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Child and Youth Care

A Journal for Those Who Work with Children and Youth at Risk and Their Families



Educated girls, a unique positive force for development – UNICEF

Update on the Progress of the Children's Bill
By Paula Proudlock,
Children's Institute, UCT

The Consequences of "Consequences"
By Teresa Pitman

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Contributing to Nation Building ...

I was on an aeroplane recently waiting for the rest of the passengers to board when a large, fit-looking man passed me and nodded a greeting - as if in reply to an acknowledgement which I had not in fact given. The person sitting next to me then explained that this was a famous sports person. I do not follow developments in the sporting world, so the hero had not been familiar to me. Obviously accustomed to being recognized wherever he goes, he was politely reacting in advance of expected recognition. It struck me then that there are very few people who are universally recognized. Most of us live much of our lives outside of roles that confer upon us a status or authority. This led me to thinking about the struggle of adults to adapt to a child right's culture. Without the role that protected us - that of 'adult' in an authoritarian culture - many of us find ourselves without a sense of authority and competence in working with young people. We are like the soccer/cricket/rugby player who expects recognition linked to a role. Now that we have had the carapace of that status chipped from us in the democratic South Africa, many of us working with young people are finding our work difficult. It is as if we must now enter the lives of young people unprotected by an external conferring of authority.

Educators and child and youth care workers in particular, talk of the difficulty of working in a child right's culture. But the field of child and youth care emerged from the crucible of somewhat role-free interactions between adults and young people. It also emerged from work in the life-space of troubled and troubling young people. I recall at the beginning of my career as a child and youth care worker and being entranced (whilst continually licking my wounds) by young people who had little or no regard for the 'status' of adults. I soon realized that the fact of my (newly-attained) adulthood was certainly incidental to whether young people cooperated with me or not. The 'because I said so' principle simply did not apply! These young people met me as I met our sports hero - as a stranger without status in their lives. I

soon realized that my own experience of discipline was of pathetically little assistance to me and sought help - from the profession of child and youth care.

This profession has grown in other parts of the world because it has developed and articulated not so much the genesis of challenging behaviour, but ways to intervene constructively with such behaviour in the lifespace of young people. It has articulated ways to discipline that rely not on an externally conferred status, but on the use of our selves in moment-to-moment interactions. It is this that I believe that we have to offer from our profession to the process of nation-building. Child and youth care with its body of literature including research and theory, offers people working within a child rights culture the knowledge and skill necessary to create a unique personal sense of authority, based on capacity and confidence in working effectively with young people. It is this that will help us, not any impotent insistence on the idea that children *must realize* their responsibilities. Of course it is important that young people learn that they have responsibilities. But in a child-rights culture this is not a pre-condition to their receiving services, and may in fact be the outcome of the work that we do with them, whether that be child and youth care work or education or any other professional endeavour.

As we celebrate our decade of democracy I believe that we as the child and youth care profession can look back at having made a real contribution to the building of our nation. Our achievements have been many, and we have celebrated them along the way. As we look to our future responsibility, it is in spreading the skills of our profession that it seems we have a further contribution to make. A child rights culture is here to stay. Each of us working with young people in our country in any setting needs to develop the skills to interact with young people without the expectation of regard for our status as adults. We are with our young people, sporting hero's outside of a sporting world.

Merle Allsopp

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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Tell us what you think ...

Whether you are a regular or a first time reader of the journal, PLEASE drop us a line or a note and tell us:

- **what was of use to you**
- **what you would like to see covered in future**

Thanks *Child and Youth Care* values your opinion.



unicef

Educated girls, a unique positive force for development

Taken from : The State of the World's Children 2004 - UNICEF

Education is everybody's right. No girl, however poor, however desperate her country's situation, is to be excluded from school.

Education saves and improves the lives of girls and women, ultimately leading to more equitable development, stronger families, better services, better child health.

A positive spiral

Educating girls has a wide-ranging impact on society and human development. Long-term benefits include:

Enhanced economic development

Decades of research have found an important link between the expansion of basic education and economic development. Girls' education has an even more positive effect.

Education for the next generation

Educated girls who become mothers are more likely to send their children to school, passing on and multiplying benefits.

The multiplier effect

Education has a positive influence in a child's life from health to protection from HIV/AIDS, exploitative labour and trafficking.

Healthier families

When mothers are educated their children are better nourished and get sick less often.

Fewer maternal deaths

Women who have been educated are less likely to die during childbirth because they tend to have fewer children, better knowledge of health services during pregnancy and birth, and improved nutrition.

The development gap

The international community committed itself to girls' education, yet it is not a priority for development investments. The reasons are complex and are grounded in reliance on faulty development models.

Growth models

Early ideas about development were rooted in the belief that economic growth, measured by gross domestic product, would lift countries out of poverty and reduce inequality. Despite many attempts to refine this model, the results were dismal. Additionally, this model was faulty because it was gender blind, and failed to consider the status of women in relationship to men and the 'unpaid care' economy – work usually done by women.

As growth models faltered in the 1980s, structural adjustment – reducing expenditure and giving more scope for prices and incentives to find their own level in the marketplace – was touted. Drastic spending cuts in education, health and food subsidies resulted. This disproportionately hurt the poor and failed to produce significant economic growth.

In the 1990s, it was understood that economic growth alone cannot produce human development. In fact, human development fosters economic growth.

Development transcends economics

Poverty cannot be reduced in any substantial manner without promoting women's empowerment.

Models of universal education

Education policy failed to recognize the key role girls' schooling plays if a country is to achieve education for all. Despite general enthusiasm early on for education as vital for a nation's advancement, millions of children were still out of school in 1980.

The 1980s structural adjustment made things worse. In countries that underwent adjustment, per capita spending on education declined.

