

# Child & Youth Care

**ISSN 0258-8927 Volume 18 No.9 September 2000**

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

**Ukunakekelwa kwezingane nentsha: Incwadi yalabo abasebenza nabantwana kanye nentsha abahlukumezekile.**

# A Focus on Wallpaper Kids

**T**here were five adolescent girls in the flat. The idea was that proximity to the new Director and his family living in the same area would manage their out of control behaviour. But at first it made little to no difference at all. There were four of them that constantly sneaked out at night, jailbreak style. Most nights, letting knotted sheets down to ground level and heading into the city and a lot of hysterical acting out. These four girls absorbed a lot of the time of the Director and ate into family time. Lots of coffee, many late night discussions in a risky inter relationship between the girls and the Director's family. After all, they all shared much of the same living space. Slowly life settled as relationships

grew but the amount of energy focussed on the four adolescent girls remained an urgent response to constant crises. Mavis was the one who resisted group pressure, she presented as compliant, co-operative and polite. She didn't demand staff or Director's attention as she was not part of the others' constant stream of critical incidents. Mavis was a wallpaper kid. One day she came to the Director's home and started to scream and shout, she had realised that to be noticed, heard; to have your needs met, you have to be either anti-social or a-social. Pro-social behaviour was not personally in your best interests in a place that was constantly responding to everyone else's crises. You get lost in the wallpaper of the children's home if you con-

form around here. She screamed that from now on she would not be overlooked – if you had to be a-social to capture someone's eye and be heard, then that is what she would be. Overnight Mavis displayed an array of see-level black leather mini-skirts, black lipstick and her bottom falling out of her shorts. No more part of the pattern on the home's wallpaper, Mavis became an f-word using, squawking force that couldn't be missed. Beneath this charade was the real Mavis, indecisive, unsure, vacillating; not good with real relationships building, and afraid of heading into an uncertain future. The overstated parody of teenage rebellion she crafted for the outside was a sharp contrast to the crying inside of Mavis. Mavis is one of many; quietly nursing hurt – browns and greys lost in the routines of everyday life of the facility, masked especially by the flashing neon signs of the others. These kids drift into the background and are regarded as all-right – coping – 'soet kinders', no trouble at all. The reliable ones who do what they are told, the golden group. In a points and levels system they win points but lose out on interaction. But, whilst the staff are busy putting out fires, these kids are burning up inside. Wallpaper kids fit the pattern of our agencies but if we don't recognise their needs in our programmes they come unstuck and peel off the wall in strips. Wallpaper kids deserve to be seen and heard. Wallpaper kids also need our attention and focus.

Barrie Lodge



**Child & Youth Care** ISSN 0258-8927 is a non-commercial and private subscription journal, formerly published in Volumes 1 through 13 (1983 to 1995) as *The Child Care Worker*. Copyright © The National Association of Child Care Workers. Editorial: PO Box 36407, Glosderry 7702 South Africa. e-mail: naccwct@iafrica.com Telephone: (021) 697-4123 Fax: (021) 697-4130. **Child & Youth Care** is published on the 25th of each month except December. Copy deadline for all material is the 10th of each month. Subscriptions: Individual Membership of NACCW is R90.00 p.a. which includes a free copy of the journal. Non-members, agency or library journal subscriptions: R90.00 p.a. post free. Commercial advertising: R312 per page pro rata. Situations Vacant/Wanted advertisements for child and youth care posts are free to Corporate and Individual Members. All enquiries, articles, letters and new subscriptions may be sent to the above address. Editorial Board: Merle Allsopp BA, HDE, NHCRC; Annette Cockburn LTCL, Dip.Ad.Ed.(UCT); Pumla Mncayi BA (SW); Adv. Ann Skelton, Ruth Bruinijies



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## NACCW

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-profit organisation in South Africa 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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'Child & Youth Care' interviews Fr. Michael Lapsley,  
Director of the Institute for

# Healing of Memories



Michael Lapsley was born in New Zealand and was ordained as an Anglican Priest in 1973. Michael was expelled from South Africa in 1976 and lived outside the borders of South Africa until 1992.

For many years he functioned as a chaplain of the ANC and lived in Zimbabwe where, in April 1990 he was sent a letter bomb by the South African government. In the explosion, among other injuries, he lost both his hands, an eye and his ear-drums were shattered.

Father Lapsley is now the Director of the Institute for Healing of Memories in Cape Town.

**Fr Michael, how did the 'Healing of Memories' start?**

In 1992 I came back to South Africa and was struck by the damage of apartheid. All South Africans have a story to tell about what apartheid has done to them, what they have done or what they have failed to do. When the new government came into power it had to deal with education, economic and other issues but equally needs to deal with the effects of the past – emotional, psychological and spiritual effects. When there was talk about a Truth Commission we knew certain people would come forward but wondered

what about others who also have a story to tell. In order for reconciliation to take place stories need to be told across divided lines. This model of Healing of Memories through workshops became a parallel process to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We developed this model with ingredients out of our African context. Recognizing that healing is something communal, we chose to see the individual in relation to a community of people. The other element which we brought in was the climax of the workshop, the liturgy. For many years I have believed in the power of liturgy, whether it be Christian liturgy, a rite of passage coming out of any culture, or a symbolic celebration of journey. Every culture and every religious tradition has immense wealth within it

and what we needed to do was to appropriate that wealth in relation to the healing process.

