 million or 60 percent of the child population in the 10-14 age group was economically active. These children work in almost all sectors of the rural and urban economy with 80 percent of them employed in agricultural and other allied occupations in the countryside. The other 20 percent are engaged in various jobs, e.g. in factories, construction sites, restaurants, as domestic servants, hotels, etc."

## **"Not enough money"**

Fifteen-year-old Padam Rana is a carpet weaver in a Jawlikhel carpet factory. "I used to go to school, but with seven children in our family there wasn't enough money and I was told by my parents that I needed to find work," he says. "Our town, in far western Nepal, has such a scarcity of work that my sister Wan (then eight years old) and I set out for Kathmandu two years ago, alone. "When we first came here we had no idea how to make carpets and learned slowly" he says. "It's difficult to work. The dust from the wool fills our lungs and there is so little light to work by. It's cold and uncomfortable sitting on hard wooden benches all day, but of course I like making carpets; it's good money. If I don't make carpets, we don't eat. "You Westerners pay a lot for carpets, many rupees. We work from 7 in the morning until 8 at night every day with no days off. We get paid by the foot, so it's good for us. About 21 rupees (50 cents) per square meter. We can finish a rug in two weeks with five men working or three weeks with four men working, so I make

about 300 rupees (\$7.50) per week. It's enough to survive — to buy rice, clothes, and maybe see a film.

## **Law and practice**

According to Nepali law, no child below the age of 14 years can be hired to work. But a survey conducted by CWIN in 1990 found that of the total work force involved in the carpet industries within the Kathmandu District, 19 percent are below the age of 14 years. Children between the age of 14 and 16 years constitute 33.11 percent of the total work force in the carpet industries.

Nepal is a predominantly agricultural country, and most children are involved with farming. In eastern Nepal where whole families work in the tea fields, parents can earn up to 550-600 rupees (\$14-15) per month. The working children, often as young as five years old, earn nothing. A CWIN survey found that although the numbers are small, the problem of children migrating into the towns and living on the streets is increasing. A recent estimate says there are about 500 street children in Kathmandu. They are either runaways, orphans, or squatters. Out of 100 children questioned in the survey, only 23 were literate. Their health was poor and most showed signs of malnutrition. Most of the children (89 per cent) came from outside Kathmandu. The situation of orphaned or abandoned children seems to be the worst.

Says CWIN founder Pradhan: "It is a big problem for the future of these children who now survive in the streets. Today they're pickpockets, tomorrow they're thieves. Most grow up to be thrown in jail. Even now many have been thrown in jail for sleeping in the streets, especially in front of the King's palace and the major tourist hotel ..."

"There is no comprehensive programme for helping these children, and while their numbers are wholly insignificant when compared with the level of the problem in India the Philippines, or other countries, as children with special needs they cannot be ignored."

*With acknowledgements: The Christian Science Monitor*

From the FICE Bulletin: Child care news from Europe

# Problems of Social Adaptation among Orphaned Children in Russia

**Dr Yelena Mastiokova** of the Scientific Research Institute for Disabilities and **Nina Larionova**, Chairperson of the Special Education Teachers Union

A wide-ranging research programme was carried out during the past five years by the genetic laboratory of the "Scientific Research Institute for Disabilities" on the basis of a systematic and comprehensive study of each individual child, with the aim of studying the emotional development of orphaned children. The theoretical basis of the research was defined by L. S. Vigotski as 'the reciprocity principle of biological and social factors in the emotional development of the child'. Our research based itself on understanding the self-awareness, activities and personality of the subject child as a developing personality, in which self-awareness serves as the connecting link between activities and personality.

The purpose of the study was to lay the foundation for learning and instructional methods for orphaned children that would prevent failure in their social adaptation in the future.

## Numbers

Nowadays, we can read a growing number of alarming newspaper articles about orphaned children in general and about their social integration difficulties in particular. The phenomenon can be explained first of all by the steadily increasing number of such children. Thus, every year some 100,000 children in our country join the ranks of those in need of full support by the government and public bodies. According to partial statis-

tics only, almost 1,100,000 children are being brought up in orphanages and residential homes at government expense. 900,000 young persons are arrested annually for loitering and unlawful behaviour. Who are these young people who get into confrontation with society and the law at such an early age? They are mostly children without families, who escape from orphanages in search of a touch of family warmth.

## The families

According to data obtained in the laboratory, only about 10% of the population in orphanages and residential institutions are orphans in the true sense of the word. The others are "social orphans" whose parents are alive but suffer from alcoholism or mental diseases, or whose right to raise their children was revoked. Investigating the circumstances it was found that about 3% of the children entering orphanages were abandoned by their parents, some 60% of these already at the maternity home. Approximately 60% of the mothers whose children are in orphanages are themselves children of single-parent families. The reasons cited by many young mothers for having their child raised through government care were inadequate conditions for raising children, lack of emotional maturity, and the absence of maternal sentiments.