The 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education For All recognized that the chronic neglect of children's right to education – especially girls' education – was exacerbated under structural adjustment. It helped re-establish education at the heart of development

Models for girls' education

While the Jomtien Conference and the Education For All movement recognized the importance of closing

the gender gap, it mistakenly assumed that the general drive towards education for all would automatically reduce the gender gap.

Resistance

Local beliefs, traditional practices and attitudes about gender roles often hold girls back from school. But parents' objections to their daughters' going to school are often caused by safety or economics rather than a belief that girls should not be educated. They may correctly fear that the school is unsafe or the journey is perilous or too long. Families may believe that they cannot afford to sacrifice their daughters' help or income. The problem is really on the supply side – the availability of safe, accessible, gender-sensitive schools, employment possibilities for women, or educational information for families. In many countries, when the importance of education is explained or tuition fees eliminated, parents eagerly send their daughters to school.



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Poverty's double edge for girls

A recent report on poverty found that 135 million children in the developing world between the ages of 7 and 18 had no education at all, with girls 60 per cent more likely than boys to be so 'educationally deprived'. Educational deprivation and poverty go hand in hand. Gender disparity in education is significantly greater for children living in poverty. Thus, girls are in double jeopardy, affected by both gender and poverty.

The alternative: A human rights, multisectoral model for development

An alternative approach to development that will allow girls their right to education, meet the commitments of the international community and maximize the multiplier effects of investing in girls' education is a human rights, multisectoral model.

Human rights

The rights of children are inextricably linked to the

rights of women. Neither will be realized without ending discrimination in all forms, especially gender-based discrimination.

Multisectoral

Many of the obstacles that keep girls from enjoying their right to complete their education are found far from school – unsafe water, communities ravaged by HIV/AIDS, families caught in poverty's grip. Solutions to the education crisis lie in many areas, such as providing school meals or improving access to safe water.

Promise

The Millennium Development Goals have linked progress on education, health, poverty relief and the environment with girls' right to equality in schooling. This holds promise for the lives of all children and the fate of all nations. ▲

Update on the Progress of the Children's Bill

By Paula Proudlock, Children's Institute, UCT

12 March 2004

There has been much confusion over the past 6 months with regards to the fate of the Children's Bill, particularly whether the Bill was going to be discussed and passed by Parliament before or after the April 2004 elections.

During the second half of 2003, the Children's Bill Working Group conducted an advocacy campaign to ensure that the Bill comes to Parliament only after the April 2004 elections. This was to ensure that the Members of Parliament will have sufficient time to give the Bill the priority attention that it requires.

In February 2004, we received final confirmation from Parliament that the Bill will not be debated and passed by Parliament before the elections. This is a good news as it will allow for more discussion between civil society and the decision makers and more time for decision makers to apply their minds to the Bill.

It hopefully will also mean that the Department of Social Development and Cabinet will reconsider the drastic excisions that were made to the Bill during the inter-departmental negotiation process in 2003. We can predict that the new Parliament will prioritise the Bill when they start in May this year. However, this is not a given and will depend on the Minister and Department's priorities after the elections. If we want the Bill to be prioritised after the elections we will need to ensure that the Minister, Department and Parliament are aware of our call to prioritise the Bill. Public hearings could therefore take place in June or July. We have heard that the Department is currently reviewing all the submissions that were made to it in September in order to put together a briefing document for the new Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development. This Committee will be constituted in May when the new Parliament convenes. This is an indication

Section 75 Bill		Section 76 Bill	
Issues which National Government must decide Will probably be tabled in Parliament in June 2004 and passed by the end of 2004		Issues that affect the provinces Will follow after the s.75 Bill is passed – probably mid 2005	
Chapter 1	Interpretation, objects and application of the Bill	Chapter 6	Partial care (crèches)
Chapter 2	General principles and the best interests standard	Chapter 7	Early Childhood Development
Chapter 3	Children's rights	Chapter 8	Measures for the protection of children
Chapter 4	Parental responsibilities and rights	Chapter 9	Prevention and early intervention services
Chapter 5	Children's Courts	Chapter 10	Identification of children in need of protection and actions to be taken to protect
Chapter 16	Adoption	Chapter 11	Contribution orders
Chapter 17	Inter-country adoption	Chapter 12	Alternative care of children in general
Chapter 18	International Child Abduction	Chapter 13	Foster care and care by family members
Chapter 19	Trafficking in Children	Chapter 14	Child and youth care centres
Chapter 20	Surrogate motherhood	Chapter 15	Shelters and drop in centres (street children)
Chapter 21	Enforcement of the Bill		
Chapter 22 and 23	General administrative issues and transitional measures		

that the Department intends to prioritise the passage of the Bill.

At the end of 2003 the Bill was split into two Bills for technical reasons. The State Law Advisors said that the Children's Bill contained a mix of two different types of provisions – section 75 and section 76 provisions. A section 75 Bill is a Bill that deals with an issue over which the National Government has competence and that does not affect areas over which Provincial Governments also have competence. A section 76 Bill deals with issues that affect the Provinces and over which National and Provincial Government share competence. Each type of Bill has to follow a different procedure in Parliament and Parliament does not have a procedure for a Bill that contains both s.75 and s.76 provisions.

Therefore the Bill was split into two Bills: a s.75 Bill and a s.76 Bill. The first Bill that will be tabled and passed will be the s.75 Bill. The s.76 Bill will follow after the s.75 Bill has been passed by Parliament. The splitting of the Bill has caused more confusion and has not helped with keeping the holistic and comprehensive approach taken by the South African Law Reform Commission. However, one advantage is that it gives us more time to advocate for changes to the s.76 Bill which is where many of the excisions have been made.

The table below gives an idea of what issues fall into which Bill, and the timeframes within which we have to work on each issue:

For those chapters or provisions that were excised, such as half of the Child Rights chapter, and the National Policy Framework chapter, we need to focus our attention on them in the next 3 months in order to get agreement in principle to their re-insertion before the section 75 Bill is tabled.