**What was your experience of the implementation of 'Healing of Memories'?**

I think firstly that I would want to emphasize that all of us South Africans carry responsibility for what happened. One of the terrible things about South Africa is that people of different colours were never confronted by each others' humanity, and in the workshop people begin to hear the stories of other people and the depths of their humanity. They are able to discover in hearing about others' human journeys that we share a commonality that transcends all the things that divide us, in spite of our rich cultural differences. We can then begin to celebrate that. People want to deal with the past but also do not want to deal with the past. It is a delicate, sensitive and difficult process. You have to

deal with parts that are still very raw, where there is a lot of pain and hurt.

**Who responded to this 'call' to heal memories?**

It is open to all who want to deal with the past – for exploring your own journey and to share with other South Africans who are damaged and feel the effects of racism. This intervention is complementary to other methods

their religious tradition is. All the great religious traditions, be it a traditional African view of reality, or Islam, or Christianity, are of equal dignity. Our underlying philosophy is an inter-faith philosophy, with the deepest respect for religious traditions and the view that no one religious tradition has all the answers, but that there is gold to be mined from all.

let the poison out. It is not cerebral. We take from the past what is life giving, for example, hope, sacrifice and commitment.

**Children being placed in care and being found to be at risk in the context of apartheid and its effects means that the healing of memories for youth is even more traumatic and necessary. What can child & youth care learn from your work?**

The methodology of storytelling and creative exercises is useful in child and youth care. Children often carry their own trauma and the trauma of their parents' lives. Damage gets passed on and remains unresolved.

In relation to the past, we South Africans often rightly speak with great passion about our commitment to justice, but often we are consumed by the retributive concept of justice, thinking in terms of punishment rather than in terms of restoration, which is a process of healing. We all need to take responsibility to be part of building something different. As white people, we had great privilege at the cost of denying big parts of our humanity, and we missed out on a lot of the human riches that Africa can offer us. If we can open our hearts much more, we can also be the recipients of great human riches from other people. Of course that's the tragedy of racism. We define 'us' in such a narrow way and we miss out on the joys of the human family and all the wonderful riches to be shared with us.

The discovery of a common humanity is certainly one of the great gifts that the workshop brings to many people. It can be



Procession to symbolically burn feelings of bitterness, anger and hatred

such as counseling and therapy. Those in need of further help are referred for longer term assistance with dealing with the past. It is unrealistic to pretend that apartheid did not happen. The past shapes us – and it is how we acknowledge the past and not allow ourselves to become prisoners of the past – that affects our journey.

The model can work very effectively with people of different religious traditions or none. There is no imposition. When we come to the celebration of the liturgy, we seek to encourage people to offer something out of whatever

**Tell us about the process of healing as it happens in these workshops**

This is one step, small or giant, on the journey to wholeness. When you express yourself you are listened to reverently. Some sharing takes place in a big group of about 25 and further sharing in smaller groups of about 5 persons. New insight is gained as persons try and reconfigure the past and see their journey more clearly. The emphasis is on feeling – the continuum of emotional, psychological, and spiritual experiences. Persons share what is in their hearts and

a pivotal moment for people to begin to let go, to take hold of their lives and release the bonds that make them prisoners of what happened to them, and to turn it into a triumph.

**Institute for Healing of Memories:**  
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 Web: www.healingofmemories.co.za



Yvette Rogers on the right

“HOM assists individuals to listen to stories of other people from different cultures and to hear how they experienced Apartheid. It can teach Childcare Workers how to truly listen to the families and children they work with who come from different backgrounds. HOM assists and provides space to build cross-cultural relationships in a safe space. Relationships are the essence of Child and Youth Care and CYC workers

**YVETTE ROGERS, Community Developer at Cape Youth Care, Thornton Western Cape and second year student in Child & Youth Development at Technikon S.A. believes that her experience as a volunteer with the Healing of Memories led her into the field of Child and Youth Care**

should try to build positive cross-cultural relationships. HOM allows one a fuller understanding of South Africa and its history. It also gives one insight into the context in which we are working. To work effectively in South Africa CYC workers should try to understand the history and how it impacts on our present situation. I believe the HOM process is vital to the healing of South Africa. It has been a life-changing process in my own life and has helped me in building relationships with colleagues and the community in which I work. It has opened my eyes to the reality of being South African.”

### **Child & Youth Care graduate seeks work opportunity in Africa**

**Nicola Campbell**, a 1995 CYC graduate from George Brown College, lives in Canada. Currently employed as a teacher and working part-time at a Children's Psychiatric Unit while continuing her University degree, she has worked in numerous capacities within the social work field including; schools, child protection, foster families, mental health, crisis work and in the capacity of a supervisor. Resume and references available.  
 email: buscam@earthlink.net

### **Child Care Workers and Supervisors**

#### **Western Cape**

**Nazareth House**, Cape Town, requires the services of experienced child care workers and supervisors.

Relevant qualification and experience needed in the care and management of young children.

Please contact Liz Burnside at (021) 461-1635 for an appointment and bring along CV and references.

### **Child Care Workers**

#### **Gauteng**

Three qualified Child Care Workers, with a minimum of 3 years experience required for **Khanyisweni Children's Home** in Yeoville, Johannesburg and **Paradise Shelter for Boys** in Marshalltown, Johannesburg, respectively.

All prospective applicants must be in possession of a BQCC certificate and have the relevant practical experience.

Please fax CV's to Virginia at (011) 402 0330.

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five cents”.

This happens in families and causes problems and misunderstandings.

You might wonder how deaf people function independently. Something you can think about if you want your deaf child to be living independently one day.