Some mothers are reluctant to

raise their children if they themselves are underage at the time of their baby's birth, believing that the baby would prevent them from attaining a desired social status, ruin their chances of a successful marriage, or would interfere with their prospects for improved economic standing.

Our society has a basically negative attitude toward single-parent families, even in cases where the mother has virtually no hope of marrying. Thus in fact society obliges these mothers to give up their children and to hand over responsibility for their upbringing and education to the state.

A special social problem is caused by families in which the parents are alcoholics (this applies to 30% of the children in residential homes), mentally handicapped or ill, rendering them unsuited for the task of raising children without outside intervention and support.

## Multiple deprivations

Our research found some families in which both parents were alcoholics, with eight or more mentally handicapped children cared for in residential homes, in special education classes, fully financed by the state (including their housing needs), while at the same time their mothers received a "glorious mother" decoration for having a large number of children.

Indeed, a survey of the parents pointed to their poor economic situation, a low educational and cultural level,

a high percentage of dissolute living and a generally antisocial behaviour. It was also found that in the high-risk group of socially maladaptive children one finds the following groups: orphans, children of alcoholics, unwanted children, children from single-parent families, and also children of large families with aggravated economic or socio-economic problems, children of parents with low educational levels, or of mentally ill or handicapped parents.

One of the main factors underlying a lack of social adaptation of orphaned children is disadvantage and deprivation. The above data which we collected serve as proof of the inseparable link between the biological and social factors in the developmental impediments of orphaned children. The negative influence of emotional deprivation is amplified many times over during the critical periods of the child's development.

It is a known fact that the biological aspect of the brain's development is always a function of the existing social milieu which can enhance it but which may also have a retarding effect on it. Our research showed that psychological separation and, more importantly, emotional separation, cause a certain degree of disparity between the biological and social development of orphaned children.

## Cognitive development

This research about the mental development of orphaned children at different age levels showed that similar factors may influence psychological make-up in different ways and according to the child's level of psychological development. The most destructive factor in the child's mental development is emotional separation in the early years of its life, i.e. during the period in which the foundation is laid for the child's future ability to learn and to comprehend.

Deficiencies in basic psychological development in the child's early years manifest themselves in later stages as insufficient ability for comprehending and absorbing of different facts and phenomena; inability to absorb and to put into focus the connections and



***All the foregoing puts these children in a position of being unsuccessful right at the beginning of their schooling, limiting their ability to concentrate during the learning process and intensifying their behavioural difficulties.***

relationships among these; a low level of cognitive activity, when the accent is not on conscious social behaviour but rather on purely self-defensive action. All these can have retarding effects on the development of speech, memory and thinking.

The lack of emotional encouragement in the early years of life causes the formation and consolidation of various arbitrary pathological actions in these children. In follow-up studies of children in orphanages and special education residential homes, a certain self-absorption common to them can be clearly depicted; many of them lol about monotonously, suck their fingers, or masturbate. Banal and stereotypical games such as the use of different types of rattles dominate, in which entertainment is provided by monotonous movement and sounds.

#### **Learning and behaviour**

Reaching learning age, most of the orphaned children suffer from a basic unpreparedness to absorb the material to be learned.

Above all, they did not adopt for themselves any viable social norms and values; they do not possess rational systems for any activity; they lack analytical comprehension; many of them have a very limited level of knowledge and understanding of their surroundings; they are lagging behind in speech facility and other basic mental activities.

Deviations from concentration and memory norms were noted; a general preparedness for learning is missing — and personal and social readiness are also absent.

These children are unable to concentrate for a prolonged period, to accept a study framework and to keep to it, to plan and control their activi-

ties, to establish reciprocal relationships, or to offer mutual help to each other while studying.

All the foregoing puts these children in a position of being unsuccessful right at the beginning of their schooling, limiting their ability to concentrate during the learning process and intensifying their behavioural difficulties.

The reciprocal relationship between learning and behaviour difficulties in these children is characterized by a special reciprocal relationship between the intelligence level of the child and its emotional maturity, specially noticeable in children with a background of alcoholism in their families. Behavioural difficulties predominate as one of the most acute problems in the case of the majority of orphaned children. In the case of alcoholic families (even if no sign of defect can be discerned on the foetus during pregnancy) babies are often born prematurely, underweight, with uterine hypoxia or asphyxia, a slower assimilation ability in the early stages and also with various symptoms of underdeveloped mental functions.