The Children's Bill will govern our child care and protection system for the next 20 years and it is therefore of vital importance that the Bill is prioritised in 2004 and that decision makers make decisions that are based on children's needs and rights. To ensure that this happens, it is important that civil society organisations with knowledge of the challenges facing children get involved in the process.

During 2004, the Children's Bill Working Group and its various members have planned a number of content workshops in order to discuss the areas of the Bill that need further discussion. These areas include the following:

- Parenting rights and responsibilities (this workshop was held in February 2004)
- Child rights chapter, Children's Protector and the National Policy Framework
- Subsidies and fees for NGOs, CBO's and FBOs

performing child protection and child care services (social workers, children's homes, street child shelters, ECD programmes, creches).

- The role of Local Government in realising and protecting children's rights
- Protecting children's health and nutrition rights
- Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances

Please use the Children's Institute website for updated information and documents related to the Bill. www.uct.ac.za/depts/ci. Please contact Elizabeth Myburgh on emyburgh@rmh.uct.ac.za or 021 – 689 5404 if you have any queries. ▀

Wherever we work with children, youth and families

... we need information and support directly related to our work in child and youth care. CYC-NET is a community of over 2000 people who work and teach in the field and who are in daily contact with each other. You can join them today by simply sending an e-mail to cyc-net@icon.co.za

Also visit the CYC-NET web site at www.cyc-net.org for heaps of daily-updated news and information.



THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE NETWORK

Editors: Thom Garfat (Montreal), Brian Gannon (Cape Town)

Days to Remember

APRIL

National Blood Donor Month
Health Awareness Month

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 2 | International Children's Book Day |
| 6 – 12 | National Polio Eradication Awareness week |
| 7 | World Health Day (WHO) |
| 7 | International Social Worker's Day |
| 25 | Africa Malaria Day |
| 27 | Freedom Day – South Africa |



Family Preservation

By Heather Goble a Family Preservation Worker

Family Preservation (family and children)

For some time now we have all been hearing about family work and what it means. Many children's homes are beginning to "see the light" as far as the importance of family preservation is concerned. Children are often admitted to homes without real thought as to what it can do to the family members. This is why it is so important to work not only with the child but also their background and family. We need to know where the child comes from in order to set goals for the way forward. We are all individuals and have our roots embedded in the past. Family preservation is a holistic view at restoring family values and working on their strengths. To do this we need to shift away from using the terminology "removing the child" and focus more on keeping the child within the community. Often it is necessary to include the child's extended family and involve all significant role-players in child's development program, based on the Circle of Courage.

We began our family preservation program in December 1999. It was very much of a "helpmekaar" beginning with us trying to find resources and put ideas together to come up with a workable program. This was no easy task. Families were reluctant to open their doors

and trust us, but with much perseverance and knocking, families eventually began to understand the importance of bridging the gap and building positive relationships between their children and the children's home.

We learned in this process that:

- we need to go into communities and find out from the members what their needs are as opposed to trying to inundate them with skills and coping mechanisms. We need to listen to them without giving them false hope. Communities and their members need to feel that they are contributing to their society. Begin by going back to basics and assisting them with what they already know and helping them build on those resources e.g. making a vegetable patch, painting a house, going shopping with a budget and other daily chores.
- parents can be encouraged to spend quality time with their children by helping them with their homework, recreational activities and assisting with household chores. Sometimes the day-to-day happenings become important and can give them a sense of belonging. Do not teach. Assist and facilitate, allowing them to think of ideas and solutions themselves.
- hand-outs do not work, they make families feel inferior

and unable to fend for themselves. Parents and family members need to know that they are important members of their community each with a vital role to play. One example is to link parents who stay at home with their neighbours. In this way, they can all share in the responsibilities of raising their children and learn home skills such as cooking and child minding from one another.

- We need to work within the family dynamics and time-frame. Each person is an individual and grows or progresses at different levels. Work at the pace of each family and not your own deadlines. Family members, in the beginning, have many fears and they may find it very difficult to share openly. Do not force questions or your ideas on to them.
- Spend time within their homes just getting to know them before rushing into an assessment phase. Try and gain their trust and build rapport first. Interact on their level not higher or lower than them.
- Do not play the “doctor” role, rather be a listener. Be clear about what role you and all other relevant parties play within the process. Always look at the families strengths, work with that and you will find the problems will decrease and sometimes disappear.
- Do not become too emotionally involved as this can lead to manipulation as you begin to feel responsible for their actions and decisions. Be aware of your own feelings and goals, do not carry families but walk next to them. Be patient but firm.
- Link up with every possible resource within the community and let families become aware of these support structures. Accompany family members to meetings within the community then allow them to

go alone. Maintain confidentiality at all times, this is essential in order to keep a good relationship with parents/family members.

- You need to have a passion to work with families and their communities. The desire to persevere and learn from your mistakes is crucial as they are your learning curves. Expect much but do not go too far with your expectations, you may not reach them. Believe in yourself and others.
- Be cautious when entering a home or area you are not familiar with. Never put yourself in a position of danger or take risks that may harm you and the family you are visiting.
- Allow for enough time between your visitations to reflect and prepare for your next visit.
- Be flexible and available to families and staff members when crisis arise.
- Be accountable to your co-workers and families as this gives you a sense of stability and support.
- Do not make promises to families that you cannot keep, this only breaks down trust and gives big expectations that you are unable to attain.
- Be on time for appointments as this shows that you are dedicated and willing to provide a service that is reliable and consistent.

Families are our primary care-givers and children belong with their communities where possible. Family Preservation helps to empower family members to become self-sufficient and become positive within their communities.