In a home, we can have

- A flashing light or lights to let us know that someone is at the door.
- A flashing light to let us know the telephone is ringing.
- A flashing light attached to a baby cry alarm to let us know the baby is crying.
- A telecommunicative device, such as the Teldem (available from Telkom) to assist us with communicating over the telephone.
- Using the cellphone to SMS (Short Message Systems) another person as a way of communicating.
- Subtitles or captioning on television.
- Sign language interpreters everywhere, such as in court, doctor's offices, lawyer's offices, hospitals, theaters, etc.

Please remember that the above costs money, are expensive and still to be a complete reality for Deaf people.

*For more information, please contact Wilma Newhoudt-Druchen, MP*

*Fax number: 021 712 9711  
Email: wsn1@netactive.co.za  
Work number: 021 403 257*

## Storie van 'n dowe jeugdige by die Dominikaanse Skool vir Dowes, Wittebome, Wes-Kaap

My naam is Cassandra Adams. Ek is vyftien jaar oud en woon in Kraaifontein, maar loseer by die skool se koshuis waar ek baie vriende het. Elke tweede naweek gaan ek huis toe. Vanaf 4 jaar oud is ek al hier op skool. Ek speel netbal en vlugbal vir ons skool se onder sestien spanne en behoort ook aan ons skool se dans groep. Ek hou baie van kuns. 'n Skildery van my was alreeds by die Grahamstown Kuns Fees uitgestal. Ons skool voorsien ons van gehoortoestelle en batterye wanneer dit benodig word.

Ek het geen probleme met die horendes nie, maar ek sal dit baie waardeer as hulle nie hul hande en koppe so beweeg as hulle praat nie. Ek kan dan nie hul lippe lees nie en weet nie wat van my verwag word nie.

Ek wil graag eendag 'n winkel kasier wees, want dan hoef ek nie te praat nie, al die pryse is al reeds op die goedere gemerk. My droom is om eendag modelwerk te doen. Ek sal die vibrasies van die musiek op die verhoog voel.

As dit moontlik is sal ek graag wil kan hoor. Ek wil graag op die telefoon kan kommunikeer en hoor wanneer iemand my naam roep. Ek sal dit waardeer as die horendes meer geduld uitoefen teenoor die dowes. Hulle kan lesse neem in gebare taal sodat hulle met ons kan kommunikeer. Werkgewers moet ook meer dowes aanstel. Ek is baie bly dat daar nou iemand is wat gebaretaal uitoefen gedurende sekere nuus uitgawes.

My eerste taal is gebaretaal en dit is nie dieselfde soos skriftelike of sprekende taal nie. Ek as dowe het nog nooit die sprekende taal gehoor nie.

*(English translation available.)*



Senior meisies en versorger, Vivien





**Who will be able to register?**

Those who have the appropriate qualification (to be determined by the Professional Board), and most probably there will be a granny clause which makes certain interim allowances.

**What will the structure of the Board be?**

It will be set up according to legislation and regulations. The specifics we will know when the board is set up. The Professional Board provides for:

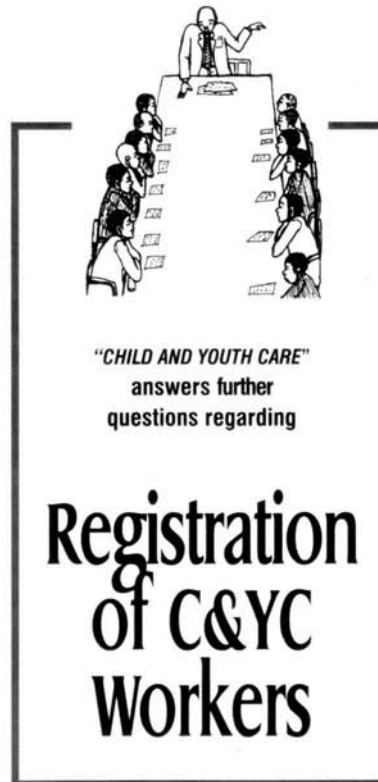
- the majority of members of the board to be members of C&YC profession
- not less than 20% – from community – minimum of 1 representative for every profession
- relevant educational institutions to be represented
- welfare authorities to be represented
- one or more persons in field of Law
- procedures for elections and appointments
- appointment by the Minister of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson nominated by members of Board
- the term of office of members of the Board

**Who will be on the Board?**

Those who are appointed and elected as per the information above.

**How do we ensure that the people we want are selected for representation on the Board?**

The Board will be appointed initially (according to those who qualify) and then elected democratically from those who are registered. You get the people for



whom you vote and who win the most votes.

**Who will be able to vote?**

Those who are registered.

**What are the cost implications of registration?**

You will know when the Board is set up – it is part of the application process.

**What is the difference between a professional board and a professional association?**

A Professional Board is a statutory body with legal powers. It decides who may practice in a particular profession. The focus is on registration, minimum standards and monitoring of qualifications/training; monitoring ethical practice. It has legal powers to sanction and/or de-register a practitioner. The intention is to protect the recipients of the professional service as well as give professional recognition and sta-

tus to that profession. Basically it is a regulatory body. Registration is a legal requirement (see Social Services Professions ACT).

A Professional association is a voluntary association of people with no legal powers and no authority beyond that given to it by its members.

**Will social workers in C&YC programmes be eligible for registration with this board?**

Only those with required qualifications will be eligible for registration. The Board will decide what those qualifications are.

**Will registration apply to workers in NGO's and State departments?**

Yes.

**Will there be categories of registration?**

Probably – but the board will decide this when it's set up.