In these children the interrelationship between biological and social factors in future deficiencies of mental development is especially noticeable. These children, who already at an early age do not conform to the accepted norms of social behaviour and who find themselves constantly in the position of being failures, are also characterized by their primary and desperate need of encouragement, friendly words and to be in the centre of attention.

Slowly, they lose all motivation for learning, and it is a safe guess that they will adopt additional forms of misbehaviour due to weighty emotional experiences.

Our research shows that orphaned children are an eminently high risk group for emotional and reciprocal disturbances, liable to various deviations in their individual development due to a wide variety of factors. These deviations can be made even more pronounced by the unsuitable learning and educational methods prevailing in public institutions.

## ***The Passing of a Friend***

Chrissie Janneker, who worked for 38 years for Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare as a Community Worker, passed away on Sunday 7 March 1993 at the age of 69.

Chrissie was loved and respected by many people in Pietermaritzburg and worked tirelessly to improve the conditions of those less fortunate than herself.

She served on the Board of Management of Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes and had ensured that a residential facility be provided in the Woodlands community.

We are sorry that she will be unable to see this project come into fruition. We trust that her family and friends know that after a life-time of serving others, she is called to a well deserved rest.

— The Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes Board of Management & Staff.

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## Kinderseksuele Molestering

Beskik Suid-Afrika oor toepaslike wetgewing, behandeling en voorkomingsprogramme? Christival Marais skryf teen die maatskaplike werk agtergrond

'n Geryde vraag was redelik onlangs deur 'n Afrikaanse Sondagkoerant geopper vir kommentaar deur die publieke te wete, "Is strawwe vir oortreders nie te lig nie?" My reaksie daarop is dat so-danige vraag nie voldoende verantwoord kan word nie tensy dit in verband gebring word met die vraagstuk, "Beskik ons oor 'n voldoende infrastruktuur om die verskynsel aan te spreek?" Subvertakings van die vermelde vraag is onteenseglik. "Beskerm die bestaande Wetgewing werklik die regte van die kind?" Op die vraag of die straf vir seksuele molesteerders te "skandelik lig" is, is my reaksie onomwonde dat die aan-geleentheid glad nie eens gekoppel moet word aan 'n swaar of te ligte straf nie, maar wel aan 'n toepaslike straf. In soverre dit ook die artikel (Rapport: 19 Julie 1992) "Kindermolestering: Is die straf te lig?" betref, huldig ek die mening dat 'n kritiese beskouing van bestaande wetgewing ontbreek, en is die toepaslikheid van mishandeling verwante strawwe glad nie aangespreek nie. Die artikel, opsigself, vol-

gens my mening kon o.a. meer gefokus het op uitbouings van byvoorbeeld artikel 42 van die Wet op Kindersorg 1983 (no. 74 van 1983) en of veranderde wetgewing wat beter beskerming bied vir die slagoffer asook voorsiening maak vir behandeling- en voorkomingsmaatreëls vir beide die oortreder en die slagoffer.

### Kinderverwante Wetgewing: Relevant of Ontoereikend?

In soverre dit Kinderregte in die Suid-Afrikaanse scenario aanbetref, is my vertrekpunt dat Kinderverwante wetgewing die afgelope 82 jaar (in toto sedert 1910) en in die geval van die Kinderwet van 1960, 32 jaar en die Wet op Kindersorg, van 1983, 9 jaar, en laasgenoemde Wet se wysiging van 1991) met betrekking tot kindermishandeling geen verbetering getoon het nie. Daarbenewens was die belangrike artikel 19(1) en (2) van die V.V. Handves vir Kinderregte ("The United Nations General Assembly, 1959. Declaration of the Rights of the Child") op vervreemdende om-

standighede uit die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing gesluit. Die strukturele geweld wat veroorsaak is deur die sosio-politiese sisteme van Apartheid kan daarom ook as een van die hoof oorsaaklike faktore van die fenomeen kindermishandeling geïdentifiseer word; en soos "Begrafnis van Drostersrus-Gouda, "Hulle spot met Apartheid se dood" tereg meld, het niemand begrafnisrede bygewoon nie omdat daar inderdaad nog nie 'n begrafnis gereël was nie. Die "Community Law Centre", Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland en die "Human Rights Trust" in die besonder, dien vermeld te word in die verskering van die regte van kinders in 'n toekomstige Menseregte Akte. So byvoorbeeld, het die eersgenoemde organisasie reeds 'n beduidende bydrae gelewer ten opsigte van die aanhouding van jeugdiges in polisie-selle. Politieke organisasies en partye en Wetgewende Kommissies, o.a. die A.N.C. se voorstel vir 'n Menseregte Akte ("A Bill of Rights for a New South Africa: a preliminary revised text, May, 1992"), die "Reger-

ingsvoorstelle oor 'n Handves van Fundamentele Regte" (2 Februarie 1993), die I.V.P. se "Constitution of the State of Kwazulu/Natal" (ongedateerd) en die Suid-Afrikaanse Wetgewende Kommissie se "Project 58: Group and Human Rights: Summary of interim Report" (Augustus 1991) kan op hierdie stadium ook beskou word as daadwerklike pogings om die Suid-Afrikaanse scenario te normaliseer veral in soverre dit die rol van die regering van die dag ten opsigte van Kinderregte betref.