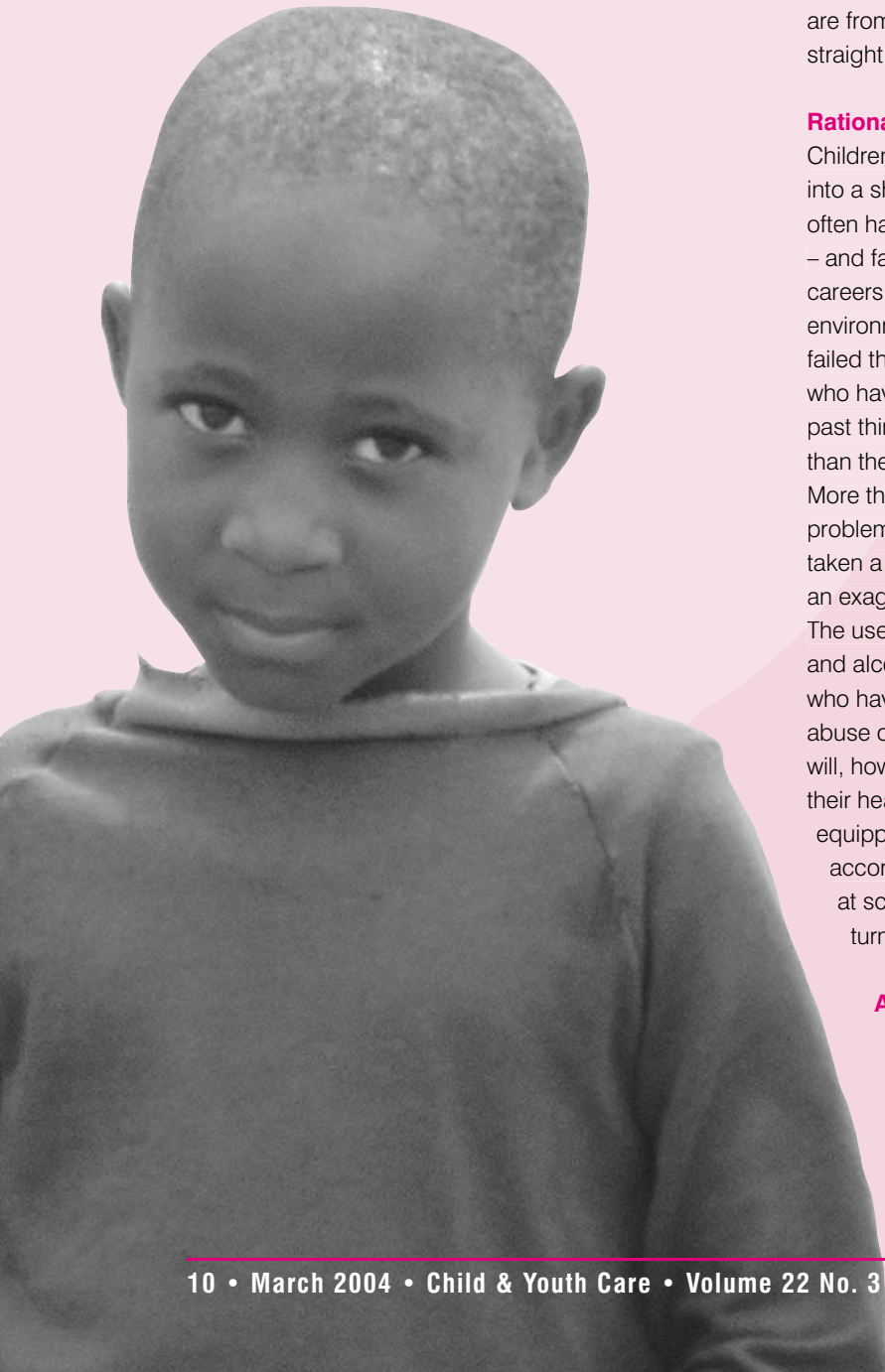
A holistic approach is a healthy approach. ▲



CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREET

An education model at 'Learn to Live' in Cape Town

By Dan Brown



History of the program

The Learn to Live education program for street children had its origin in the Homestead Shelter for street children in Cape Town fourteen years ago. Annette Cockburn and her staff had learnt from experience that one could not simply take a child off the street, place him in mainstream schooling and expect him to cope. Learn to Live was later taken over by the Salesians Institute. Apart from the children at the Homestead, children and youth from the street frequented the program that was housed in the old school chapel. Brother Peter Simmonds, with a staff of volunteer teachers, met every day after the children's lunch in order to review the day's failures and successes and plan for the next day. As new shelters opened around the city, they sent their children to Learn to Live. The numbers grew from the twenties in 1990 to the nineties in 2003. Now Learn to Live has become the education facility for practically all the residential programs for street children in and around Cape Town. Monday morning is intake day for new learners if they are from a shelter, and every day is intake day for boys straight from the street.

Rationale for the program

Children who find their way to the streets, and perhaps into a shelter and then a home for street children have often had traumatic experiences before starting school – and failure and rejection during their short school careers. School was not an accepting and nurturing environment for them. The official education system has failed these learners. Over fifty percent of the children who have attended the Learn to Live program over the past thirteen years, have been four or more years older than they should be for the last grade they completed. More than twenty percent of them have learning problems of varying intensity. Their self-esteem has taken a serious battering and they have had to cultivate an exaggerated aggressiveness to cope on the street. The use of thinners, glue, dagga and mandrax, tobacco and alcohol, is almost a given on the street. It is adults who have driven children to the street by cruelty, neglect, abuse or fear. Adults are not their favourite people. They will, however, beg from them, con them and strum on their heartstrings. A child with these habits is not really equipped to cope in mainstream school, and yet, according to the South African Schools Act must be at school until he has completed the year in which he turns fifteen.

Aims

Over the years the program has constantly revised its aims according to the perceived needs of the children.

