

Child & Youth Care

**A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH
TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK**

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**IN AFRICA:
REHABILITATION OR
DEVELOPMENT?**

**UPDATE ON HIV AND
ORPHANS IN KWAZULU**

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Editorial

The easy part is always the hard part

Over the past few weeks I have had the unique experience of sharing in the work of Project Go — as part of the residential care “response team” in the Western Cape. It has been an opportunity to spend time with child and youth care workers and administrators, hearing some of the problems they struggle with, some of the solutions which have worked — and some which haven't.

Passion

We are reminded of some of the universal truths of child care work. One is that we seldom succeed if we don't have a passion for the work — for kids in difficulty, for thinking up better ideas with them and seeking solutions. For many child care workers that comes easily. We like to quote Bronfenbrenner's attractive idea that “every kid needs at least one adult who is crazy about him” and we make our commitment to the children accordingly. But every youngster in care does not inspire passion. Indeed, many bring with them a deep mistrust and hostility which pushes us away; they bring a negative self-image born of a lifetime of rejection and abuse and they will not allow themselves to believe that they are acceptable and loveable. We become the target of the conflicts they bring with them, and the focus of their fears and hates. Often it is hard for us to sustain the passion which should be the driving force in our work. Each one of us knows the temptation to

give up on a child, to blame and reject, and to choose to see the errors and the problems instead of the positives and the hopes. And when the child looks into your eyes, it will be immediately clear whether you are there for him or not.

Structure

Another truth is that to succeed we need structure and a plan. A vital ingredient of what we offer in our work is security and predictability so that the youngsters know at least that they can rely on us — that they will be cared for and protected, that they will belong and be taken into account no matter which child and youth care worker is on duty. Again, for some child care workers structure comes easily. Planning and preparation are natural parts of any task. No coming event (a weekend, a new arrival, a confrontation or a celebration) is risked through a lack of thought and anticipation. Some workers, though, will choose to “wing it” when difficult tasks lie ahead, and will do so at their cost; some simply don't think that in work with troubled kids we need to anticipate every possibility and cover all the bases — do we have a plan for this, will we have enough staff on duty, do we have a Plan B? Others will get the meaning of structure wrong, and use it to limit and control kids instead of to contain and guide. It is too easy to use structure to achieve what we want, rather than to allow young people to work out in safety what they want.

Capacity

Whatever the passion and the planning, a child and youth care programme needs at least the capacity to carry out the work and achieve the goals. One of the older rules of the game is to never attempt alone what would be better done by two!

In many of the programmes we have visited this past month, there is frankly not the capacity — not enough people to tackle this complex and demanding work with children and youth who are, by definition, hard to work with. Private institutions were reeling under the reduced subsidies and had retrenched staff, so that as many as two-thirds of the children could at any one time be without adult supervision. State institutions were reeling under the country-wide staff reductions, so that often the very organisations being asked to work with the most difficult children had been left least able to do so!

Society finds it easy to refer its difficult youth to institutions; the hard part is making sure that the institutions have at least a fighting chance to meet society's expectations.

It will be a sad day for child and youth care, if when all of the transformation ideas fall into place, all we discover that there's nobody around to put the grand plans into action.

Internet addresses

Our web sites are now located at the following addresses:

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<http://www.pretext.co.za/naccw>

CYC-Net

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Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Child & Youth Care

A journal for those who work with troubled children and youth at risk

Volume 16 Number 2 February 1998

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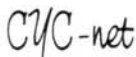
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The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-profit organisation which provides the professional training and infrastructure to promote healthy child and youth development and to improve standards of care and treatment for troubled children and youth at risk in family, community and residential group care settings.

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The views expressed in *Child & Youth Care* are in all cases those of the writers concerned and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Association of Child Care Workers.

The Child & Youth Care Scene

Doubts and fears dominate the field at the moment, with unanswered questions and uncertain future plans common in most sectors. In the public sector there are questions about the possibility of organisations being closed down and expected staff retrenchments. In private organisations, another year without a subsidy increase will mean further staff cutbacks — just when Project Go is asking for improved services to avoid children and youth being moved deeper into the system.



The least helpful reaction to these problems is to give up, to ask "What can we do?" and to roll over and play dead. For one thing, there are the children who are with us now to consider.



They are in the middle of their *only* childhood or adolescence — they get only one shot at this — and we are the adults who are with them on this part of their journey. The role models they need right now are not those of the defeatist and the victim, but those of the positive and the hopeful. They need to see in us people who believe in kids — and if we believe in kids then we also need to be more active in the present situation. What better ideas can we think of? What can we do to make things better?

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going" — according to the well-known saying. Certainly one of our responsibilities is advocating for children and youth at risk — and advocating for our profession. We all need to be more articulate about child and youth care issues — speaking our minds and asking questions. On our side, we should be rethinking our systems, understanding all over again what the needs of our children are, being clear about what we should be doing about them, and building the appropriate programmes and skills in our teams.



In our approaches to government we should be clear about what we have to offer and be prepared to "market" our services better. If you are a children's home you should be able to say to the state and the community "these are the services we are skilled at, and we undertake as far as we can to deliver the goods you expect from us." If you are a "reform school" you need to show why young convicted offenders would be *better off* in your programme than in prison.

We have every right to express our point of view about things which we feel are important for the work we do with young people at risk — and to ask questions. "When will the new 'programme-based' subsidy system finally be worked out so that we can start doing what the IMC is asking of us?" "How can education departments apply the same staff-pupil ratios in child care schools (which by definition work with the most at-risk level of youngsters) as they do in normal community schools?" "Is anything happening about these schools coming together with the rest of the child and youth care system under the arm of Welfare?"

Not enough people to go around — a problem which is leading more and more institutions in both private and public sector to explore the use of volunteers in their programmes. Just *one person* with a particular interest or skill, who commits to a regular hour or so once a week, adds to your resources and frees up a staff member for a while.

A visitor to the web site of the NACCW's electronic child care network CYC-NET posted a challenging question on relationships. It prompted a stimulating discussion, the exchange of writings and even a poem. Some excerpts ...

The centrality of Relationships in our work

The Question

I keep hearing so much about the centrality of "the relationship" in the work of child and youth care friends. Are they for real — or is this a bit sentimental and bogus? Surely the doctor and the plumber and the auto repairman must equally have good relationships with their customers/clients/patients? What's so different with child and youth care people? — Jon (Jack)

The relationship is crucial because of the previous experiences of the youth and the fact that the youth worker 'lives' with the youth daily.

To me the relationship is a key, but not the only component of the work. I am fond of citing a trilogy of A's:

- Attachment
- Attention and
- Activity

All of these are mediated through relationship. At the same time the three A factors affect the relationship — for example, an activity can serve as a focal point to develop relationship.

— **Karen VanderVen**

Relationship is in child and youth care work just as crucial as it is in social work activities. I agree with Karen that the three A,s (attach, attend, activity) are helpful structures in relationships with children and youth, especially working with the kids who are hurt in both emotional as well as in physical ways.

However, relationships with children and youth are well reflected in the writings of Buber and Kirkegaard, the meeting of the I and the Thou, and the I and the It. These are complicated propositions but useful to understand for appreciating how relationship with children and youth become crucial.

— **Hans Eriksson**

I would only add two points.

First, it is precisely in the area of rela-

tionships with others that many of the youngsters with whom we work have been most deprived; therefore, they need to experience real, wholesome, deep relationships if they are to be able to learn to relate positively to others. I think these can only be learned meaningfully by experiencing them.

Second, a related point, the plumber, auto repairman, etc., need to relate to others as a means to an end; for the child and youth care worker, the relationship is an end as well as a means — it is, in many ways, the focal content as well as the method in the work.

Therein lies the difference, at least for me, in the role of relationships in our work compared to the work of other fields such as mentioned by Jon.

— **Jerry Beker**

I agree with Karen's three A's and have been very curious lately about the work that is being done to understand how relationships, skills, knowledge and self awareness are used in context in child and youth care.

The metaphors tossed around are jazz, dance, self in action, etc. In other words how does one use one's self skill and knowledge in a range of circumstances, situations and activities in a manner that empowers and promotes growth ... and conversely what are the activities that allow on the opportunity to maximize this potential?

Personally, I've been doing a thematic analysis of relationships — observing workers, analysing their stories and reflecting on my own experience to identify themes in successful interactions.

So far I'm focused on presence, meaning, rhythm and atmosphere. For example, in successful interactions workers are present in the moment, curious about and sensitive to the meaning of an interaction or moment for a youth as interpreted through his or her cultural lens, attempting to get in synch with a youth's developmental rhythms for

trusting and growing, and sensitive to the atmosphere in which the interaction is taking place.

This, of course, is a very general description of the themes, all of which are much more complex in meaning and practice. And a lot of fun to think about.

— **Mark Krueger**

Jon partly answers his own question by pointing out how necessary it is for people to establish relationships. Young people who come into child and youth care programmes are the very kids who have been failed in their relationships with others, most often to the extent of losing their own ability and confidence to establish and maintain positive and mutual relationships.

Child and youth care workers like meeting people, being with people, listening to people — and are good at this with those who find it difficult or threatening or hopeless. The value to the child of the relationship in child and youth care work is simply the relating itself, the experience of being with someone who can offer a respectful, responsive and rational relationship, one which will survive the expected mistrust and testing. The youngster gets to the point where he realises, Hey, I can do this; with whatever imperfections, doubts and false starts, I can have a fair shot at relating, mutually, with others — without having to bully and dominate, or having to submit to too high an asking price, or having to employ neurotic or manipulative methods. Just me.