### Die Rol van die Regering en Artikel 19(1 & 2) van die V.V. Handves vir Kinderregte

Subartikel 19(1) van die bovermelde V.V. Handves vir Kinderregte fokus byvoorbeeld uitsluitlik op die rol wat die regering van die dag moet vertolk ten opsigte van relevante wetgewing wat betrekking het op die administrering, maatskaplike en opvoedkundige maatreëls wat die kind beskerm van alle vorme van fisiese of geestelike geweld o.a. beserings of mishandeling, eksploitering insluitend seksuele molestering.

In subartikel 19(2) val die onus op die skepping van effektiewe prosedures sodat maatskaplike programme ontwikkel en daargestel word, as deel van die voorkomende en behandelingsmaatreëls soos in subartikel 19(1) vermeld. Identifisering, aanmelding of aanmeldingsverwysing, ondersoek en behandeling van gevalle wat, indien nodig, wetgewende ingryping benodig, is geïnkorporeer in die subartikel.

Volgens die vermelde artikel behoort wetgewing deur die regering van die dag geformuleer te word wat ook behandelings en voorkomingsgerig is. Die standpunt van Mev. Labuschagne van die Departement Kriminologie aan UNISA (Rapport 1992.07.19:13) te wete dat alle seksuele molesteerders in die tronk hoort, word dus in die lig van die vermelde artikel 19 negeer. Die mening word ook voorts gehuldig dat daar beduidende gebreke bestaan in die "Kinderverwante Wetgewing" sowel as in maatreëls wat gepaste vonnisse, met inbegrip van behandeling- en

voorkomingsprogramme regverdig. Op hierdie wyse sal dekriminalisasie van mishandeling, veral seksuele molestering, in die vooruitsig gestel word. Die Amerikaanse regering het byvoorbeeld, 'n Federale Wet uitgevaardig, onder leiding van die destydse President Nixon, te wete 'n "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act" (CAPTA) wat geskoei was op die dominante psigososiale model van ingryping of hantering.

### Navolgenswaardige idees

Die onderliggende idee was dat hofbevele die deelname, samewerking en volgehoue seksuele oortreder-behandeling duidelik spesifiseer, tesame met voorwaardes wat die behandeling onderskraag. Gevangenisstraf en paroolbevele kan deel uitmaak van die vonnis as die nodige samewerking en deelname deur oortreder in die behandelingsprogram ontbreek. Die mening word gehuldig dat die seksuele oortreding wetgewende prosedures assessering en behandeling die enigste werkbare oplossing is vir die voorkoming en rehabilitering van die oortreder. Hierdie standpunt word ook oorhoofs gedeel deur Joy Cole van die Departement van Kriminologie aan die Universiteit van Pretoria (Rapport 1992.07.19:13) wanneer sy tereg meld dat "Meer kan met terapie bereik word." 'n Soortgelyke perspektief word gehuldig deur Rina Pelser, verbonde aan RAU se Instituut vir Kinder- en Volwasseleleiding. Sy verklaar: "'n Oortreder wat vrywillig terapie ondergaan, kan met welslae gehelp word." Dit is ongelukkig ook die geval dat die nodige infrastruktuur in Suid-Afrika wat verband hou met die behandelings- en voorkomingsaspekte vir beide rolspelers totaal onvoldoende is. Daar bestaan slegs enkele organisasies soos o.a. Safe-line wat oor die vakkundigheid en infrastruktuur beskik om programme soos hierbo vermeld te kan aanbied. Die infrastruktuur sal egter moontlik drasties vergroot moet word ten einde 'n stad soos Kaapstad te kan bedien. Die aanbou van akkommodasie fasiliteite sal definitief as prioriteit beskou moet word ten einde die deelnemers te



## Protection from abuse

*Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child reads:*

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of

parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

akkommodeer. President Nixon het destyds 'n globale bedrag van 86 miljoen dollar bewillig vir die ontwikkeling van 'n infrastruktuur en programme. Indien die scenario in Suid-Afrika drastiese verandering moet ondergaan met betrekking tot die hantering van kindermishandeling, sal daar alhier indringend na die finansiering van die skepping van 'n infrastruktuur gekyk moet word. 'n Wyse van fondsskepping sou onteenseglik 'n tipe Staatslotery kon behels of 'n aanpassing in die herverdeling van fondse vir die Welsynskomponent in Staatsbesteding. Kindermishandeling in Suid-Afrika is 'n Kairos (krisis) en moet met dieselfde omsigtigheid en erns as VIGS of die heersende droogte hanteer word.