These include:

- To reintroduce the child to a structured day. We keep as close as possible to the kind of timetable schools have. There is a two-hour period of serious numeracy and literacy between 09h00 and 11h00. The five-minute warning bell is sounded before each new activity.
- To re-acustom the child to being in a room with an adult and peers in an atmosphere of learning and concentration. As obvious as this may seem it is a serious challenge for many of them.
- To help them to reawaken their interest in formal education. Schoolwork is not, in reality, a priority for the street child.
- To help those who have unpleasant memories or a fear of school to overcome these negative feelings. The first work they are given is very simple. Work is not marked "wrong" but they are asked to have another look at it. They are praised generously for any work well done.
- To help them look to the future and regain a sense of tomorrow, and a sense of hope. They are helped to plan for days, weeks and months ahead.
- To help them achieve an acceptable standard of social behaviour especially with regard to non-violent conflict resolution. This is done as and when needed by the teacher concerned.
- To help them make up in some measure for the loss of life skills and social skills that would have been learnt as a matter of course in a functional family. This is one of the more difficult duties of the educators. To some extent one has to presume that the child is unaware of what is appropriate.
- To help the children develop better self worth and dignity. We try to make the school child-friendly. They are praised but we also quietly point out their shortcomings. We run extra mural activities to give them opportunities of shining in something apart from schoolwork.
- To help them realise that some adults are caring, concerned and trustworthy. The child is with the same teacher every day, and the teachers try to communicate in a warm manner with all the children.
- To liaise with mainstream schools to understand the children better.
- To offer the older children, fifteen years and older, an alternative route to education: ABET.
- To liaise constantly with the residential care social workers regarding the physical, emotional and social welfare of the children. This is done on a daily basis if necessary. We also have a special open day every six months for the social workers.
- To assess the child's school readiness and make appropriate recommendations to the social workers.

At the children's home the assessment is made not only on academic but, also especially social and emotional and psychological readiness.

- To reinforce cultural values and traditional forms of respect.
- To foster and promote the spiritual and religious growth of the children. The prayers, readings and songs build on what most of them have experienced even for a short while.

Curriculum

It is obvious from the aims that the actual "reading, writing and arithmetic" that is done, is in some ways not as important as all the other developmental work. However, basic numeracy and literacy form the bulk of the schoolwork. Worksheets are used most commonly, especially for the younger learners. We borrow ideas from any source that we can access.

Personnel

The educators are all qualified and experienced. All prospective teachers must volunteer for at least one week to experience the ethos and methodology before they apply for a post. The combined teaching experience of the five educators and the coordinator adds up to two hundred years!

The ethos is one of:

- Acceptance of the child, warts and all,
- Patience
- Work
- Respect
- Religious and spiritual growth
- Child friendliness
- Self-referral.

Placement

When a child arrives for the first time he/she is briefly interviewed. We then place the child in a "class" according to age, last school grade passed and language preference. Each teacher has a range of three or more years of age and at least three academic levels in the class. In effect, we have to fit the whole of primary school into three classes! The children in any given class are by no means a homogenous group. In order to respond more meaningfully to each child we identify certain categories and sub categories of learners:

- The possibility of impact on their lives:
 - the more stable learners that come from children's homes for street children
 - the less stable learners that come from intake shelters, assessment centres and from the street directly.
- Their prospects for the future:
 - there are the younger learners in the intake and

intermediate classes that could possibly return to mainstream schooling.

- there is the group that will almost certainly not be either willing or able to return to mainstream schooling.
- Learning material offered:
 - the intake classes concentrate on basic numeracy and literacy as a reorientation for possible re-entry into mainstream schooling.
 - the senior classes follow the curriculum and learning areas of Adult Basic Education and Training, levels one and two. The learning material for these two levels also consists exclusively of basic numeracy and literacy.
- Language preference:
 - Xhosa-speaking learners
 - Afrikaans-speaking learners.
- Past academic achievement:
 - there are learners whose academic level is age appropriate
 - there are those that are several years older than they should be for the highest grade they have completed.
- Learning capabilities:
 - there are learners that are behind because they were deprived of opportunities and are able to make rapid progress.
 - there are learners with learning disabilities of various levels of severity.
- Stated level of academic achievement:
 - there are learners that are actually at the level that their school records indicate.
 - there are learners whose actual level is several years behind what their previous school's records indicate.

Daily Routine

The school day begins at 09h00 and finishes at 13h00 with lunch. During the first session 09h00 to 11h00, "school work" is done. This is the most intense time of the day. During the second session 11h15 to 12h00, we offer music, art, drama and sport. During the summer months they have the opportunity to swim for half an hour. On Mondays and Fridays we have a morning assembly. The assembly has a religious component of hymns, a reading and encouragement. The values of gratitude, respect, cooperation and honesty are constantly stressed. The values and ethos of Learn to Live are explained in a participatory manner.

With the dedicated help of volunteers, all the learners get some experience of a computer. Each child must get his moment at the keyboard. The older learners are taken through an elementary course.

One of the most difficult challenges arises from the

principle of self-referral. Basically any child can get up during any class, tell the teacher and fellow learners in colourful terms what they can do with their program, and then walk out and never return. The challenge is to convince the child by means of our ethos, the fact that he knows that his teacher has his interests at heart, and by persuasion that attending Learn to Live is better for him than going back to the streets. In any given year almost one third of the children that are registered, leave the program in less than two weeks. They would possibly return later in the year or even in subsequent years. Once they leave the shelter where they are staying, they usually also leave Learn-to-Live. Over the past fourteen years just over twenty percent stayed for less than two weeks and never returned. We consider the first two weeks as crucial because from that point on, statistics show that the chances of the learner staying and making progress increase dramatically.

ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training)

For the older learners that are least likely to be either willing or able to rejoin mainstream schooling, we offer Adult Basic Education and Training. Even though one needs to be sixteen years or older to be able to qualify in the General Education and Training Certificate in A.B.E.T., we argue that even younger learners would be progressing in the learning areas and levels and will have a decided advantage by the time they reach sixteen years of age if they follow this course.