**What is the Board set up to do?**

- Consult and liaise with other Professional boards
- Assist in promotion of social services in SA
- To control and exercise authority in matters affecting persons in the:
  - training of CYC profession
  - practice of CYC
- Promote liaison in cooperation with training institutions and to promote standards of such training
- To determine minimum standards of education and training of persons practicing CYC
- To maintain and enhance dignity and integrity of CYC Profession
- To guide CYC profession and to protect the public. □

Adults who work with challenging youth sometimes feel that they have little impact in the face of the many environmental risks these young people face. However, the power of a caring adult to influence lives can sometimes be greater than that of family or peers, as shown by these student reports about adults whose specific actions had lasting positive (or negative) effects on them.

# Do I make a difference?

Mary Beth Hewitt

**W**hat can I do? I only have them for a few hours each day. Their family or friends have more influence on them than I do. Sometimes I feel like I'm fighting a losing battle. How can I make a difference if their environment does not change?



This is a pretty common concern I hear at workshops. I remember feeling the same way at certain points in my career as a teacher, especially when I would be talking with a student about a different way he or she could have handled a problem and the student would reply,

"But my dad told me to hit him" or "What's the big deal? All my friends smoke." I'd think why am I investing so much time in trying to influence this student's life in one direction when it seems as though everyone else is exerting influence in the opposite direction?" At those times, I felt powerless, inadequate and insignificant.

I can't remember when I came to the realisation that many of my teachers had had very dramatic and long-lasting effects on my life, sometimes influencing me more than my parents or friends.

I think it might have been when I first read Haim Ginott's (1976) book *Teacher and Child*. The opening sentence in the preface of the book was "Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools." I agreed with that! Ginott went on to say,

"The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task" (Ginott, 1976, p.15).

I came to believe that if some of my teachers could have had so strong a positive or negative influence on me, then perhaps I could have a similar effect on my students.

Ginott's philosophy, written when Ginott was a young teacher, is often posted in classrooms.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with it, here it is:

- I have come to a frightening conclusion.
- I am the decisive element that creates the climate.
- It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
- It is my daily mood that makes the weather.
- As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous.
- I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.
- I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal.
- In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanised or dehumanised.

Perhaps the hardest lesson I've ever had to teach my students I've also had to teach myself. It's difficult to keep doing what you know and believe it's right when the rest of the world seems to be doing the opposite. It's hard to keep doing your job when it appears that others are not doing their part. It's hard to believe that anything you do matters when you appear to be going against the flow.

### Affecting Lives – for Better or Worse

What things do we do that make a lasting impression on the students in our care? I teach a class in classroom management at Nazareth College. At the beginning of each semester, I ask my graduate students to think about a teacher who had the most positive impact and a teacher who had the most negative impact on their lives. I hope the following items might help you reflect on the power you truly do have to positively or negatively influence your students.

#### Teachers who made a negative impact

- made fun of me in front of the class
- stopped the class and embarrassed me; told me I was late in front of everyone in the class
- told me I needed to be in the lower math group
- said I was never going to become anything, because I could not read well at 7 years old
- threw the music stand and music sheets at me because he thought I had not practiced
- was very insensitive to a personal problem / death in the family
- used a baseball bat – hit on a desk to get us to be quiet



- called me a cheater in front of my reading group
- did not believe me – believed the kids who were lying
- put down my dialect
- compared me to my siblings
- always assumed I was doing something wrong; was judgmental
- treated all kids the same – we were all punished if one kid did something. For example, for talking in the hall, all kids wrote 100 times, “do not talk”
- taped my mouth shut
- yelled and screamed when students broke rules or had difficulties with subject matter.
- listened to my stories
- listened to me and talked to me about problems unrelated to school
- told me he learned from me
- gave me choices
- was flexible in terms of the rules
- talked to us like we were adults

#### Teachers who made a positive impact

- made me feel it was OK to make a mistake
- believed I had great ideas
- allowed creativity
- told me I could succeed if I wanted to
- told me I was special the way I was and she loved me for who I was
- shared her love of learning and acknowledged our interests
- told me that I had the ability to do anything I wanted to
- came to visit my sister when she was critically ill in hospital
- told me I was smart
- said I was a pleasure to have in the class
- gave me support and encouragement
- always complimented the extra work I did

When students feel powerless to affect their world, they assume the stance of a victim and say things such as, “Why should I bother, no-one else is doing their job? It won’t make a difference.” I tell them that one way to ensure that others won’t do their job is if they don’t do theirs first. One way to ensure that you have no power in your own life is by not even trying. Teachers and others in the helping professions might well take that advice for themselves. One way that I can ensure that I have no effect on a child’s life is to adopt a ‘why bother’ stance. If I expect my students to keep trying when it’s hard, I have to model that type of behaviour for them. Much of the research on the factors affecting self-esteem and youth success points to an attachment to at least one significant adult. I believe that we have the potential to be those adults of significance.