### Wetgewing

Soos reeds vermeld, is my vertrekpunt dat daar beduidende gebreke is in bestaande Kinderverwante wetgewing. Alhoewel die hoofdoelstelling van die Wet op Kindersorg (no. 74 van 1983) die beskerming van verwaarloosde en mishandelde kinders is, geniet kindermishandeling 'n laer prioriteit, terwyl kinderverwaarloosing oorbeklemtoon word. Die begrip "mishandeling" word byvoorbeeld nêrens in die vermelde Wet of die Kinderwet (no.33 van 1960) omskryf nie. Artikel 42(1) van die vermelde Wet vernou ook die maatskaplike verantwoordelikheid van die oorhoofse gemeenskap wanneer, byvoorbeeld net Tandartse, Geneeshere of Maatskaplike

Werkers wat 'n kind ondersoek of verpleeg, onder omstandighede wat die vermoede laat ontstaan dat die betrokke kind mishandel of ondervoed is om die Streekdirekteur van die Departement van Gesondheid en Welsyn onmiddellik in kennis te stel. Ander beroepslui soos o.a. onderwysers, dagversorgers (kleuterskole ensomeer) en ander persone in die gemeenskap word van hul maatskaplike verantwoordelikheid ontsê. Die fiasko van Junie 1988, waartydens 120 persone beweerdelik betrokke sou wees by 43 minderjarige seuns kon moontlik 'n ander nuans aangeneem het indien die breë gemeenskap verplig was om deel te vorm van die aanmeldingsproses. Die uitbouing van die aanmeldingsprosedures sal, ten einde maatskaplike verantwoordelikheid 'n nuwe betekenis te gee, ook indringend die interpretasie van "privaatheid" soos dit in die Internasionale Handves vir Menseregte vervat word anders belig, veral omdat die Menseregte Handves oorhoofs deur volwassenes geeien word. Dit sal groter wetgewende ondersteuning bied vir geregverdigde ingemenging deur die oorhoofse gemeenskap en professionele persone om ouerskap te monitor asook om die kind die primêre reg bied om toegang te hê tot die gemeenskap. Die Sweedse regering het o.a. 'n "Kinder-Ombudsman" tot wie die kind hom/haar kan wend in gevalle van kindermolestering. 'n Kansellier van die Kinderwet van 1989 (Brittanje) se

aanhaling onderstreep die verbreding van maatskaplike verantwoordelikheid "It should be emphasised that the days when a child should be regarded as a possession of his/her parents are now buried forever ..." 'n Byvoeging by die Wetgewing was die konsep van "joint parenting," wat impliseer dat meer as een ouerlike model verantwoordelik kan wees vir die beveiliging van 'n kind.

### Slot

'n Uitbouing van die Wet op Kindersorg (no.74 van 1983) veral artikel 42 ten einde voldoende voorsiening te maak vir meer omvattende aanmeldingsprosedures behandelings- en voorkomingsmaatreëls (die Strafproses Wet sal ook dienoreenkomstig gewysig moet word) sodat behandeling- en voorkomingsprogramme deel vorm van 'n toepaslike vonnis. 'n Alternatiewe aparte wetgewing, soos dit in die VSA daaruitsien (CAPTA) kan oorweeg word. Hierdie oorweging moet die breë spektrum van multi-dissiplinêre beroepe soos Maatskaplike Werkers, Sielkundiges, Mediese personeel, Regtelike personeel en verteenwoordigers van die breë gemeenskap insluit. Die forum kan dan indien "CODESA" weer in sitting is, pertinente voorstelle by die Welsynskomitee indien. Retrospektiewelik gesproke, kon die artikel van 19 Julie 1992 se opskrif liewer verander word na "*Kindermishandeling: Beskik ons oor die nodige infrastruktuur om te handel en te voorkom?*"



Most of those attending a recent NACCW Orientation Workshop in Cape Town were relatively new to the field — yet they had a good idea of the nature of child care work. Small working groups were asked to build definitions of child care work in not more than ten words. **Brian Gannon** reviews their efforts ...