In practice, they are not with us long enough for this to happen. We therefore follow as closely as possible the unit standards of ABET and the continuous assessment requirements so that the learners could attend an ABET learning centre once they leave us to return home or to work.

Registration

Since 1991, we have tried to register Learn to Live as a public school. The Administration of the House of Representatives was the first to turn down our application. The sub-directorate for learners with special education needs was our next hope in 1996. They turned us down because of finances. Eight years later they are still pleading poverty. Unofficially, we believe that we do not fit any of the categories found in the Schools or the ABET Acts. To register as a private school is meaningless, since the finance to sustain the project cannot, almost by definition, come from the learners' families. The negotiations continue. One is almost tempted to take the department to court because they are not providing for these children. Nor are they helping those who *are* providing education and orientation for them. ▲

The Consequences of “Consequences”

By Teresa Pitman

It's the first day of the summer camp where my daughter Lisa works as a counselor, and she listens while the head counselor sits all the kids down, lists the “forbidden” behaviours, and outlines the consequences that will follow when rules are broken. Lisa tells me that after this introduction, one little boy says, almost in tears, “I'll never remember all those rules!” Another starts to punch the child sitting beside him, just seconds after being warned about the consequences of such behaviour. All the kids look restless, anxious – and a lot less enthusiastic about being at camp.

It reminds me of the days when Lisa and her brothers were small, and before we went on family outings, their father would present them with a similar list of crimes and consequences. The children would then respond to his expectations: after all, if the adults have gone to the trouble of thinking up a list of behaviours and devising appropriate consequences to go with each one, any reasonable child is going to feel that he or she is expected to demonstrate those behaviours.

Despite the popularity of consequences, I've never been comfortable with this approach. It clashes with my beliefs about children's natural desire to do the right thing – in Jean Liedloff's words: “children, far from being contrary, are by nature profoundly social.” I've also worked with foster parents and others caring for children who have been abused and traumatized, and most of them have been taught to use consequences and other forms of behaviour management to “correct” the children. In the parenting workshops I've done with these groups, there has been almost universal agreement that despite the theories, consequences don't work. In fact, they seem to be more harmful than helpful.

The technique goes like this: The child is told that she can “choose” how she wants to behave, and that there will be “consequences” resulting from her choices. The parent or caregiver then describes the consequences of making the “wrong” choice – being sent to her room,

doing some unpleasant task or chore, sitting on a time-out chair, having a toy or privilege taken away, etc.

Consequences can also be used when the child is already doing something the parent doesn't like. Then she's told that if she continues that particular behaviour, she'll face a negative consequence, or she can choose to stop and avoid it.

On the surface, this approach looks something like the way children naturally learn. The toddler drops a toy and, consequently, it falls to the ground. She learns the effects of gravity. Or a preschooler heads outside in winter without a coat on, feels his arms and hands getting cold, and learns that snow on the ground means cool temperatures.

But the similarities are more illusion than reality.

While gravity and weather are naturally occurring, the kind of consequences we are talking about are contrived and then imposed on the child by the adults in his life. The child looks to adults to help him understand how he is expected to behave, and this approach tells him that “bad” behaviour is expected – it must be, because the adults have planned for it.

A thorn by any other name...

Despite the name, consequences are really just punishments. The parent is trying to coerce the child into doing what the parent wants by making it unpleasant to do anything else. I hear angry social workers and child care staff say to the children they are caring for, “I'm going to consequence you so you'll never forget it!” Changing the name doesn't change what it is, and kids know it.

Pretending that the consequences are the child's free choice – that he has chosen the punishment – is incredibly dishonest. It becomes a way to blame the child, even as he is being punished: “Well, you chose to play in the puddle, so now you have to suffer the consequences and clean everyone's shoes.” Added to the anger and resentment he may feel about being punished is a confused sense of guilt that he's somehow brought this on himself. In his heart, though, he knows he was meeting the implicit expectations of the adults in his life.

Part of the pretense is the claim that these are “logical” consequences that simply follow from the child's choice: “Sorry, Joshua, you chose to come home late for dinner so you get nothing to eat until breakfast tomorrow.” A more logical or natural consequence might be that Josh had to prepare his own dinner, or had to eat something reheated, but many parents want something more “painful.” So Joshua goes to bed hungry.

But what if, the next night, Mom arrives late from work and misses supper? Does Dad tell her that the consequences of her choice are that she gets no food

“... there has been almost universal agreement that despite the theories, consequences don't work.”

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until morning? No, he's probably kept a serving set aside for her and will warm it up as soon as she comes in; at the very least she'll prepare herself a sandwich or heat up a meal. And no, the disparity between how his mother is treated and how he is treated will not escape Joshua.

The presentation of a false choice is also very confusing to children who are trying to sort out what behaviours are expected and appropriate. One of my friends told her two teenage daughters that if they stayed out past the curfew time she had set, they would have to do various chores around the house the next day. That would be the consequence. They took her statement at face value and behaved as though she had offered them a real choice: they stayed out as late as they wanted, and then willingly did chores the next day. The girls couldn't understand why their mother was so angry at them.

The price of consequence-induced compliance

Sometimes parents who recognize the problems with consequences will offer positive consequences instead – giving rewards for the behaviours they want to encourage. Dad tells his toddler “Stop crying and I'll give you this cookie.” The toddler gulps down her tears and reaches for the cookie. But ten minutes later, the

“... positive consequences or rewards are also manipulative ...”

cookie is eaten and she's in tears again. The root of the problem that caused her crying (perhaps she's tired, frustrated by not being able to communicate, missing her mom, stressed

by the arrival of a new baby in the family, or any of a hundred other things) has gone untouched. And children quickly recognize that positive consequences or rewards are also manipulative. When we offer a child a prize for reading a book, does that make reading more appealing? No. The message the child gets is that reading is so unpleasant and undesirable as an activity that adults need to bribe children into doing it.