This is no quick, simple lesson for most of these kids to learn. It takes a lot of knowledge, method, created opportunities, patience and generosity on the part of the child care worker — and we must get the kids "up to speed" so they can take this back into their real lives back home and at school — with the significant people in their lives — and with the plumber!

— **Brian Gannon**

I agree with Brian. Other points to remember about the relationship —

A great deal of modelling of appropriate behaviour is taking place.

The child is involved in a relationship that teaches skills of conflict resolution, caring and problem solving.

— **Debra Cockerton**

Another thought to add to the growing and thoughtful pile: the power in relationship is based in very ordinary moments being exchanged — moments many of us take for granted — such as having someone give us something they took time to think about, knowing when to touch and when to hold back, noticing something interesting about a person and telling them so, asking someone to help "you" [rather than the usual youth worker role of helping someone else],

putting down what we are in the middle of doing because a youngster has approached us "now" [rather than asking them to wait just a minute ...], having a food fight ...

Well, that's my addition to this most critical conversation — without relationship, all the technique in the world is nothing but dead baggage.

— Penny Parry

My first reaction was to say 'you can't be serious' but I kept coming back, because a question like this cuts, in its simplicity and directness, to the heart of the matter and challenges what we see as the very foundation of our work.

Also because it is a question I deal with every day in my work with staff.

Whether expressed or not, the question is there in many of the alternative questions I hear, like

- Shouldn't he be taught a lesson?
- What makes him think he can get away with that?
- Why should we tolerate that behaviour?
- How am I going to get him to do that?

At times I wonder out loud: 'Are you in this relationship, or are you *outside looking in*, monitoring and manipulating, but not 'being' in the relationship?'

For the relationship is this thing between us, but it is also us being together. It is us, we are it. I know, it gets kind of zen-like at this point, but let me continue to struggle — my struggle is about connectedness, by the way.

Think of a time, I might say, when you had a feeling of 'we'-ness with somebody. It might have been when you were dancing; or playing catch; or walking in rhythm down the street — at these moments there is a sense of connectedness, of moving together in harmony.

Imagine some other time when, for example, you worked on a common project with another person, and you had a sense of 'being in this together' as you both shared the excitement, and frustrations, of trying to reach a common goal.

Or sometimes, in all our lives, we have the experience of being 'at one with somebody else' — a time when there is a 'fusion of joint experiencing' with another person. Now, I'm not referring to a time when I am you and you are me, but rather a time when *we are us*.

These are the times when we are 'in relationship'. And the word 'in' is important here.

You see, effective youth care practice is not just about 'having relationships' but about 'being in relationship' with youth; about entering into the relationship, not just getting along with someone else but about *being in* the getting along.

We don't just 'have' a relationship, like having a chocolate bar or a new TV or a shiny penny. We enter in to relationship and from within the context of that rela-



Trina Schart Hyman

“Think of a time when you had a feeling of ‘we’-ness with somebody. It might have been when you were dancing; or playing catch; or walking in rhythm down the street — at these moments there is a sense of connectedness, of moving together in harmony.

tionship we help to facilitate change.

Now it is true that the plumber, the car salesperson and the gardener like to have good 'relations' with their clients, but they don't enter in to a 'relationship'. Effective youth care practice is not about *having*, it is about *being*.

Jon, this is an important question for your work with young people. Because how you frame it, influences what you do. So, good for you for asking it.

Anyway, as always, I ramble. Let me suggest a few youth care reading areas to explore.

- Mark Krueger on presence, rhythm-icity and relationships
- Gerry Fewster on being in relationship
- Henry Maier on attachments
- Leanne Rose on being a youth care worker
- Bill Halpin on seeing 'I to I'
- Karen VanderVen on self in activities
- Edna Guttman on the fusion of self and experience
- Leon Fulcher on joint experiencing
- Lorraine Fox on healing through relationship
- Or even my own stuff on connected experiencing ...

— Thom Garfat

Everyone who parents has probably become aware of the buzzword 'quality time' as they struggle to balance work, housework and lifework. It is no different for child and youth care workers, who can become 'caught up in catching up' and may miss the obvious — that they are there for the young people and conversely the young people are there for them.

Quality time, being in the moment, one to one, whatever one may want to call it, that valuable time simply spent in enjoying living with the young people, is what it is all about. Carve out such time and simply enjoy the moment at whatever activity you each have chosen. You will find both your work and your purpose rewarded and rewarding.

Last week, my young people and myself sampled an eighty foot, frozen toboggan run together. As we all faced the chal-

lenge of surviving that sucker, each at our own levels of courage and endurance, we shared lots of laughs, emotions and a few passing boo-boos and overall a solid chunk of real quality time which got us out of our usual skins and transformed us into survivors of the slide and perhaps of much more besides. Such opportunities are everywhere in your workday, seize them and go with them.

— Garth Goodwin

I've spent the last half hour or so catching up on this relationship dialogue, and before jumping in I would first like to try to summarize my understanding of some of the key points raised thus far.

1) "The relationship" is the central mediating force through which attachment, attention, and activity can produce development (Karen);

2) The study of themes and rhythms in relationships can reveal much about "successful interactions" between children and youth, and those of us who care for them (Mark);

3) "Real, wholesome, deep" relationships are precisely what is needed for the children and youth with whom we work because of their relative and typical deprivation in these very areas, and that in child and youth care, "the relationship is an end as well as a means" (Jerry);

4) The primary value of the relationship to the child is in "the relating itself, the experience of being with people who can offer a respectful, responsive and rational relationship, which will survive the expected mistrust and testing," and that this "lesson" is complex to learn and demanding to facilitate (Brian);

5) "The relationship" ultimately models "appropriate behaviour" and skills like "conflict resolution, caring and problem solving" (Debra);

6) The power of "the relationship" rests not so much in that which is extraordinary but rather in the "ordinary moments being exchanged" between child and care giver (e.g., "noticing something interesting about a person and telling them so") (Penny).

From what I can tell (and I hope I didn't

miss anyone or any essential point), it seems as though everyone so far agrees that "the relationship" and the "relational process" in particular are at the transformational heart of child and youth care.

If this conclusion is fair and accurate, I would wholeheartedly agree. However, I would like to share an experience I recently had that feels relevant to this discussion, and raises additional questions in my mind.

A couple of weeks ago, I spent a day with a large group of child and youth care practitioners and supervisors in North Carolina. One essential task of our meeting was to determine what was at the very core of child and youth care as these individuals lived and defined it.

They said many of the same things that we are saying here but raised at least three interrelated questions:

1. How do we ensure that those individuals who are selected to develop relationships with children, youth, and families are willing and able to do so in a healthy and healing manner?
2. To ensure and facilitate such relationships, what if anything should be required of these individuals before they are hired and while they are on the job?
3. What effect, if any, would such requirements (e.g. acquiring or demonstrating specific skills or areas of knowledge) have on a care giver's ability to cultivate the kinds of "connected" and "being with" relationships that we all value?

I'd be curious to hear any thoughts from the group.

— **Craig Shealy**

Some quick thoughts on Craig's three questions.

First I think we use the best available instruments to screen individuals entering the field to see if they have the personal attributes as well as the capacity to develop skills to relate with children in an effective way (I know there are lots of loaded terms in this statement).

Then I think we also interview candidates with panels of experts, child and youth care workers who have demonstrated over a period of time the ability and capacity to relate. Personally in my experience as a supervisor I found the latter source a more accurate predictor. I also felt it was important to stay tuned in to one's gut feelings and instincts and the collective guts and instincts of people on the recruitment team.

While on the job we develop mentoring and supervisory relationships with workers to support them and expect that they continue to demonstrate their ability to relate—there are any number of evaluations processes to determine how someone is doing. I prefer the qualitative measures.

The skills of relationships and the knowledge base have been articulated in

many forums and journals over the years. The body of knowledge is extensive and should be required.

Personally I believe we should work towards a minimum of a bachelors degree with a focus on relationships. In other words, as workers are with youth they weave as much care, learning, and counselling as possible into their interactions, with sensitivity to discovery and context. The goal of course is to empower.

— **Mark Krueger**

Thank you Craig, for your excellent summation of the various comments about relationship. This could be the foundation of a more extensive discussion and ultimately, a publication. Your three questions are very well taken.

1. Yes, we need to ensure that those selected to form relationships with children are willing and able to do so in a healthy manner. The challenge will be to the whole system and context that we work in — it is not only the literal selection process, but the complex of societal forces that shapes the agencies and programs that employ workers and plans the ways in which they are used.

2. Certainly there are requirements at the time of hiring and on the job that go above and beyond how much training, pre-service and in-service, should occur — as important as that is. Again the issue is both specific and systemic.

3. To me, skills and areas of knowledge (and I believe we know what they are for this work) enhance care giver's abilities to form relationships and 'be with'. They give care givers a stronger and more complex frame of reference with which to make decisions 'in the moment' (a kind of information retrieval process) and present a more enriched personality for kids to relate to, i.e., more 'hooks' for them to anchor to.

I have *never* been one of those who believe knowledge and skills (both within the field and out) interfere with 'spontaneity' and one's ability to relate. "Too much 'professional' education limits spontaneity". Total nonsense — to be professional in this field one would be encouraged in the use of self, and would know how and why one was doing this, and for what purpose.