# Do-it-yourself Definitions of Child Care Work

**Child care is ... (here come the ten words) ... giving hope and healing to troubled children through caring relationships.**

This is a definition which describes the work alongside the methods we use. I liked the order of the words: first 'hope' and then 'healing', for this implies that from their first day in the special environment we have built for them, youngsters can begin to trust once more, to begin again to have some expectations of their world. They are 'healed' usually, not through some treatment applied to them but by finding consistency, reliability and worth in their day-to-day lives. As the caring relationship first engenders this newfound hope, so it goes on to allow the exposure and exploration of the hurt.

**Child care is ... finding the roots of emotional/physical hurt and understanding them.** This definition reflects the important psychological principle that often it is enough just to know and understand our problems for us to be able to live comfortably with them — we don't always have to solve the problems. One of the most destructive of all emotions from which the children suffer is anxiety — a pervasive feeling of dread without us knowing exactly what it is we dread. If you are sneaking up on someone's house at night, you will suffer strong anxiety, because you are pretty sure that *something* is going happen, but you are not sure *what*. Only when a light snaps on or a dog barks, does your anxiety give way to rational fear which you can then

deal with (by fight or flight). Children in care have often been walking through minefields, dreading the worst but never quite knowing what will go wrong — could it be the violence, the rejection, the abuse, the separation, the loss ... ? Within trusting relationships with caregivers, children find the courage and the opportunity to confront these horrors, to turn the light on them — to find the roots of the hurt and understand them.

**Child care is ... seeing to the physical, emotional, educational, medical and spiritual needs.** Here we have a strong reminder that our work is far more than feeding and clothing and clean and tidy rooms. Physical care is the foundation of child care work, because it re-establishes confidence in people and places: At least I am regularly fed and kept safe and warm here. But that physi-

cal care can be cold charity when it doesn't move on to the other areas of the child's life and development. We are reminded of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in that once the physical and safety needs are taken care of we need to move on to the other human needs for belonging, for love, for self-esteem ... The worst 'institutional' care was the daily preoccupation with cleanliness and tidiness, giving little scope for the rest of children's needs.

**In child care we ... guide, understand, care, teach; it's hard, challenging, rewarding and fun.** That's certainly what child care workers do — and what they get out of their work. Guiding is an affirming thing for young people: it is the provision of signposts — to encourage *them* to start living their own lives again. Understanding is, of course, much more than "there, there, I understand". It is the serious work of thinking and theorising so that we grasp fully the child's condition and circumstances — and so that we can build a reasoned plan for him or her. We never underestimate the value of *care*, the reliable human concern which reassures children that they matter. But lastly in this definition is teaching, which is probably one of the most important yet least developed skills in our profession. School teachers, for example, work to a carefully prepared curriculum, which outlines all that has to

be taught, taking care not to leave anything important out. They also work according to specific methods with proven effectiveness. Child care workers work in a less formal 'classroom', namely the daily 'living space' of the children, but within those daily routines and activities we also need our curriculum, our methods and our media, our exercises and tests, as we teach the children life skills.



**Child care is ... the opportunity to lead children to satisfactory, mature, adult life.** Some good ideas here. I like the word 'opportunity', for our limited time with the children is just that, a chance (a second chance, a last chance?) to make good something which has gone wrong, or to make up for something which has been lost or damaged. What-

## A Formal Definition

*The NACCW participates in the International Child and Youth care Education Consortium. The 1992 meeting of that body adopted a definition of child care practice. Although the definition is couched in 'big words' it is helpful in that it identifies the clients, the context, the settings and the tasks and skills of child and youth care work.*

Professional Child and Youth Care practice focuses on the infant, child and adolescent, both normal and with special

needs, within the context of the family, the community and the life span. The developmental-ecological perspective emphasises the interaction between persons and the physical and social environments, including cultural and political settings.

Professional practitioners promote the optimal development of children, youth and their families in a variety of settings, such as early care and education, community-based child and youth development programmes, parent education and family support, school-based programmes, community mental health, group homes, residential cen-

tres, rehabilitation programmes, pediatric health care and juvenile justice programmes.

Child and Youth Care practice includes skills in assessing client and programme needs, designing and implementing programmes and planned environments, integrating developmental, preventive and therapeutic requirements into the life space, contributing to the development of knowledge and practice, and participating in systems interventions through direct care, supervision, administration, teaching, research, consultation and advocacy.

ever, it is an opportunity not to be missed. *Leading* children provides an interesting image — of being a little ahead of them in life's journey, of being one step ahead of them', and of at least knowing where we are all headed! (There is a lovely native American tradition according to which the adult, while leading children, remains nevertheless acutely aware of how the children are managing. When he sees a child struggling, *the adult* sits down, mops his brow and admits that the way is hard. The child is saved any loss of face or sense of failure — and is even given the opportunity to help and encourage the adult.) The best part of this definition is again that it remembers the *destination*: we lead children to satisfactory (it does not have to be perfect, just OK), mature (hopefully they will have grown to their best potential), adult life. If we ever forget that we are building adults rather than just controlling children, just think that in fifteen years time *an adult* might walk in your door to tell you how he or she experienced your child care work.