Consequences also focus entirely on the behaviour, and ignore the child's need. Foster parents tell me that this is one of their greatest frustrations in using this technique. They will send a child to a “time-out” room as a consequence every time she screams, for example, and may eventually get her to stop screaming. But then she starts biting other children. A new consequence might suppress that behaviour, but now she's torturing the cat. None of the strategies have gotten at the underlying problem: the anger and unexpressed emotions that this child needs to resolve.

Imagine using consequences in this way to deal with a baby who is crying. You decide that the crying is an “inappropriate behaviour” and that as a consequence

you will put the baby in another room, alone, every time he cries. He will probably, eventually, stop crying. He will give up, and it will seem as though the consequence has achieved its goal. But the cost is so great. He has learned that nobody cares about his needs and that his calls for help and nurturing will go unheeded.

Alternatives

To get away from consequences, rewards and other kinds of “behaviour management” it can be helpful to think in terms of living with your children, rather than controlling them. Unfortunately, many of us find it hard to have faith in our children. We're afraid that if we don't push, coax or coerce them into acceptable behaviour, they'll never learn to be cooperative or responsible. This is probably a message passed on through our own childhood experiences and exacerbated by pressure from other adults. But Liedloff's experience, and that of many parents, shows that exactly the opposite is true. When we stop trying to control and manage our children's behaviour, their innate desire to follow our examples is able to come to the surface.

This year my daughter was assigned a small group of children to work with at camp, and she has been able to try a “non-consequences” approach. Instead of going over expected misbehaviours with them before outings, she just takes them along. If a child makes a mistake, such as talking loudly in a place where people are expected to be quiet, Lisa will gently and quietly let the child know: “Andrew, we need to whisper here because other people are reading.”

Most of the time, though, she finds they watch her for cues on how to behave. If she walks into a building and stands quietly waiting, they'll do the same – without her saying a word. Sometimes one or more of them will be overflowing with too much energy or tension to stand quietly, and then she helps them to find ways of dealing with that. One might need to be picked up and held, one might need to talk, one might want to move around – so Lisa helps that one to find some space where movement is okay. She respects their needs, and they follow her model (most of the time) by respecting her reasonable requests.

While establishing consequences might seem effective on the surface, children hear the underlying messages even more clearly. It tells them they are expected to misbehave, and that when they do, they can't even object to the punishment because it was “their choice.” All of this goes disastrously against their natural tendency to look to adults for the examples and expectations that will guide their behaviours. ▲

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Making a difference – Little by Little



Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa

A project of The Partners for Children Educational Trust

“Creating futures...through friendship” – that is the vision of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa (BBBSSA), a mentoring program for children and youth in need. Many children and young people are faced with the burden of dealing with the daily challenges of poverty. The mission of BBBSSA is to make a difference one by one by enabling creative relationships between a caring role-model (the Big Brother or Big Sister called “Big”) and a child (the “Little”) through the process of friendship.

BBBSSA is a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping children and youth at risk between the ages of 6 -18 years. The current key focus areas are the Schools Programme, the Children's Home Programme, the Diversion Programme for youth in conflict with the law and the Programme in support of those affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. BBBSSA matches youth in need with carefully selected and trained adult volunteers in one-to-one relationships that help them maximize their potential. It is affiliated to Big Brothers Big Sisters International. In 1904 Big Brothers was founded in America and one year later joined by Big Sisters. The programme merged in 1977 to create Big Brothers Big Sisters of America which now already operates in 38 countries around the globe. BBBSSA was the first African Big Brothers Big Sisters program and 31st country world-wide to host the program. Since 2000, the program has not only taken off in Cape Town, it has also been launched in Gauteng and has plans to open in Kwa-Zulu Natal in 2004. Currently BBBSSA has a total of 435 active matches (289 in the Western Cape and 146 in Gauteng).

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa – A Success Story

Known in the programme as a “Big”, a mentor spends a minimum of one hour a week for at least one year with their “Little”, helping them build personal values such as self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others. The relationship may only last a year but the effects may last a lifetime. International studies have shown that youth matched with a Big Brother or a Big Sister are 52% more likely to stay in school, 46% less likely to use drugs and 32% less likely to engage in violence. The BBBSSA evaluation, has shown that matched children and youth have an increase in communication skills and academic performance, a reduction in risk-taking behaviour and aggression.

A little BBBSSA success story

One hour per week is exactly the time that Dave and Louis have spent with each other for a whole year. Dave was 17 years old when he first met his Big Brother Louis. The beginning of their relationship was not easy. They had to get to know each other and find out what they liked to do together. As Louis is a very active sportsman – a body building coach – he often took Dave to the gym for a training session. They became friends and Louis gave Dave guidance in making his own decisions and in working hard to make his dreams become true. At the annual graduation event, Dave proudly stated, that his experience with his Big Brother has been extremely helpful. He looks up to Louis as his role-model because he has supported and encouraged him to complete and pass his matric. Well done, Dave and Louis – through your friendship a future has been created. (*names have been changed by the editor) ▲

If you would like to become a Big or require more information about BBBSSA, just contact us at Tel.: 021-447 2227, email: makeadifference@bbbssa.org.za or visit our website: www.bbbssa.org.za

Rites of Passage: Children in the Forest

By Brian Gannon

The children are deep in a forest. No sunlight filters through the dark undergrowth to give them a bearing – north, south, east or west? They take a few steps this way and that, but they aren't sure what direction they are taking and they have come to mistrust their own instinct. They don't know how they got into the forest. They have become frustrated and angry at their impotence in finding a way out. They lose hope.

What they need is someone in a helicopter up above, someone with a wider view of where they are, someone with maps and a compass, someone who understands what it's like down there, someone who knows the way. We can't land our helicopter in the forest and pick the children up. They have to make it by themselves. But we can in many respects accompany them on their journey home. It helps them just knowing that we are there. It helps more to know that we know that they are there. But we can do more than this from our vantage point high above the forest.