— **Karen VanderVen**

This discussion on relationship has intrigued me and like several others, I have scanned briefly and noted that I want to pay more attention to it and should come back and re-read the postings. So last night I printed them all out. I ran out of time to read at work and so took them home. In what I thought was a quiet moment as dinner was cooking in the oven, I grabbed them to review.

As I sat down to read, my 11-year-old plunked herself in the chair opposite and started chattering. She was quite dis-

tracting and I was *really* interested in the ideas that people were expressing on relationship.

However, when I hit the ideas about being present and being in the moment (not new ones, just there on the page), I tossed the stack of papers and decided to *just do it!* We had a wonderful conversation and I was again reminded of how important we are to each other.

Later (much) I reflected on the opportunity she presented and what I learned from our interaction. It seems to me, as our field professionalizes, as the demands of paperwork increase, with accountability for change, focus on positive outcomes for the children, youth and families that we work with, all these things impinge upon the nature of our work and our relationships (both with clients and co-workers). Some of the skills demanded to do these things, are actually counterproductive to developing relationships because they require the ability to organize, schedule, and be systematic, and I think these demands can pull us away from relationship, if we aren't aware of how we respond to them. So, in response to Craig's questions about ensuring people can develop relationships, I might sarcastically suggest that we look for self-aware individuals who are disorganized, late, and avoid paperwork! I also believe that we need to provide time for them to explore and develop their awareness in the context of our relationship and co-worker relationships.

Relationships are everywhere. While their essential character may change, they are everywhere. The character of any relationship is ever changing — as long as I attend to the relationship and the person. This is the power of the work we do with relationship.

Youth and children come to us and try to create relationships as *they* know them — patterns of communication and ways of being with each other that don't work. We work to create something different for them. Trying to get these concepts across to young people just entering the field is a challenge.

I am enjoying the discussion about the required knowledge, skills and self-awareness that promote the ability to be in relationship. I don't think the relationship itself is teachable, although we can tune up some skills and knowledge to enhance it.

However, helping workers to know who they are and how they interact in the world with others, being aware of themselves, is fundamental. Enough said for today.

— **Carol Stuart**

You can join in such discussions — free. E-mail to cyc-net@iafrica.com and you will be added to this international network.

Minister's Parliamentary Briefing on Child and Youth Care

In her statement at Parliament on 9 February, Welfare and Population Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi reviewed past progress and priorities for 1998.

"When I took office as Minister in June 1996, I pledged to focus all my energies on transforming social welfare in South Africa, with a clear focus on poverty alleviation and welfare services, especially youth and children." She outlined progress with legislation, consolidation of previous departments and finances, but concentrated on the child and youth care system.

Child and Youth Care

For many years now, the child and youth care system, which encompasses policy and services to children in need of care and protection as well as those in trouble with the law, has been in crisis. The approximately fifty thousand young people presently within this system (foster care, residential care, children awaiting trial, and children on the street) range from infancy to 18 years of age with the majority in need of care, protection and developmental programmes.

A small minority of approximately 10 to 20 percent are in trouble with the law, and many of these young people are equally in need of care, protection and development.

In 1995 when young people awaiting trial were released from prisons, the CYC system which functions mainly within the welfare sector, but is shared by Justice, Education, Correctional Services

and SAPS, was unable to respond with appropriate resources.

This situation together with South Africa's new commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, resulted in an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC) being established by the Cabinet to design a new system and manage the crisis in the interim.

A further change to Section 29 of the Correctional Service legislation in 1996, led to children once again being detained in prison to await trial. It is this amendment which will fall away in May 1998.

Our realities

The reality is that we have a need for effective services to children, youth and families which far outweighs our present resources and capacity. Furthermore the child and youth care system which has been and remains in crisis, must be transformed in practice before we are likely to see this turnaround. The crisis and ineffective nature of the system itself is in effect draining our resources. We have a new system design which was completed by the IMC in 1996/97. We have a new policy.

Our greatest challenge now is to re-prioritise both financial and human resources, retrain and build the capacity of our human resources, plus (in the face of serious financial restraints) seek additional resources. In addition we are faced with the approaching change in

Section 29 once more in May when the present 1400 children awaiting trial will (as in 1995) be released into welfare facilities.

Our challenges

Some of the individual (but by no means small) challenges contextualised within the broader outline above are:

- transforming and providing probation and early intervention particularly to young people
- transforming the residential care service to young people, which includes upgrading the effectiveness and delivery of family preservation and family reunification
- establishing policy, legislation and effective mechanisms and programmes which address child abuse and neglect
- dealing with poverty in such a way that families and communities are supported and empowered to remain together and develop towards wholeness and well-being
- transforming funding, social security and financial policy and approaches so that financial resources (whatever the amount), support the transformation of the CYC system, increase effectiveness of service delivery to children, youth and families, support quality service delivery, reach the most needy and are equally and appropriately distributed
- ensuring that the system



is prepared, willing and has the capacity and resources to deal with HIV/Aids and the consequences of this virus - most specifically the women and children and particularly the children who are orphaned and/or abandoned. Each day the number of orphaned and abandoned children increases and we expect that we will be dealing with approximately a million orphans within the next 10 years.

- preparing the system to adequately meet the challenge of May 1998 when Section 29 again changes, so that no further crisis will result.
- developing the appropriate legislation.

The complexity of these challenges lies in the fact that there is a shortage of resources and capacity coupled with the fact that each challenge is directly interconnected with the others. Impacting positively on only one aspect will not necessarily change other aspects — so our task, however daunting, is to address the full system — in what we call the process of transforming the child and youth care system.



Our progress and our hope

While it is often difficult to see progress within such a vast array of very serious challenges and poor resources to meet those challenges, we have made small but significant steps of progress, and we intend that the 1998/99 financial year, in spite of challenges which lie ahead, is one which harvests our efforts to the significant and felt benefit of children, youth and families. We have six very effective projects which are operational and which have demonstrated the financial and programmatic effectiveness of our new principles and framework. Already three to four thousand young people and their families have benefitted. This year, together with support from funders, we intend that these be spread around the country providing many more services and yet facilitating the transformation.

Youth justice

Probation services have increased in most provinces and this will continue. So far we have trained or retrained 500 probation officers and this will continue throughout the year.

Secure care facilities will be ready in Mpumalanga, Northern Province, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Free State before or just after May 10. We already have a facility in Gauteng, and the North West facility will be ready within the next 8 months.

Project GO

Project Go has been initiated to deal with transformation and reprioritisation of residential care, finalisation of secure care, urgent probation services, immediate upgrading of re-unification services, and the effective management of the release of children in May.

Each province has initiated this project which is being co-ordinated nationally by my department. A detailed action programme is in the implementation phase and will be closely monitored by myself and the other IMC Ministers. Already a number of children have been appro-

riately placed back within their communities. At the same time we are giving urgent attention to financial and human resources issues as well as to piloting new and more effective methods of subsidy.

Concern

At this point we are indeed concerned about the numbers of children who will need to be in some form of secure care after May 10, particularly because there is some uncertainty about the numbers of children presently being held in police cells. We are too, to some extent, dependent on other departments such as justice and education and to that end we are working in close partnership to ensure that all measures are taken to prevent a crisis in May certainly, but to do more than that — we intend that Project Go will once and for all begin to turn the system away from crisis and facilitate transformation. It is our firm intention that this system will be comprehensively addressed during this coming year. Each province, both the government and non-government sectors, is working intensely on unblocking the residential care system, establishing secure care, and putting in place the desperately needed support services to children and families. We are fortunate to have some funding available in the IMC budget and are thus able to provide at least some support to the provinces. It is unlikely that there will be no difficulties when May 10 arrives, but we believe that Project Go will provide the necessary supports and resources.

Ethelbert Training Course Being Evaluated

The Ethelbert Child Care Training Centre received too few applications this year to run a viable First Year class, and is using 1998 to re-evaluate the course.

The Centre has been running the two-year pre-practice course since 1990. Its merit lay in the good balance between theory and practice, with extensive opportunity for students to do hands-on

Clarification on UNISA/Technikon

Last month, we provided information about the new Technikon SA course and said that "with closure of UNISA's certificate in Child and Youth Care, this training moves to the Technikon SA from this year."

What this means is that UNISA will not be registering any new students for this Certificate. Those students who began the course in 1997 or earlier will have an opportunity to complete the course and are encouraged to do so. The last UNISA exams will take place in January 2000, which means that the final registration for 2nd year will be in January 1999. All students who graduate from the UNISA Certificate will receive full credit so as to be able to register for the 3rd year of the B Tech. degree at Technikon SA.

Youth Policy presented

Complementary to our work with youth at risk is the country's wider concern with youth policy and youth development. On 24 February the National Youth Commission presented its draft policy document to President Mandela. The policy is a framework for the development of South Africa's youth, who make up 39% of the population.

In setting up the Commission on Youth Day two years ago, the President said that the youth "are the valued possession of the nation.

Without them there can be no future. Their needs are urgent and immense."

Four of the themes in the policy document are development, skills training, national unity, and service. Youth would be expected to serve the country through national service and community projects; protect the environment; promote respect and understanding among themselves; ensure a society free of violence, crime and degradation; and promote peace, security and development.

Hearings on poverty will put our work in context

From mid-March four-month's of hearings on poverty in South Africa will begin in all nine provinces. Their purpose is to document the experience of our country's poor.