**Child care is ... being role-models and respecting children's rights to choose for themselves.** One of the most serious deprivations suffered by children in care is the lack of mature, fully-functioning adult role-models. Children separated from their families at early ages or for long periods simply have not experienced the complex daily interactions between men and women and parents and children which give them full-colour pictures of what people are and what they become. In troubled families the adult role-models are often anxious, inadequate, preoccupied, hostile or depressed people struggling with poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, illness or failure. Their ways of dealing with problems, for example, are often by denial, by violence or some other inappropriate response. Certainly a major need of children in care is for consistent, reasonable, secure and healthy-functioning adults — which can give them a more helpful pattern for building their own identities.

## Guidelines for the Child Care Administrator



### The foundation of leadership: credibility

*"I am careful of the words I use from day to day, to try to keep them sweet — for I never know from day to day which ones I'll have to eat." — Anonymous*

James L. Hayes, author of *Memos for Management*, calls a manager's credibility "The coin of communication; without it, his words and actions are worthless. A strong, credible leader will serve to unite workers towards the goals of an organisation, which in their eyes will be believable and worthy." Credibility is not a gift bestowed upon a manager. It is earned over time through open and honest behaviour. However, credibility is not easily maintained. Office politics can produce players that underhandedly attempt to destroy a rival's credibility. Healthy competition can inadvertently transform itself into

a game of one-upmanship with some very unhealthy results.

Hayes reports that a manager without credibility is a manager who will have difficulty getting the job done. Workers will often show disrespect or apathy which may appear in the form of absenteeism, late completion of assignments, or subtle sabotage.

To achieve and maintain credibility, the author offers five basic steps:

- **Tell the truth.**

Although absolute truth is virtually impossible, you must express what you believe at the time to be true. Failure to do so indicates an intention to deceive. Any inconsistency between what you believe and what you hope another will believe destroys credibility. If a lie is discovered, credibility can be irretrievably destroyed.

- **Admit mistakes.**

Managers are human and humans err. However, when you admit your mistakes and say "I was wrong," it strengthens your credibility when you say "I'm right."

- **When you don't know something, say so.**

Managers don't have to know everything. Those who attempt to hatch an answer will more often lay an egg.

- **Always keep promises.**

The response to a simple lie can range from irritation to rage. But that is slight compared to the reaction to a broken promise, which cheats someone of an anticipated outcome. If you don't know that you can keep a promise, don't make it.

Hayes refers to credibility as believability. "One of the highest — and most beneficial — accolades for a manager is the comment, 'If he says so, you can bank on it.'"

Source: Hayes, James L. (1983). *Memos for Management*. New York: AMACOM.

## Telephone tag — I don't want to play anymore

Statistics reveal that the chances of reaching the person you are calling are one in six. In fact, one study claims that you could spend up to two years of your life playing telephone tag! Here are some pointers on how to reduce this frustrating time waster:

- Ask people you speak with frequently when they prefer to be called and call them at those times. In turn, provide them with the same information.

- If the person you are calling is not in, ask if there is someone else who can help you. You may find that there are a number of people with the same information.

- If the person you are calling is not in, and no one else can help you, don't just leave a message for a return call. Ask when the person is likely to return or when it would be best to call again. If possible, set up an appointment for a telephone meeting.

- When leaving a message, provide as much information as possible. State who you are, why you are calling, where and when you can be reached, and anything else the other person will need to help you.

- Look for alternate ways to contact people. Fax machines and electronic mail are good ways to avoid the telephone tag problem.

Source: Canape Charlene, (Ed.) (1990, June 1). How to Avoid Telephone Tag. *Working Smart*. New York: National Institute of Business Management.

Acknowledgements to: *The Child and Youth Care Administrator*, Nova University, USA

# Children and responsibility

*Last month we looked at the impact on the British people of instances of juvenile crime. In The Independent the debate has continued. Here are some extracts ...*

Victims of juvenile crime react with justifiable anger and fear to the violation of their property by young delinquents. They point out that a criminal is a criminal and that a mere caution is not enough for those who flagrantly flout the law.

At the other end of the spectrum there are those who see only the causes of criminal behaviour, not the results. For them it is always someone else who is to blame. They hold society or the Government responsible. They seek to justify criminal acts with the fashionable belief that delinquents are the passive victims of circumstance.