#### Reference

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From *Reclaiming Children and Youth: Vol.8 No.2*

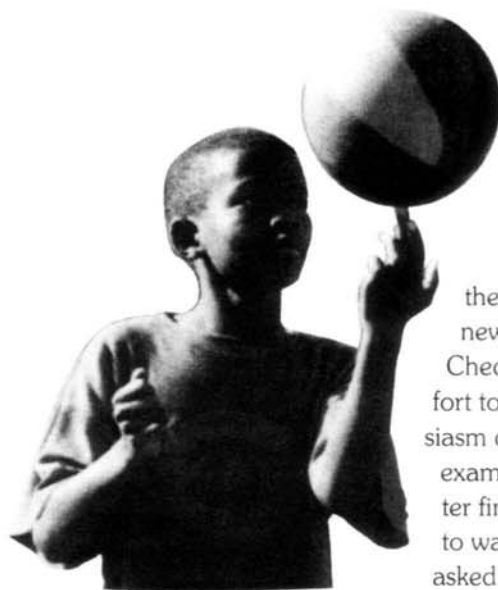
**I**n principle, recording should reflect on the strengths of the children, young people and families. Most often strengths are not captured in the reports and upon reading the report one is often confronted with the negative labels which usually end up shaping our thinking. In our work we focus more on strengths because we want to build on what is good and positive for the people. If we do assess and utilise strengths, then we should be able to reflect them in our recording. What does this mean practically?

### Highlight as many positives as you can

You must identify things that are working well with the family. Things you may have picked up during the review of the referral (even before you have met the family or young person) or things that you may have observed during your contacts with the family. The following example is an illustration of how you can identify some strengths in any family even before contact is initiated. "Whilst the IFS (Intensive Family Support) team was reviewing this referral, the following family strengths were identified:

- mother is working
- she is a 29 year old single mother who has been able to raise her 12 year old child after the father passed away
- the child is attending school.

If there is a need to reflect on the weakness to make a certain point, you should be able to counter that with the strengths. For instance, "Thulani's addic-



tion to dagga and mandrax as well as his involvement with gangsters had caused a rift between him and his family as well as with his immediate neighbourhood. However, the positive factor is that in the family meeting he had demonstrated enough strength and courage to concede that he needed help with drugging...He showed interest and commitment to attend and finish the rehabilitation programme for young people at Siyakhula in Durban Children's Home." You will find that enhancing such strengths in your recording is less exhausting than being trapped in focusing

## Spotlight on Students

Gloria Luthuli, a social worker with the Inanda Family Preservation Project, describes how to refine

# Strengths Based Recording

on what is not good about the family.

### Look for potential

It is essential to observe the family's capacity to learn new ways of doing things. Check who is making an effort to learn, is there any enthusiasm demonstrated? An example of this would be, "After finishing helping Londeka to wash her school clothes, I asked her if there was anything else that they needed to do around the house. Londeka thought for a moment, grinned knowingly and responded that she wanted to surprise her mother by cooking the family supper. She started taking some potatoes and onions from the vegetable rack, gave some to me and kept some for her. Then we started peeling, with her occasionally peeking at what I was doing. She had a very determined expression on her face..." Furthermore you should also look out for any potential for change or growth that you might be able to capitalise on, for instance, "After thanking the family for their hospitality, we stood up to leave.

Then something momentous happened. Thobani's paternal uncle, who had seemed careful not to take part in the discussion as he had continued to shine his shoes throughout the session, told Thobani to get a packet of crisp chips in the kitchen. Then he asked for our phone number.

This was the connection! Thobani's face lit up, not only because of the chips, but at the fact that the uncle had spoken to him in a way that actually acknowledged him as part of the family. He had for the first time since we had been in the house shown interest in him as he had asked for our phone number. This was certainly a great moment for Thobani as there was a possibility that he may eventually be connected with his family after all."

### **Pay attention to cultural richness**

We all know that there are plenty of strengths that are found in people's cultures. All we need to do is to identify those cultural practices and connections that bring family members together and strengthen them despite their disagreement or crisis situation. Here is an example of what I am talking about, "Before the date of the meeting, Ms Msimang had called one of the team members and had actually indicated that she had considered a lot of things and was thus

anxious to have her estranged brother and sister present in the forthcoming meeting. This was because family cultural issues were going to be discussed and she felt that their presence would fortify her position with Themba's father."

### **No negative labelling**

We should record in a manner that minimises blame, as this is connected to negative labeling. Therefore the report should be devoid of negative and demeaning labels such as aggressive, hostile, unco-operative, resistant, unmotivated, etc. Remember that that particular label might mean something different to somebody who might be reading your report and it transmits very little information about the actual situation. Such labeling could even be misleading. The specific things that the child or the young person or any other family member did to result in those labels could possibly be far less scary than the label might imply. So instead of using value-laden terms like 'resistant', it is more helpful to describe as 'lacking the necessary skills to begin thinking about the issues at hand.' One could describe a person as 'feeling helpless' instead of 'unmotivated'.

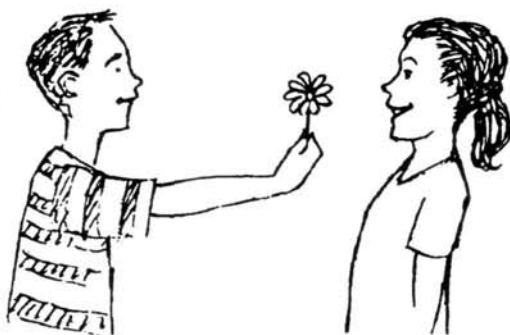
### **Search for potential resources**

Find out what existing resources there are within the family to draw on. You need to ascertain whether there are any influential extended family members, neighbours or special friends who could be used to supplement and strengthen the family's support system. This could be reflected in the report like this: "The team was

also able to observe that the mother's sister seemed to be the most influential person as it had been gathered that she was the one who had solely assumed the responsibility for traditional ritual. She also tended to lead other family members in the discussion during the session. It was noticed that she was not taking sides with anybody and was inclined to say what was on her mind. The other family members appeared to listen to her and looked upon her for guidance and leadership whenever there was a bit of a silence.