Nine million in shacks

At the launch of these hearings on 24 February, figures were released which showed that more than half of South Africa's population lives below the R301 per month poverty line.

In addition, more than nine million people have no proper homes and live in shacks.

The hearings are organised by the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, and an NGO coalition.

practical work — both on a daily basis and in longer placements with various organisations.

Acknowledging change

Kathy Mitchell, Director of the Centre, reports that the new dispensation in child and youth care dramatically changes the content and the context of the field, and training courses need to

follow these trends. The Ethelbert course is one of those

which are accredited in terms of the National Qualifications Framework.



Kathy Mitchell

A Day like any Other

Stories, poetry and art by Street Children in South Africa

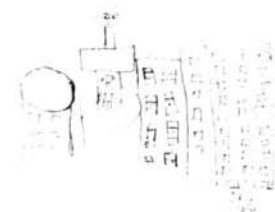
Rita Hirsch (editor)
Cosaw Publishing

At first glance this appears (wrongly) to be an insubstantial book. The writing and the drawings are very basic, the stories fragmentary — until we remember who is talking to us. For then we may feel honoured to be included in the artless and unselfconscious story-telling of youngsters who have decided to seek their security on the streets of a city. For this review, some of the stories in the book speak for themselves ...

My Grandfather Elias

Jabu Mlotshwa

My grandfather was born in 1928. He was sixty-two years old when he died. He died on 24 December 1989. He was very helpful and kind to me. He used to pay my school fees, and buy clothes and food for me.



My grandfather lived with my family. I used to go with him when he collected his pension. He collected his

pension in a community hall next to the police station. When he got his pension he would buy mealie meal, potatoes, meat, tea, sugar and coffee. We did not starve during his presence with us. When he died we experienced problems like not having enough food. There was no more schooling. Everything was upside down. We were lost. Nobody was interested in looking after our family. One day I was starving. I decided to go and find work in Johannesburg.

Shining Shoes

Elias Mosala

My friends and I decided to visit Johannesburg. It was on a Saturday morning that we left our homes. We travelled by



train. So many things attracted me when we got there.

I saw public parks, game shops, many people — black and white — chain stores and restaurants. They were so wonderful to me. I thought, 'One day I will come back alone and visit again.' We did not have much money, so we decided to start a small business. We shined shoes for people. We charged each person one rand. We did very well. We had about fifty rand in our pockets. So we bought ourselves a nice lunch. Everything that I saw in the city was attractive to me.

I said to myself, 'I will come again.'

My Friend Jacob

Tony Mnguni

It was Tuesday the 29th of September 1990 when I saw my friend Jacob in the game shop, which is in Hillbrow in Johannesburg.

I asked Jacob, 'Where are you sleeping today?' He always sleeps in the street. He said, 'If you want to you can come with me.'

I said, 'Wait for me.'

I went with him to sleep, at the restaurant opposite Checkers. We took an empty banana-box and we stretched it out to make it flat so we could sleep on it. We slept on the box because the ground was cold. We slept well.

We woke early. We went to the park and washed our faces. We came back to Checkers to beg for money. We begged from the people shopping at Checkers, who gave us a lot of money.

We bought food. We ate together. To this day Jacob is my friend.



Helping Children Cope with Bullying

Sarah Lawson
Sheldon Press, London

This book (114 pages, soft-cover) is one of a series on *Overcoming Common Problems*. It offers a very thorough and practical overview of this problem which has been receiving more attention recently — as something which is more than just "a bad thing" about which "something should be done".

In looking at the causes of bullying, the book avoids the obvious and simplistic. "The labels 'victim' and 'bully' can be misleading. In many cases the factors that lead a child to bully and to become a victim of bullying are the same — indeed the same child may simultaneously play the role of both victim and bully..." Parents and caregivers are helped to face up to the possibility that their child might be a bully — or being bullied — with a helpful list of warning signs to watch out for.

What to do

The book discusses a whole spectrum of things we can do and help children to do about bullying, and sensibly includes a section which helps the reader to understand phenomena like aggression, anxiety and feelings.

Bullying is often an invisible factor operating negatively in the background of youngsters we are struggling to understand. Any vulnerable child, already hard enough to work with, is a sitting duck for this level of conflict and abuse — something which compounds shame and poor self image, and which is kept silent through "schoolboy/girl honour."

users the right to participate in decision-making about the services they use. Thus people have little opportunity to learn how to control and assume responsibility for what happens in their lives.

Service-agencies, for their part, are so busy competing with each other in an attempt to capture more "clients" (so as to justify appeals for more funds) that they cannot plan and work together to see how best service-users can really be helped.

With these observations in mind, researchers who undertook the Kisumu-Mombasa portion of the Kenya case study for the Unicef Urban Child in Especially Difficult Circumstances project, 1990-1992, decided to use a different approach. The approach differed from that used in Nairobi and in the other four countries participating in the project because it was specifically designed not only to get information about children in difficult circumstances, but also to help them define their own problems and take steps to solve them.

It was anticipated that the communities the children came from would also be mobilised to support the children's projects; and that social workers in governmental and non-governmental agencies, local leaders and policy-makers would also get involved.

Thus the approach was designed from the beginning to be more of an experimental, participatory, research-and-action-oriented effort than a comprehensive survey. Its aim was to demonstrate the feasibility of participatory action research and intervention strategies that mobilise and empower children, adults, and the communities they live in; that change the way agency staff (whether governmental, local authority, or NGO) perceive themselves, relate to each other, and carry out their work; and that ultimately influence policy as well. The intention was to see whether children in especially difficult circumstances and their families can take the initiative in coming up with even partial solutions to any of their problems. If they can, and if they can be helped to actually implement some of these solutions, this might open the way to deal with such problems more effectively than the typically rehabilitation/direct relief approach, and ultimately to better policies for preventing or minimising the difficult circumstances that give rise to such problems.

Methods used

In order to accomplish the above objectives, a set of research methods was designed by the researchers to enable them to collect information from a variety of perspectives, while at the same time stimulating action on the part of the different categories of the subjects of the research. These methods included:

- a training workshop held in Nairobi for agency staff, who routinely work with CEDCs and their families in Mombasa or Kisumu. The workshop was to give service-providers a new set of analytical and practical tools and help them learn not only a different way of conceptualising the problems these children and their families experience, but also a different way of relating to them as people and a different way of working with them and with a variety of agencies to try to overcome the problems;
- workshops in Mombasa and Kisumu for a sample of urban children from three communities in each of the two towns, in which the social workers encouraged the children to give their views and also passed on to them the analytical and project-planning skills the staff had just acquired in Nairobi. A main objective of the workshops was to help the children use these skills to plan and implement projects of their own to tackle any of the problems they and their families face. The projects would be such that the children themselves could manage and sustain them, but other members of the community would also be involved:
- surveys of the six communities the children came from, and surveys of some of the agencies helping them;
- further development of the children's action projects formulated by them toward the end of their workshops to tackle some of their problems; and
- a series of community follow-up activities to generate additional information and maximise workshop gains by drawing in other community residents whose awareness of and support for what the children were trying to do would be crucial. These activities included: child-to-child interviewing; interviews/case studies of the workshop children and their parents; community meetings for parents in general, older youth, and local leaders; and seminars for local-level policy-makers.

The data-collection techniques chosen for the Mombasa and Kisumu portions of the study were those the researchers felt would help them see the everyday life of children in especially difficult circumstances through the children's own eyes and from their own points of view.

The researchers held the belief that children can be encouraged to "tell their own stories" genuinely and without inhibition or falsification, once they realise that doing so can be of benefit to them. This meant that the collection of information for the research would have to be justified in terms of the action projects the children would design.

The involvement of policy-makers was

felt to be critical, not merely at the end of the project, but in fact as the work in the communities proceeded. Without it, there would be little possibility for systematic follow-up of the findings of the research, for accommodation of the children's/communities' projects into existing budgetary, planning and programming operations.

Results

The project demonstrated that the children in Mombasa and Kisumu, who were the principal subjects of the research were alert, intelligent, and wanted a better life. Although at first they were somewhat passive and gave the impression of being indifferent to whatever the researchers were trying to get them to do, when they realised that their opinions were really being taken seriously, they rose to the occasion and were able to meet if not surpass the researchers' expectations regarding their ability to participate in the project.

Secondly, the children actually developed proposals for projects they thought would help alleviate some of the difficult circumstances in their lives. The proposals varied in sophistication and comprehensiveness, but all six of them were in fact realistic and viable. Some of the projects could be run by the children themselves, while others could be started by the children but would eventually require wider community support and involvement to be successful. All of the proposals were definitely relevant, and addressed themselves to major problems in their communities as the children saw them.

The children showed themselves to be well aware of the anomalies in their own situations, and they had a general idea why things are not the way they should be. Shaking off their initial scepticism and defeatism resulting from the generally distressing and depressing conditions of their lives, the children applied themselves enthusiastically and optimistically to the task of designing projects to tackle some of the problems they face.

Thirdly, although lack of money featured at every level of the research as a major factor responsible for the especially difficult circumstances which children in Mombasa and Kisumu experience, the project also highlighted activities that were going on at the time and other potentials for action that could make a significant contribution towards improving these difficult circumstances, even before adequate finance became available.