As a psychiatric social worker in Brixton I saw first-hand that difficult children need love, stability and support to help them develop responsible attitudes. As head of the juvenile court in Lambeth in the early 1980's I saw also that patterns of law-breaking in youngsters had to be nipped in the bud to prevent a downward spiral of recidivism and despair.

— **Virginia Bottomley**  
Secretary of State for Health

Children and young people, stereotyped and scapegoated, are always an easy target for society's anger, bewilderment and despair. Mass hysteria is dangerous because it usurps sense and sensibility. Mourning the tragic death of James Bulger and condemning the children accused of killing him, the nation ignores the more than 90 toddlers who die unsung each year at the hands of parents or care-takers.

... children's experience of inter-personal violence in their own homes is a root cause of all violence in society. Australia's National Committee on Violence states that "the greatest chance that we have to prevent violence in society is to raise children who reject violence as a method of problem-solving ..."

— **Penelope Leach**

As someone who has been caring for young people in residential settings for 15 years, I can list some of the problems we face. Many young people are placed inappropriately by courts in homes which do not have the staff or skills to deal with them.

The sanctions the staff might apply [for offences] are regarded by the young person as trivial and unenforceable; the staff feel deskilled by the system. Staff are assaulted physically and verbally, yet, tired and mentally exhausted, they are still expected to function normally, with patience and a caring attitude.

— **A. Watts**

It's part of a civilised society to look after its children. Damage to human beings can't be undamaged.

The justification for caring is caring itself, not the outcome. And the more we say that, the more we reassert a civilised society. This is an asylum, a refuge. We have never claimed success.

— **Masud Houghugh**  
(asked how much centres like Aycliffe can really accomplish)

The FWA (Family Welfare Association, London) believes that the current moral panic reflects society's lack of self-confidence and direction. Solutions which ignore the material as well as the emotional needs of people will fail.

— **Lynne Berry**

I know it is home background that moulds personalities. So why not make the parents of regularly offending children attend compulsory training sessions, and try to educate them in the right way of bringing children up? Being poor is no excuse. Many people were poor, my parents included, when I was a child, but we did not go around stealing from old ladies.

— **Patricia Canniwick**

We all have a responsibility for raising moral awareness. We are all to blame for what has happened. Only as a society, all of us together, can we make amends.

— **J R Riley**

**Pumla Mncayi and some of her children from the Masikhule Children's Home, meet some other children ...**

## Get off the streets!

It is a matter of eight hours since I had been listening to Brian Gannon's inspiring speech during the Graduation Ceremony for students from various NACCW courses, his keynote address on "The Contradictions found in Child Care". I am travelling in the combi with Hettie (our recreational officer) and sixteen of the children, on our way to Newlands where the children have been invited to perform.

We stop at the robots at the intersection of Campground and Belmont Roads, and Ronnie shouts from the back seat, "Hettie, Hettie laai hulle op asseblief". Immediately everybody's attention is drawn to this demand, and we see little ones, boys, approaching the cars, begging. Nobahle says "Yho! look at this little one looking the same age as Dzedze".

(Dzedze is one of ours, a very lively, lovable child full of the tricks of children of his age). So we started to hear the "shame, tog!" etc. Hettie says to Ronnie "Okay Ronnie, en kan hulle maar met julle kom bly?" — and I hear noises around the topic. One child says "Oh but I would not encourage them to move around and beg". Ronnie comes in again saying, "But man! When the going gets tough at home, you sort out ways like these to get out of the problems." Nobahle says again, "Even so, one would remain at home. Here we are to-

day, at Masikhule, so places like those could really come to your rescue — other than to be in the street".

I felt yes, here is my chance, so I said, "Yes, kids it is true, resorting to the streets does not solve anyone's problem. Instead matters sometimes get worse for both parties — you, being in the street, and your parents not really understanding why you leave home".

Our culture does accommodate the hardships of life.

The joys and sorrows that are encountered by one, one shares with the person next to him, or with a relative or a friend — or the whole neighbourhood. This sense of belonging is the only pillar that still keeps our nation together.

I said to the kids that whatever the hardships, we are used to the situation of neighbour having to shoulder the burdens of his neighbour.

And if it is not a neighbour, every black person belongs to a clan, the clan that forms a network in the village. So, if you are having problems with your immediate environment, in this case your home, you go to your aunt, uncle, cousin, grandfather, brother's grandfather, etc. I have never heard of any one hanging in the air with no where to belong. Even if you visit a foreign country, immediately you come across someone belonging to the same clan as you, and the bonding develops right at that time. As conversation develops each identifies certain shared values, thus strengthening the bond.

Therefore one tends to believe the Xhosa expression "Umntu Ngumntu Ngabantu". So the message from Masikhule children is "Fellow folks your pain is ours, *but get off the streets!*"