### **Remember skills talents and abilities**

Recording should also portray the family member's dreams, their exceptional qualities and things that they are good at. In your involvement with families, you obviously create opportunities where certain members are exposed to experiences of growth, eg. workshops and skills training. Do any of these members acquire skills or display talents? All that needs to be reflected in your report. For instance, "To put them at ease, comments were made about the academic award certificates on the display cabinet and we were proudly informed that they were the achievements of their son, Reggie. We admired Reggie's achievements and pointed out that he was indeed an 'intellectual whizz' as the award was for Mathematics, Science and English. We shared about how we used to battle with those subjects in our school days. Mr Mbatha proudly shared with the team that the school principal always referred to his son as the 'professor' thus he was nicknamed 'prof' at school". □





## Africities Workshop on Crime Prevention and the Role of City Governments

Ursula Scheepers, Manager of Stepping Stones One Stop Youth Justice Centre in the Eastern Cape, reports on this workshop held in May in Namibia

**T**his international conference was organised by the UNCHS (Habitat) Safer Cities programme.

The main purpose of the AFRICITIES 2000 conference was to provide an opportunity to launch a broad dialogue on the financing of African local governments to strengthen democracy and sustainable development. Approximately 1000 delegates from all walks of life attended.

Secondly, the conference aimed to focus on social and current issues which both the communities and the state will have to face before Africa can enter the third Millennium under the best conditions. Topics like African Mayor Alliance against AIDS, urban transport, and air quality in Africa. Women in Local government, African local government accesses to loan and financial markets and Crime Prevention. The workshop in which I participated was entitled 'Violence and Security and the Role for Local Governments'. The emphasis of the workshop was for the different cities and countries to focus on sharing and learning from the experiences of others.

The workshop was divided into the following sections namely:

- The services which local government provides for women in their respective cities, and how women can be mobilised to fight for their right to access certain services.
- A focus on the plight of street children and what intervention services are rendered.
- The recognition of the role which young people can play in keeping cities safer and giving input on the planning of cities.
- A case study of the City of Cape Town which adopted the Safer City Programme as a method for the city to develop crime prevention strategies based on local partnership approaches involving both main social and institutional actors. These strategies embrace an objective of strengthening institutional capacities into the safety needs of local residents particularly in poor sectors of the city.

I gave input on the Stepping Stones One Stop Youth Justice Centre as a model of intervention as well as prevention of crime amongst young people. The input also included the lessons which we have learnt through piloting

this model as well as the sharing of successes and mistakes we have made along the way. The delegates showed a lot of interest in the Stepping Stones model. Their only concern was whether it was an affordable model. I explained that this intervention model does not depend on the erection of buildings from where this service can function. Its focus is on intersectoral co-operation in service delivery to young people in trouble with the law, embracing a philosophy that young people are special and that they need services which are designed to meet their special needs. The message that this service has been successfully replicated within our country, without erecting buildings, was well received. My experience of this conference was that some city councils within Africa have started to broaden their main business to include services which have the welfare of the people in their cities at heart. The motivation to invite the Stepping Stones model to deliver a presentation was seen as a way of exposing municipalities to a successful model of service delivery to young people in trouble with the law and for them to start thinking about replicating such a model or even only an aspect of the model. □

In our January issue we featured the background on the Mkombozi Centre for Street Children in Tanzania. This month we read about how high they've risen!



**O**n 23 May 2000, Mkombozi conquered Uhuru Peak (the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro – 5895m above sea level). This project aimed to expose the youth to their country's beauty, raise their self-confidence, teach them how to achieve their goals and introduce them to potential career opportunities.

On the day of departure we packed into a minibus to the trail-head. The nervous energy was almost palpable – the windows did not stay in one position for more than three minutes the whole way. Soon after our arrival, that energy somehow took a wrong turn. Boys, booze and bhang (marijuana) equal BUSTED! Three of our kids were escorted home the following day, watching their goals disappear before their eyes as they walked down the mountain instead of up. They learnt that every decision has its consequences. On the way up, each of the remaining kids was amazed by something new.

Gabrieli, 16, saw ice and snow for the first time in his life. Each time we turned around, he was metres behind, entranced by yet another ice formation on the trailside. He even tried to bring some back to show his friends. (Too bad it melted – he wound up drinking it instead!) After an extremely difficult day of climbing, Valeriani, our 17 year old insomniac, woke us up at 3am. He could not contain his excitement: his radio was on full blast and his startling hell informed us, "the music comes in SO MUCH clearer up here!" As the elevation increased, the mountain's charm decreased. Even the lure of another chocolate bar could not convince four of the kids to move beyond Gilman's Point (on the rim of the crater – but not the highest 5685m ASL). Stupefied at our inane perseverance, Abeli, 21, turned and boogied down the mountain (... not even noticing the half-conscious British tourist he leapt over on his way). We reached Uhuru Peak at 7am on May 23rd. Pictures were not pleasant, nor plentiful: "Daniela, just take the stupid picture so we can get off this stupid hill." On the descent, Valeriani whispered to Daniela that those few moments on

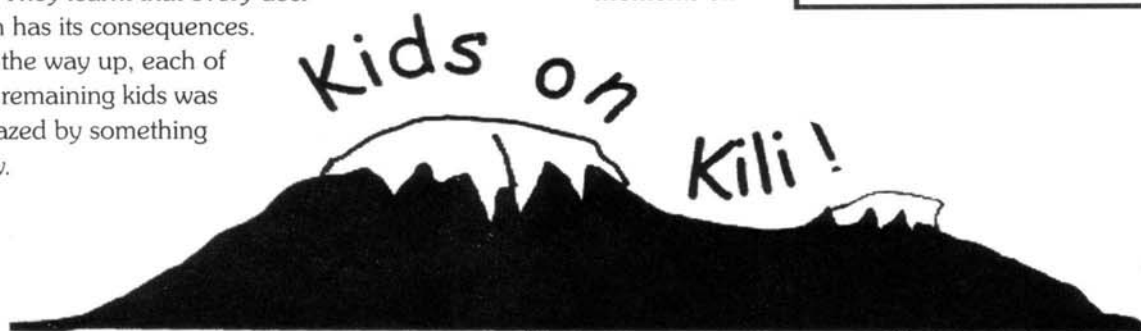
the summit were the happiest he had ever had – so happy that he would climb the mountain again just to feel that good.