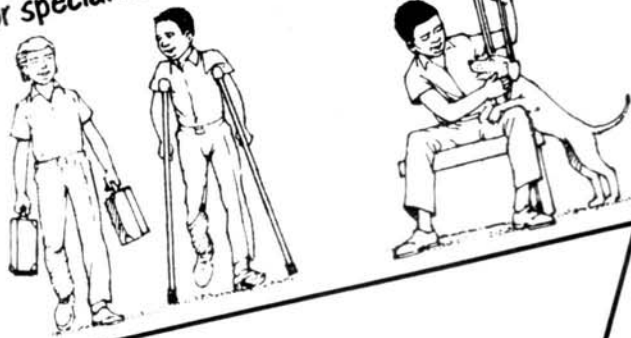
Community mobilisation

The fact that the research project was able to stimulate action on the part of subjects who otherwise were quite critical of the approach social welfare agencies normally take is also instructive.

As of the time of writing this article, five

Children have the right to get special care for special needs...

...and the responsibility to be the best people they can be.



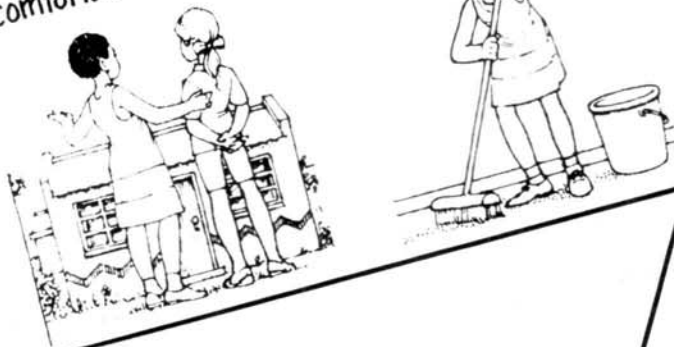
Children have the right to be proud of their heritage and beliefs...

...and the responsibility to respect the origins and beliefs of others.



Children have the right to a safe and comfortable home...

...and the responsibility to keep it neat and clean.



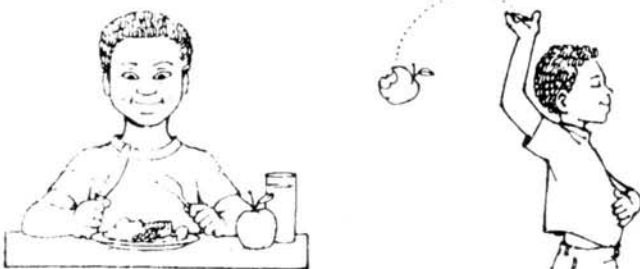
Children have the right to make mistakes...

...and the responsibility to learn from these mistakes.



Children have the right to be well fed...

...and the responsibility not to waste food.





From a photo by Steve Morgan

The problem with rehabilitation

In this article **Professor Roberta Mutiso**, Director of the Institute for Development Policy and Practice in Nairobi, Kenya, looks at some of the ways in which public and private child-serving agencies in Kenya typically intervene to tackle the problems faced by urban children in especially difficult circumstances. The advantages and disadvantages of an alternative strategy that seeks to involve the children actively in defining and addressing their own problems are explored. The author gives an example of a specific occasion when such an action-oriented research strategy was applied, and concludes with a brief discussion of the results.

Typical strategies

Agencies attempting to help children in especially difficult circumstances in Kenya typically intervene using strategies that may not differ much from what is observed in other parts of the world. Specifically, the response of Government tends toward other forms of authority with respect to adults. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also make use of institutionalisation to some extent but tend more toward direct relief (such as material provision and child sponsorship programmes) and a variety of community development efforts that usually have training and/or income generation aspects as well. Overall, for both governmental and non-governmental organisations, the emphasis is on rehabilitation both of children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDCs) and their families, which means that they are to be "re-formed" into acceptable modes of behaviour. There are, however, problems with the rehabilitation approach.

The problem

For one, trying to change people through a process of counselling or subtle coercion (institutionalisation and use of the law), with or without supplementary direct relief, takes a long time. The scope of problems CEDs and

their families face keeps on increasing faster than rehabilitation efforts can succeed.

The problems are also complex, multi-faceted and interwoven, so that it becomes difficult and discouraging to know where to begin tackling them, let alone how to solve them. Too much or exclusive use of direct relief, on the other hand, tends to create dependency.

The effectiveness of rehabilitation is also conditioned by the availability of large numbers of highly qualified professional counsellors equipped with adequate institutional backup in the form of networks of supporting, auxiliary services and staff. This social and physical infrastructure is notably lacking in the situations of most Southern countries and cities today, and Kenya is no exception.

Drawbacks

Perhaps the most serious drawback to conventional services for children in especially-difficult circumstances is the hierarchical nature of their organisation and delivery structures that put a gulf between service designers and service-implementers on the one hand, and between service-implementers and service utilisers on the other.

For example, decisions about the kinds of services that will be given, why, and how, are made

by top level administrators in most governmental and non-governmental organisations, while social workers and other field-based staff are expected to merely carry them out.

Service-implementers in turn have the same expectations regarding their relationship with service-users (CEDCs and their families). They expect the users to unquestioningly comply and acquiesce in the assumption that whatever is being done or offered is for their own good.

Unfortunately, this is usually not the perspective of the service-users who, although they do need help, show dissatisfaction with authoritarian modes of service provision through a variety of forms of resistance, non-co-operation and their own styles of counter-exploitation and manipulation.

Intervention strategies of public and private agencies, in short, are typically individual-based, resource-dependent, authoritarian in style, and curative as opposed to preventive in focus. They have thus not been markedly effective. Instead, they have tended to generate a host of problems of their own.

Why an alternative approach?

Conventional efforts directed toward helping children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC), typically deny service-

users the right to participate in decision-making about the services they use. Thus people have little opportunity to learn how to control and assume responsibility for what happens in their lives.

Service-agencies, for their part, are so busy competing with each other in an attempt to capture more "clients" (so as to justify appeals for more funds) that they cannot plan and work together to see how best service-users can really be helped.

With these observations in mind, researchers who undertook the Kisumu-Mombasa portion of the Kenya case study for the Unicef Urban Child in Especially Difficult Circumstances project, 1990-1992, decided to use a different approach. The approach differed from that used in Nairobi and in the other four countries participating in the project because it was specifically designed not only to get information about children in difficult circumstances, but also to help them define their own problems and take steps to solve them.

It was anticipated that the communities the children came from would also be mobilised to support the children's projects; and that social workers in governmental and non-governmental agencies, local leaders and policy-makers would also get involved.

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Community mobilisation

The fact that the research project was able to stimulate action on the part of subjects who otherwise were quite critical of the approach social welfare agencies normally take is also instructive.

As of the time of writing this article, five

years after the research, it seems that what was set in motion by the Unicef project has continued to bear fruit. The municipal authorities in both Mombasa and Kisumu, according to Unicef staff, have been able to sustain the community mobilisation process that the children's proposals initiated, going as far as supporting communities at the locational level in projects they have designed and managed for assisting children who, for financial reasons, are out of school. Gradually it is expected that these activities will extend to cover the full range of problems the children's project initially targeted.

Conclusion

Participatory Action Research is empowering because through it, subjects acquire useful skills and change their perceptions of themselves, and also change their lives. This leads to both higher levels of sustainability of projects initiated and, as a corollary of this, also to greater self-reliance on the part of participants rather than to dependency and apathy.

Participatory-action research is in some ways the most difficult kind of research to do because it is so intense, involving, and exhausting for both the researchers and the subjects. Research assistants, for example, need much more support and more *continuous* support from the principal researchers than is true of conventional research, where data collectors can pretty much be left to get on with the job, apart from spot checks, once they have been properly trained.

Yet PAR is far more gratifying than other types of research because it is truly a shared and mutually enriching process. From a spiritual point of view also, it underscores the dignity that was originally intended for and bestowed upon human beings by the Creator, and that we should be co-workers with Him and with each other in expanding the resources freely provided for the benefit of all. It is hoped that this article has encouraged more researchers to use the method in learning from and increasingly being able to help children in especially-difficult circumstances.

*This article is reproduced with permission from **Children in Action**, Interlink Rural Information Service (IRIS), Kenya.*



Youngsters in a secure detention facility talk about the kind of staff they would like to work with them

My kind of Counsellor

The best type of counsellor is the type that will work with you all the way. Here at Log Cabin, the counsellors are cool. Most of them will work with you and give you a chance. If I was a counsellor I would be different. I would help the residents leave this place. I don't think I would be taking points, but instead, if they do something wrong I would make them do exercises.

If I were a counsellor I would treat the kids the same way they are. Unlike some counsellors who treat kids like dogs. They put us up (in our rooms) every time we do some petty stuff. They're lucky we're not in their shoes 'cause I'd treat them the same way they treat us. But now I'm in Co-Ed and they treat you like you their child. I mostly give props to Ms. Jackson and Mr. Woods, Nelson, and Mr. Cee. Those are the counsellors that don't treat you like dogs and cats, they treat you like their kids.

Some people's idea of an ideal counsellor would be someone who's hella cool with you or down with you and can understand where you're coming from. A perfect counsellor would be someone who you could talk to without them writing your business in a file or telling your PO. Someone who actually cares, who's not just plain nosey, makes a good counsellor. Some are just worried about their paper. I think half the staff here needs to be re-evaluated to find out what they're really here for.

If I was a counsellor I'd put myself in the detainees' shoes and see things from a locked up person's point of view. Then I'd try to realize the stress most youngster's go through while in the hall. And show a little bit more love just because I'd be able to feel em'.

My ideal counsellor is Joe Tanner. He's cool. He lets me work sometimes when I ain't got no roommates to keep me occupied. Sometimes he lets me make bed rolls. The second is Bover. He's big and lazy, but he's cool. He do the same and just try, at least try, to keep me out of my cell when I'm bored and worried. If I was a counsellor, I would be a little similar to what they do.

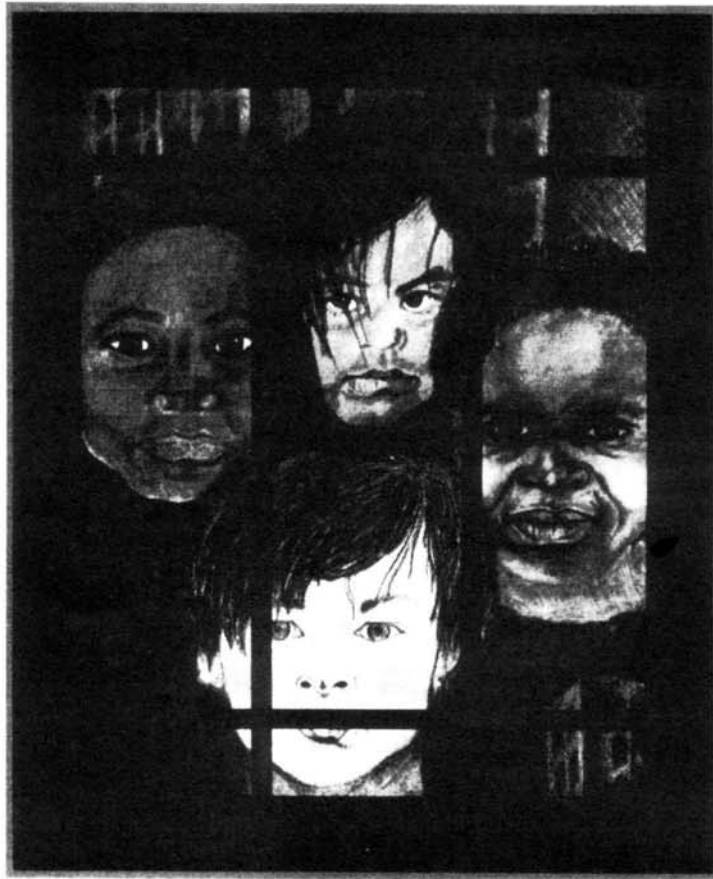
The ideal counsellor in my eyes is a very unique one. He has to be one of a kind. He has to be one that you see, but not too often. He has to be very considerate of others' feelings. Not to a ridiculous point, but respectable. He has to be more than willing to help someone who's in need. He has to think about situations from both sides. For example: if a detainee gets in trouble, he has to do more than think about his or another counsellor's feelings. He has to put himself in the detainee's shoes, too. I also think he shouldn't try to prove anything to anybody. He has to be his own man. Plus, he shouldn't bring his problems from home to work. He should maintain a certain attitude for work and a certain attitude for home. He should already have a strong view that we are going through enough by being here than for him or anyone else to add on to it. Plus, he should give knowledge to anyone willing to listen as much as he can. That's my opinion of a good counsellor.

My ideal counsellor would be someone who will listen to you and understand your problems. Most counsellors just come to work for the money and try to lecture you or take your points. My ideal counsellor would listen to you and talk to you not yell at you, or lecture you.

One quality that makes a good counsellor is not keeping detainees in their rooms all day. The counsellors don't make my life easier, they make it harder. They say "do this" then the other one says "do that." I don't know which one to listen to. So I get room-time. I don't care about counsellors. Mr. Couglar is a cool counsellor and Tanner because they never give me much room time. They like giving people chances.

From *The Beat Within* — 'A Weekly Newsletter of Writing and Art from the Inside'
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Angie Larson

Attacking Crime or Kids? Youth Justice at the Crossroads

In two months' time, awaiting-trial children will once again no longer be allowed in prisons, part of a new dispensation for youth justice in South Africa. But in the USA there is an increasing tendency to try children as young as ten as though they are adults.

Scott J. Larson, writing in *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, warns that while this new policy may be politically popular, it is opposed by most professionals, such as police officers and correctional experts, who are dealing with these problems on a daily basis. Dismantling the juvenile justice system which has been built up over many decades, he warns, will result in increased criminal behaviour.

At the end of 1995, President Bill Clinton declared juvenile violent crime to be the country's most serious crime problem (Finlay, 1996).

Although juvenile crime rates have actually decreased in the past two years, nobody would argue that such crime is still a serious concern. What is more frightening, however, is the way in which policymakers have responded.

The entire juvenile court system is in the process of being dismantled, and more and more teens are being sent into the adult prison system (Van Fatten, 1995).

Changes in policy

The roots of our juvenile justice system date back to 1899, when the principle of *parens patriae* was introduced. Under this doctrine, the courts were given the power to protect the community by intervening in families where youth were out of control.

Parens patriae recognized that youth were not simply small adults, or even young adults, but had needs distinctive to their developmental stages.

During the 1960s, further development of the juvenile justice system offered young lawbreakers a combination of punishment, treatment, and counselling to help them straighten out their lives (Gest & Pope, 1996). However, between 1989 and 1993, the number of cases sent from juvenile court to adult court for trial increased 41%, totalling 11,800, or one out of every four juveniles arrested for violent crime (Witkin, 1996).

Three years ago the Massachusetts legislature passed a law that automatically tried juveniles 14 years old and up as adults unless it could be proven that they were amenable to treatment in the juvenile system. In 1996, the Massachusetts House of Representatives changed that law, mandating that all 14-year-olds accused of murder be automatically tried as adults, regardless of the circumstances or their amenability to treatment.

Oregon recently passed a similar law, lowering the age from 14 to 12.

Wisconsin placed its minimum age at 10, and Tennessee has eliminated any minimum age for youth to be tried as adults (Gest & Pope, 1996).



Do we really think that putting them into adult prisons will make our streets safer in the long run? Have we completely given up on the notion that kids can change?

A good start

What will be the outcome of this "new" national approach? Edward J. Loughran, former head of Massachusetts' juvenile corrections agency, has some serious concerns regarding the direction juvenile policies are taking. He said, "Bad cases make bad law. One heinous case has everyone jumping up and down saying all kids are doing it" (Gest and Pope, 1996, p. 32). Under Loughran, Massachusetts was a national model for the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. Although the Massachusetts program was sorely underfunded, its results were impressive: The re-arrest rate for juveniles released from Massachusetts treatment facilities was 23%, compared to 62% nationally (American Correctional Association, 1990). Since Loughran's departure in 1993, the treatment approach has slowly been replaced by more-popular longer sentences without a treatment component.

Loughran is not alone in his evaluation. When a cross-section of police chiefs was surveyed by Northeastern University's Centre for Criminal Justice Policy on the effectiveness of different approaches to reducing crime and violence, only 14% of the 540 chiefs chose the policy of trying more juveniles as adults and sentencing them to adult prisons. The overwhelming majority — 75% — said the best way to reduce crime and violence was to increase investment in programs that help all children and youth get a good start (Broder, 1996).

A Philadelphia youth corrections official, Jesse Williams, stated: "Tough speeches may be good for politicians' re-elections, but they don't make much sense for curbing the cycle of juvenile

crime" (Gest & Pope, 1996, p. 4). Crime consultant Donna Hamparian of Columbus, Ohio, agreed: "Even if more youths are put behind bars, the projected violator totals are so high that we can't build enough prisons to keep all of them locked up" (Gest & Pope, 1996, p. 36). The reality is that even if more youth are put into adult prisons, the vast majority of them will still be released to society, but more violent and dangerous than ever.

Kids the scapegoats

The American Civil Liberties Union recently issued a bulletin exposing flaws in much of the current thinking. For example, the bulletin noted that if drugs were the scapegoats of the 1980s, then kids are clearly the scapegoats of the 1990s. A movement has taken hold nationally to undermine the juvenile justice system and erase any distinction between young offenders and adult criminals. Legislatures are rushing to make sure juveniles receive maximum punishment, turning the juvenile courts completely upside down. If this backward trend isn't halted, the consequences will be disastrous — not only for an entire generation of our nation's youth, who will be condemned to prison, but for society as a whole, which will be left with a more violent culture. Putting young offenders in adult prisons increases, not lessens, their propensity for committing crime. While in prison, the juvenile offender will learn from older, more hardened criminals. When he or she is released back into the community (in his or her 20s, undereducated, unsocialised, unemployable, and at the peak of physical power), this individual will be the very model of the person society wished most to avoid creating (American Civil Liberties Union, 1996).

Three critical elements

Can anything be done to reach this population of high-risk youth? According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), three critical elements are necessary to counter risk factors in a young person's life:

1. The development of individual characteristics (e.g., possessing a resilient temperament or a positive orientation);
2. Bonding (positive relationships that promote close bonds); and
3. Healthy beliefs and clear standards (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1994).

Clearly, these needs will never be met in the current environment. A recent University of Florida study concluded that "juveniles sentenced to adult prisons revert to a life of crime more quickly after released—and commit more crimes, and more serious crimes—than those in juvenile institutions" ("States Revamping Laws," 1996, p. 34). According to the OJJDP the only hope for turning the tide

of juvenile crime is a combination of effective community-based intervention and intensive treatment and rehabilitation of juveniles in juvenile facilities.