The post-trip duties (thank you notes and washing clothes) taught the kids about responsibility – and us about bribery: "Don't even think about getting your cheti (certificate) until you wash this stinky raincoat!" All hard work sees its rewards. Abeli, who washed over half of the clothes, is currently on the mountain again – this time as a paid porter. He is saving money towards self-reliance.

The lessons learnt from this safari were many:

- Our choices have consequences – good and bad.
- If we work hard all our goals are attainable.
- Climbing a mountain that high is not fun. Contrary to Valeriani's sentiments, we would not actually do it all over again 'just to feel that good'.

*Mkombozi Centre, P O Box 9601  
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Moshi, Tanzania  
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The Constitution of South Africa protects the rights of children. It says

**'EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT NOT TO BE REQUIRED OR PERMITTED TO PERFORM WORK OR PROVIDE SERVICES THAT ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR A PERSON OF THE CHILD'S AGE; OR RISK THE CHILD'S WELL BEING, PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OR SPIRITUAL, MORAL OR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.'**

# CHILD LABOUR

## What do we mean by child labour?

Child labour is that kind of work that endangers a child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development or that interferes with his or her education.

The new Basic Conditions of Employment Act sets a minimum age of 15 years for employment. Does this mean that children helping with housework or earning money after school or during holidays are doing child labour? Children can gain a great deal from helping out at home and working with others. It is all part of growing up.

But when it hurts rather than helps, when children lose the chance to grow and develop, then children's work becomes child labour.

## What are the dangers of child labour?

Health and safety hazards in the work place affect children more strongly than adults. For example, they suffer more readily from chemical hazards, radiation, heat and noise than adults. The health effects can be more devastating, creating irreversible damage to their young bodies. For example, carrying heavy loads can lead to deformation of the spinal column or pelvis. Children's bodies are not suited to long hours of strenuous and monotonous work.



Long hours of work impair their physical and emotional development and their learning ability.

A US study showed that the academic performance of children between 15 and 17 is adversely affected if they work 15 hours a week.

Children do not understand that certain instruments or chemicals are dangerous. Sometimes protective clothing does not fit them. Children are more vulnerable to physical and psychological abuse such as beatings, insult punishment and sexual abuse.

## Try this short quiz...

### What do you know about child labour?

More and more people are becoming concerned about children who work, but many get the wrong impression about where these children actually work, what they do, and how the problem can be solved. How much do you know about child labour? Take this quiz! You might surprise yourself.

#### Question 1: Where do most child labourers work?

- A. In sweatshops producing cheap goods for export to rich countries.
- B. In the neighbourhood delivering newspapers.
- C. In the streets selling things, in the countryside doing farm work, and at home carrying out household chores.

#### Question 2: How can child labour be curbed?

- A. The only way to make headway against child labour is for consumers and governments to apply pressure through sanctions and boycotts, that is, refusing to buy things made with child labour or stopping the import of things made with child labour.
- B. What is needed is a way for people in a community to come together and suggest solutions and alternatives, including pro-



viding a chance for children to get a basic education.  
C. There's little that can be done to stop child labour.

**Question 3: In which countries is child labour a problem?**

A. It's only a problem in poor, developing countries.

B. It's a problem in rich, industrialized countries as well as poor, developing countries.

C. It's only a problem in industrialized countries.

**Question 4: What is the link between child labour and poverty?**

A. Child labour will never be gotten rid of without making sure

that there are no longer poor people.

B. There is no link between child labour and poverty.

C. It is possible to eliminate child labour independently of poverty reduction. □

## Answers

### QUESTION 1

#### Answer A

Factories making goods for export are the most visible places where children work. For example, you might come across soccer balls made by children in Pakistan for use by children in rich countries. But, in fact, only a very few children out of all child workers make things for export — probably less than 5 per cent.

#### Answer B

Few people in rich countries would say that a child delivering newspapers in the neighbourhood for an hour or two before school is being taken advantage of, or exploited. Often such a job is encouraged as a chance for the child to gain experience in the 'real world' of work and business.

#### Answer C:

Most child workers actually work in what is called the informal sector — selling things on the street, doing farm work or hidden away in houses carrying out domestic chores. They are beyond the reach of official labour inspectors and do not attract the attention of newspaper and television journalists. We must not forget the tens of millions of children all around the world who work, not in factories producing goods for export, but on the street, on the farm and at home. They have to put up with many hazards and dangers and are often taken advantage of, abused or exploited.