Given up on change?

We operate a home where we take in kids who have been released from juvenile facilities. Over the past six years, we have had six youth live with us who were locked up on manslaughter charges. Five of those six kids are now in college. In addition, all of them are working stable jobs in the community. None have become re-offenders. If any of them had committed their offences a couple of years later, every one of them would be serving most of their lives in an adult prison. Is this really what we want as a society? Do we really think that putting them into adult prisons will make our streets safer in the long run? Have we completely given up on the notion that kids can change?

The voices in favour of rehabilitating youthful offenders who are deemed amenable to treatment are few. They have been lost in the political rhetoric of "Get tough on crime," "mandatory sentences" and "Three strikes and you're out." I get a sick feeling when I think not only of these wasted lives in adult prisons, but of what kind of people these kids will have become by the time they are released back onto our streets. We are at a critical juncture when it comes to juvenile justice. What has taken several decades to build could be completely dismantled soon. There has never been a more important time to work to reeducate our friends, neighbours, and politicians about what really will make our neighbourhoods safer and reclaim the lives of our most at-risk teens.

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In a new study Barbara Mason and Greg Wood update and extend the data from their 1995 report, using the latest HIV-prevalence figures from ante-natal clinics throughout KZN and new computer modelling software



The impact of HIV/AIDS on orphaned children in KwaZulu-Natal

This report was commissioned by the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, on behalf of the Pietermaritzburg-based Children In Distress (CINDI) Programme, in order to update our understanding of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and, in particular, of its impact on children.

CINDI is not an organisation as such, but a process made up of various non-government organisations, each hosting a pilot project to explore a particular aspect of the AIDS-orphan crisis. CINDI works closely with government at all levels, and is in the process of being declared a national pilot project by the Department of Welfare.

The authors of this study were until recently based at the AIDS Training and Counselling Centre (ATICC) in Pietermaritzburg. They co-authored a study in 1995 for the Town & Regional Planning Commission entitled *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Planning Issues in KwaZulu-Natal*, with Alan Whiteside and Nick Wilkins of the University of Natal in Durban.

The new study seeks to update and extend the data from the earlier report, using the latest HIV-prevalence figures from ante-natal clinics throughout KZN, and pre-release data from the 1996 census, as well as improved computer-modelling software.

KwaZulu-Natal is believed to be "further into" the epidemic than other provinces – even though HIV prevalence in some other provinces is similar or, in the case of North-West Province, higher.

The Epidemic

The HIV/AIDS pandemic actually comprises two epidemics – an HIV epidemic, when the virus

spreads among sexually active adults but remains invisible, and an AIDS epidemic, which mirrors the first epidemic but trails it by about seven years, when the same people develop AIDS and die.

It is thought the average period from infection to death in South Africa is seven years, although individual cases may vary widely from this norm.

Mason & Wood estimate that, at the end of 1997, around 800 000 people were living with HIV in the province – more than one in ten of the total population.

Clearly AIDS-awareness campaigns have failed, and the focus should now shift to managing the disease, rather than trying to avoid it.

"Aids Orphans"

The report defines an AIDS orphan as "a person of 15 years or younger whose mother has died from an HIV-related illness." At present children who lose their mothers are invariably relocated within the extended family, or become wards of the State, rather than being raised by their fathers.

Only a relatively small number of AIDS orphans will themselves be infected with HIV. Obviously, children born before their mothers contract the virus will not be infected at birth, while less than a third of babies born to HIV+ve mothers will "inherit" the virus. In general the challenge with AIDS orphans is not caring for them until they die, but raising them to live a fulfilling and productive life.

CINDI's pilot projects do not distinguish between children orphaned by AIDS, and those in need of social intervention for other reasons. However, the epidemic will massively increase

the number of children needing placement, while significantly reducing the number of potential care-givers.

Semantics

Mason & Wood stress the dangers of describing the figures given in their report as a "prediction" and suggests they be regarded, instead, as a "possible scenario". However, since this study encapsulates the latest figures and the most up-to-date understandings of the disease, it is probably the most credible scenario available, and must be taken seriously for planning purposes.

Please note that the following section is a commentary prepared by the CINDI Coordinator – for the authors' views, please see the original report at website <http://www.pmb.pix.za/cindi/>.

Commentary

Population: It now seems the population of KwaZulu-Natal has almost stopped growing, and will level off at just below 8-million. In the absence of further population growth, within 20 years the province will have 3-million fewer citizens than it would have had without AIDS. AIDS will deplete certain age-groups more than others. By 2014 in KZN, the number of children under 10 will be more than 25% below the number expected without AIDS, while people who are presently aged between 20 and 35 will be depleted by 40% or more.

However, certain other age categories – notably children who are currently between five and 10, and mature people presently over 50 – will be reduced by very little. This will result in a dramatic change in our demographic structure and, in

particular, the ratios between dependants (children and the aged) and breadwinners/care-givers.

Obviously this will have major implications for education, housing, employment and a host of other fields – including, perhaps most significant of all, the need for social support in the form of pensions and grants, or services such as institutional care and social work.

Mortality: It is probable that more than 70 000 people in KZN became AIDS-symptomatic last year alone, and that around 55 000 died from the disease. We know that more than half the medical in-patients at local government hospitals are suffering from AIDS related illnesses.

However, as AIDS kills through opportunistic infections, many of these deaths have been attributed to tuberculosis, malaria or other diseases. Because of social stigma, even where the family knows the real cause of death, they are unlikely to make it generally known.

The number who have died from AIDS in KZN since 1991 is of the order of 150 000. While it has taken seven years to reach this number, it will take only another two to double this figure and, by 2004 when AIDS mortality peaks, 130 thousand will be dying each year.

This year in KwaZulu Natal, AIDS will kill more people than all other causes put together.

By 2006, the cumulative total of AIDS deaths in KZN will pass 1 million, and 10 years later – in the absence of a cure or vaccine – it will reach two million.

Children: Within five years, around 10 thousand children under the age of five will be dying from AIDS each year – or one-in-ten of all AIDS deaths in the province.

As a rule of thumb, less than a third of children born to HIV+ve mothers contract the disease. By eliminating breastfeeding by HIV+ve mothers, this can be further reduced. But the most effective way of reducing vertical (mother to child) transmission is by treating pregnant HIV+ve women with antiretroviral drugs, which could theoretically reduce vertical transmission by two thirds.

Unfortunately this strategy is fraught with problems, not least the high cost of treatment – perhaps R2 000 per case. This is compounded by the difficulty of targeting the right women for treatment when they are under no obligation to take an AIDS test, and many refuse because they fear disclosure of their status to their husbands or employers.

Most children who inherit the disease from their mothers die relatively quickly – within the first two years. However, a growing number are living without any manifestation of the disease well past their fifth birthdays, which means they are often outliving their mothers.

Orphans: While the spectre of small

children dying from AIDS is horrifying enough, it is important to remember that, for every child that dies, more than nine adults will succumb to the disease – and most of them will be parents of uninfected children.

Assuming the ratio of men and women dying from AIDS is equal, the number of AIDS orphans in KZN will more than double over the next three years to nearly 280 000, and continue rising over the ensuing decade to 660 000.

If, however, the ratio of AIDS deaths remains at the present level of 10 women to 7 men, the province will have to deal with 335 000 AIDS orphans by 2000 and 800 000 by 2010. A generation from now, one-in-ten of the total population could well be an AIDS orphan.

If half of these children qualify for State foster grants, at present levels, it would add more than R500-million to the provincial welfare budget by the turn of the century, and over R1,4 billion by 2010. If space could be found for 10% of AIDS orphans in our (already full) children's homes, it would conservatively cost R800-million a year by 2010.

Strategies

Other than an affordable cure, there is not much which can be done to save those who will die from AIDS over the next seven years, because nearly all of them already have the virus. The most that can be hoped for from preventive measures (abstinence, condoms, vaccines) is that the rate of dying will fall off more sharply after the peak than would otherwise be the case.

But we can and must do something about the children who will be left without parents. It is not enough to say they will be cared for by relatives – many of these relatives will themselves die from AIDS, or be so impoverished by the epidemic that they cannot take in more children. Over the longer term, the "granny generation" will also be depleted, as fewer people make it to old age.

As for state grants – whether to children's homes, foster parents or the elderly – it is an open question as to when the rising costs of AIDS will simply "bust the bank". Unless, of course, radical changes are made to the way in which public funding is allocated, and the government adopts a "First Call for Children" approach.

For hundreds of thousands of children in KZN, and millions throughout South Africa, we need new models of upbringing, appropriate to a country devastated by AIDS, but built on a determination to make things better for the next generation. Any deficiencies in raising these children will inevitably come back to haunt us for much of the next century. Unfortunately, an effective response is hampered by widespread denial. But, as with the HIV/AIDS epidemic itself, by the time it becomes impossible to deny

the orphan problem, it will also be too late to mount an effective response. We are going to lose millions of South Africans to a preventable disease. Must we also condemn our children to grow up as scavengers, and bequeath our nation to the mercies of those who emerge from this kind of childhood?

7. "Raising The Orphan Generation"

To focus public attention on these issues, and on the work of our roleplayers and other agencies attempting to develop alternate models of care for orphans, CINDI will be hosting a major conference in Pietermaritzburg from 9–12 June, entitled "Raising the Orphan Generation."

The Provincial Premier, Dr Ben Ngubane, has already agreed to host a welcoming function for the approximately 500 delegates, and the conference is being supported by UNICEF.

The goals of the conference are:

- a far greater public awareness of the inevitable impact of HIV/AIDS on families, and children in particular, and of the part to be played by all roleplayers – from the individual and community to the State and overseas stakeholders – in addressing this unprecedented challenge;
- a revision of State priorities – especially in terms of social spending, empowerment of social service-providers, child-care norms and procedures – and, hopefully, a national accord that raising the next generation is our first priority;
- to draw government and non-government agencies into the urgent quest to develop appropriate models of care for huge numbers of orphans within the context of a society profoundly affected by HIV/AIDS, and to be able to rapidly duplicate the most successful models;
- to contribute usefully to the world debate on HIV/AIDS and child care, especially in nations confronted by a sudden increase in the number of orphans – particularly our neighbours in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Orphaned Children in KwaZulu/Natal by Mason & Wood, 1997

Models of Care for Children In Distress by McKerrow and Verbeek, 1995

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Planning Issues in KwaZulu-Natal by Whiteside, Wilkins, Mason & Wood, 1995

CINDI 1997 Mid-Year Review, August 1997

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After many years in direct work with children, youth and families in schools, family homes, community based and residential programmes – and a period as associate professor in the School of Child Care in Victoria – **Penny Parry** took on for some years the job of Children's Advocate for the City of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Listening to young people

On the day Penny Parry took on the job of Children's Advocate in Vancouver, she was in a meeting with young people in care. One young girl, pointing at her, said "So if you're the Advocate, what are you gonna do for us?" Penny replied: "Well, I've only been the advocate for about half an hour, so you've got me while I'm still raw and unset in my ways. What do you think a good advocate would do?" (One of the best questions I ever asked!) With that, she was given the basics of the model of advocacy she tried to follow in her work. "So," says Penny. "Here it is for the sheer price of reading through this article ..."

Basic principles

Like any real worthwhile piece of advice, it's simple to remember and difficult to put into practice. Like any real worthwhile piece of advice, it's not new ... it rings true to some basic child and youth care principles such as:

- respecting another's point of view
- being of assistance so that worth and learning occur rather than simply being part of controlling a situation
- believing that those who are experiencing a difficulty are the most important resources for solving the problem
- the importance of modelling as a way of learning and the responsibility I hold as an adult that my every action or failure to act constitutes a modelling of something to those around me.

Well, here it is! There are only five things an effective youth advocate has to do. What the young people said that day was:

1. *Never presume to know what is "in a youth's best interests" ... never presume to know what our issue is.*

In practice, this has meant: Be sure to listen first! Notice who you listen to!

Here are a couple of examples from my experience: Prior to that day when I was given the gift of this model, I had indeed had this part of the lesson from another much younger child many years ago. A nine-year-old girl with a severe learning disability was asked what she wanted to learn while she was at the learning centre where I worked. Parents, teachers, psychiatrists, speech therapists, and social workers all had their opinions, such as: learning to read at grade level, having better self-esteem, being happy, overcoming her depression, and so on. She said she wanted to "skip bubble buch" [skip double dutch]. Well, it turned out that by learning to play this game, she became accepted into her school group [boy, that old clinical depression just seemed to die off!], she smiled [hmm ... that old self-esteem shot up!] and no, she never did learn to read easily, but she learned ways around it. Well, you get the lesson?

Then there was the time I worked in a residential centre. The night staff were quite disturbed by a pattern that was developing. A particular young boy would create a disturbance every night just around bedtime and would end up in the locked "seclusion room." Much time and care was spent trying to figure out what was going on. Was there a particular trigger that set him off? Was it some sort of seizure disorder that everyone was missing? What was the cause of this unprovoked anger? Then, someone suggested that a staff ask the boy how we could help stop this pattern? By listening (instead of trying to outguess him), we learned that he felt very unsafe in the dorm where the doors to all the rooms except the seclusion room were unlocked. In his life, asking for something usually had no effect. So he did what usually worked for him: created a disturbance. And, for a while, we did what we thought was best: tried to figure

out the disturbance without trying to listen first!

2. *Assist young people to understand, to get a handle on whatever situation they are in, and don't make them feel stupid for asking you to help them understand.*

In practice, this has meant I have had to have a lot of information at my fingertips, and/or I have had to know where to get that information fast! I must truly believe that asking for help is not stupid.

Here are a few examples of the range of information young people expect Vancouver's child and youth advocate to know:

- I am a 16-year-old temporary ward of the court. I am going to get an abortion. Do my natural parents have to know?
- How many children in Vancouver live in poverty? (This one was difficult, as the young person asking needed the information for a school project which was due after lunch—it was of course eleven o'clock during a spare at school.)
- What do we have to do to make sure the piece of land we want for our youth drop-in is OK to use ... like are there any city rules about this?
- My daughter is going through a very rough divorce. My three-year-old granddaughter is in the middle—the child is pulling out her fingernails. Who can I turn to?
- Does this letter to the Minister of Social Services sound too sucky?
- My daughter is supposed to appear in court to testify in an abuse case. She said she would do so but now she is scared — she hasn't eaten in two days and is lying in her bed in a fetal position. Crown council is calling me saying I have to get her to court or else — she's their

star witness. I don't think anyone is caring about my child. What can I do?

More recently, I was in a group meeting: lots of business going on with people trying to get agreements about what to work on, what's important and how to do it. There were about 25 young people and three "adult resource persons." One young man kept getting up and down, got handfuls of small creamers, with high drama poured several small creamers into a glass, scrunched each one into the next and then slammed the whole bunch down on the table, yawned loudly every once in awhile, and asked what seemed to be off-topic "clown" questions. He didn't verbally ask for help but his body did, so I moved over and started "reading the material" for him. He just needed assistance—in a quiet, non-obtrusive way. (He couldn't read—but damned if he'd let anyone know.) Finally, just a word about the third practice requirement: believing that asking for help is not stupid. We may be in danger here today as we become busier and busier and don't have the time to help someone at the pace they need. A rushed bit of advice can seem uncaring at best, or can be incomprehensible (and so make the person feel stupid) at worst! I must remember to slow down "be in the moment!"

3. Assist young persons to express their viewpoint in their way, not yours.

In practice, this has meant being ready to offer:

- Practical assistance such as taking notes on the flip chart or, when I had a vehicle, driving a youth to a meeting.
- Emotional support such as just being there.
- Skill development such as suggesting another way of saying something so others will be more likely to continue to listen to their comments.

This last part is quite tricky as I've had to constantly check that I am not just suggesting phrasing that sounds better [translation: sounds like a politically correct person has said it?] or has won points for me. I find this happens quite unconsciously to me if I've volunteered to take down the notes for a group who are brainstorming. Funny how there seems to be an editor between my ears and my fingers! Words and phrases change by the time they are taken down by me on a flip chart if I'm not careful! At the same time, I've had to step in on those situations where the phrasing chosen by the young person will get doors closed immediately.

These are the phrases familiar to all of us, often extremely vivid and creative, and quite unprintable!



Sally and Richard Greenhill

4. Make sure that if the young person has taken the time and trouble to understand their situation, and has had the courage to express their view, that they are expressing it to someone who can do something about it.

In practice, this has meant:

- Developing contacts I can use to set up real opportunities for young people to give input.
- Keeping my own faith that there are people who will do something as a result of hearing from youth.

Many years ago, a woman named Vicki Bruce, from whom I learned many child and youth care skills, told me that manipulation was a positive skill. This was a great relief to me as I have used my skill of manipulating, that is positively influencing and engaging people to help children and youth, to the hilt.

Keeping the faith definitely has required that I keep a close eye on my own mental health, that I stop to notice the blue sky, and that I spend time with young people and admit that they are my energy source.

Recently, I have had several opportunities to notice that, given the opportunity, young people have amazing powers to make an impression. Over the past year, I have been involved in developing a civic youth strategy for the City of Vancouver. While some departments of civic government are already involved with youth (e.g., Parks and Recreation, Library, Police, Health), others do not have youth involvement directly in their mandate (e.g., Engineering, Finance, Permits and Licensing, Planning). As such, some departments were not intrinsically interested in a venture called the civic youth strategy. Well, inviting 100 youth to City Hall for a day during which many people had the opportunity to listen and

mingle with these young people truly engaged the city government! Again, when it came time to go to Council and to the Board of Parks and Recreation for approval of the project, six young people spoke to the plan. Their presentations were the key selling feature as they provided the genuineness and playful rule-breaking in a normally formal atmosphere with a direct and heartfelt request for government to recognize and support its youth.

5. Encourage a co-operative spirit between our voices.

In practice, this has meant:

- Seeing differences of opinion as a positive value of diverse perspectives and not falling into a "who's got the right answer" attitude!
- Modelling respect, especially when conflict arises.

I have had some recent painful experiences where we as adults did not model respectful dealing with conflict. I am not ready to share these with you yet—they are too raw.

On March 28th 1995 the City Council of Vancouver approved this model as the model to be followed by the City's child and youth advocate. Since the position of child and youth advocate is a three-year term position, Council's approval is particularly significant as it ensures that the model will outlast the current incumbent. In closing the circle, it was Robert Fricke, a young man from the B.C. Youth in Care Network, who sought and got Council approval.

The model isn't just about the child and youth advocate's job. It's about everyday opportunities that happen to all who work with young people!