■

### QUESTION 2

#### Answer A

The commitment of countries and governments and the pressure they can apply are important. But boycotts and other sweeping measures can only affect businesses that export goods. These businesses are relatively small exploiters of child labour. Such measures may also unintentionally affect too many people, and sometimes actually harm rather than help the children involved. For example, the Harkin Bill was presented in the US Congress a couple of years ago, aimed at stopping imports into the US of things made by children under 15. The mere threat of this Bill panicked the garment industry of Bangladesh, leading to child workers, many of them girls, being thrown out of work. Some of these children were later found working in even more perilous conditions, including prostitution.

#### Answer B

UNICEF encourages and supports people in taking their own initiative in providing alternatives and opportunities, especially giving children freed from child labour a chance to go to get good primary schooling. For example, in the Philippines, UNICEF helps teams of government inspectors, social workers, police, non-governmental organizations, prosecutors and the media to regularly investigate working children's conditions, and to remove those in danger.

#### Answer C

Much can actually be done. UNICEF recommends five key actions in a comprehensive strategy against hazardous child labour: Promoting and improving education; building on national and international laws

## Answers

against child labour and improving enforcement of these laws; giving the poor more say in their lives; mobilizing society; and campaigning for companies to be more responsible in their actions and those of their subcontractors. For example, in Bangladesh, where primary education is a high priority, a joint non-governmental and government non-formal education programme for 1.4 million poor urban children was drawn up in late 1995.

■

### QUESTION 3

#### Answer A

In fact, children routinely work in all industrialized countries and hazardous forms of child labour can be found in many countries. In the United States, for example, children carry out agricultural work, a high proportion of them from immigrant or ethnic-minority families. A 1990 survey of Mexican-American children working in the farms of New York state showed that almost half had worked in fields still wet with pesticides and over a third had themselves been sprayed.

#### Answer B

The vast majority of working children, it is true, are found in developing countries. But children routinely work in all countries. In every country, rich and poor, it is the nature of the work children do that determines whether or not they are harmed by it — not the plain fact of their working.

#### Answer C

Although most working children are found in developing countries, the percentage of children working in industrialized countries can be surprisingly high, when all forms of work are considered. In the United Kingdom, for example, the most reliable estimates available show that between 15 and 26 per cent of 11-year olds and between 36 and 66 per cent of 15-year olds are working. Most of these child workers in industrialized countries also attend school. It is not true to say that the only kind of work undertaken by children in the West is for pocket money.

■

### QUESTION 4

#### Answer A

We are told we must tolerate the intolerable until world poverty is ended. This is very convenient for all those who benefit from the current situation. But it is also untrue. The fact remains that when a child is engaged in hazardous labour, someone — an employer, a customer or a parent — benefits from that labour. It is this exploitation that is overlooked by those who see child labour as inseparable from poverty.

#### Answer B

It is clear that child labour and poverty are linked, in that the vast majority of child labourers come from the poorest, most disadvantaged groups in society. Child labour, in fact, can actually make poverty last longer, as a working child grows into an adult trapped in unskilled and badly paid jobs.

#### Answer C

UNICEF is of the view that hazardous child labour can and must be eliminated independently of poverty reduction. Things are already changing. At the highest level, governments have begun to act, realizing that they have to fulfil the promise they made in ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the local level, activists and non-governmental organizations are exploring creative ways to remove children from dangerous work and to provide alternatives for them.

*From UNICEF Information on  
Child Labour and S.A. Dept. of  
Labour*



Molo Sengulalo

Dr Sebastian van As, Head of the Trauma Unit at the Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town, and Di Caelers, Health Writer for the Cape Argus, summarise the findings of a research project on the rape and sexual abuse of children in the Western Cape.

# Sexual Assault cases pile up

A team at Red Cross Hospital examined the issue of paediatric rape among young patients at the hospital between 1996 and 1999, in a bid to document the incidence and patterns of physical injury, as well as the nature and outcome of the treatment of the children. The horror of their findings is corroborated by the South African Police statistics that say that one in four girls, and one in ten boys, will be sexually assaulted before they reach the age of eighteen. A breakdown of the ages at which children were sexually assaulted shows that no age group is spared although the graph shows a high for children aged three to four. Another high is children aged 11-12 (Red Cross Hospital treats only children aged 12 and younger).

- ¼ assaulted by strangers
- 23% assaulted by neighbours
- remainder assaulted by family/friends/boyfriends of mother or sister
- 3% assaulted by father
- A quarter of the assaults took place inside or near the children's own homes,
- one third took place inside or near another home (a neighbour or friend),
- 12% took place in the bush or forest.

Most of those responsible are men (99%); more than half the children knew their assailants and a third were related to their assailants.

The reality is that most of the children knew the men who as-

saulted them in some way. This should mean easy arrests and prosecutions. But the reality is a pile of crime kits – evidence painstakingly collected by hospital staff to ensure prosecutions – that have been on the shelves since last year, never collected by police.

We now make affidavits to the police for every assault case the hospital sees (according to the law, reported cases of sexual abuse of children must go to trial) in a bid for justice for the children.

The only way to break this cycle is for people to come forward, even if this may be uncomfortable, to report cases and to help the police.

*An extract of article printed in ChildrenFIRST August/September 2000*





# *If I could do it again*

If I had my child to raise all over again ...

I'd finger paint more and finger point less.

I'd do less correcting and more connecting.

I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch  
with my eyes.

I would care to know less and know to care  
more.

I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.

I'd stop playing serious and seriously play.

I would run through more fields and gaze at  
more stars.

I'd do more hugging and less tugging.

I would be firm less often and affirm much  
more.

I'd build self-esteem first and the house later.

I'd teach less about the love of power -  
and more about the power of love.

**Diane Loomans**

Courtesy of Wellness Project Management (Ptv) Ltd.