We can provide signposts, give them directions as to how they can get home, or at least out of the forest. Maybe from our position we can see that the direct route has impassable obstructions, and that they will have to take the long way round. Maybe they still have to spend quite a while in that forest. But they have hope. Perhaps most important, as they get to the end of each day's trek, when we drop them some supplies, we could also let them have a map which shows them where they are on the route. We can show them how far they came today, so that their day's efforts have some meaning for them – how today's gains fit into the journey as a whole. It also shows them that we noticed their progress, and that we believe in their ability to go on. This will encourage them and spur them onto greater efforts tomorrow.

There will be some difficult patches. They might spend a whole day hacking through half a kilometer of tough bush, or a whole day working out how to cross a river – or just building up the courage to cross it. Maybe they won't get far in a day, but we can help them see that the struggle was necessary and important, and that now they are indeed half a kilometer to their journey's end, this will encourage them.

That's all we can do for them really. See that they

get food and warmth each day, and give them enough information and feedback to help them fit each day's traveling into the wider picture of their journey home.

The children are, of course, our children. Many of them feel this way about being in care. Forces which they cannot understand often placed them in their forest of confusion. People they trusted let them down. "Was it something I did?" they often ask. They seek direction, but they lose their way. They are frustrated and angry. They lose hope.

The people in the helicopter are, of course, child and youth care workers. The maps and compass are our technical skills. It is often a disturbing realization for us to know that we can't simply land and pick them up. This is their journey through their forest and we can't do this for them. They have to do it for themselves.

To feed them and keep them warm is easy enough, but it isn't enough. They can't stay forever where they are, and they have to battle their way back onto the path home. Every day for our children has its trials and discouragements, and certainly its achievements and joys. These can all be wasted if they are not consciously woven into the child's broader picture of his journey. A day's bundu-bashing that remains unconnected to 'the big picture' is just another day survived. There is a hopelessness when things 'just happen' to children. The sense that life arbitrarily dishes out treats and disasters is ultimately disempowering for them. Life should not be allowed to be something that 'just happens' to children: they will learn nothing about cause and effect, and nothing about their own responsibility for what happens. Worse, they are not helped to own their problems and their successes when they 'just happen'.

For one reason or another we very often fail to guide children through this confusing time in their lives. Sometimes we do no more for them at the end of the day than let them know they satisfied us – and we often do this by our silence! Those who offended us at least received some 'feedback' but those who didn't, got nothing. Did they really do nothing today?

From where they are, in their forest, children at risk find it difficult enough to make sense of what is happening in their lives. But when there is a plan they can be helped to find their place in that plan. We need to punctuate their journey home with information and feedback so that they understand the plan and can make it their own. We do this by visiting them at times during the day or at the end of the day (or at the end of the week, to the end of a specific period during which they have been working on something) and helping them to see what they have achieved and how it fits into their lives. This shows them that we noticed their progress, and that we continue to believe in their ability to go on. ▲



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Child and youth care with young people who are dying: Lessons Zama taught our team

By Mandy Goble

Working with Zama

Developing a relationship with young people who are placed in care is a challenging task, which often takes months and sometimes years of dedicated perseverance. As HIV/AIDS claims more lives in South Africa those of us working in residential care programs are having to come face to face with caring for young people who are dying. It is our responsibility to provide these young people with a caring and supportive environment.

At times these young people are admitted into our programmes when they are at the final stage of the

disease. How then do we as child and youth care workers ensure that we develop relationships, which have meaning to these young people, in the short time that they are with us? During this time they will rely on us to care of them through their most undignified and dehumanising moments, and even the youngest child will experience embarrassment and humiliation at having to be exposed to relative strangers in this way.

We were requested to admit Zama a 9 year old girl and her older brother into our program. Zama and her mother were both HIV positive, whilst her brother had tested negative. We were informed that Zama was

struggling with her health and discovered that she was in the final stage of the illness. Her mother who was also struggling with her health was physically unable to care for the children.

On the day of their admission we were informed by the placing social worker that Zama had been admitted to hospital. Her brother was admitted as planned and the care plan for the family discussed in a painful meeting as the final arrangements for mother and Zama were made and shared with the brother.

The staff at our Amaqhawe Care Centre had been preparing for Zama's admission. The children living in the centre had made a welcome banner for Zama. A cake had been baked for the welcome party and her bed had been made up with the teddy bear sitting amongst the new towel, face cloth, comb and tooth brush.

The Amaqhawe team decided that as there was no idea of how long Zama would be in hospital, or if she would even recover, that they would reach out to her. They went to visit her in hospital, introducing themselves, gifting her with her welcome to Amaqhawe House banner and giving her special messages of welcome from the children living in the centre.

Zama remained in hospital for 3 weeks. During this period the staff team took turns in visiting her on a regular basis, and through sharing stories of the activities in the centre, introducing her to the different children. By the time Zama was well enough to enter our program she had spent quality time with each of the child care workers and support staff who would be providing her with services. She also knew something about each of the children in the centre.

Our annual Christmas party is held at the end of November each year. When visiting her in hospital, the staff had been giving Zama running commentaries on the preparations taking place for the party. Zama was desperate to attend the party. The staff has discussed her wish with the doctor at the hospital, who agreed that special arrangements could be made for her to attend the function if she had not by then been discharged.

Fortunately Zama was discharged before the party. She was weak and still very ill. She struggled to walk unaided and tired very quickly. But as she dressed up in her new party clothes, and her face shone with an excitement that was barely containable. She sat through the occasion absorbing every little detail, from Father Christmas and Tinkerbell to the gaily-decorated tables. Having received her gift from 'Santa', she refused to let go of it. The following day the staff told us how she had slept in her party clothes with her new doll clutched tightly in her hands.

The staff had shared with Zama how sometimes children in the centre were taken for special treats.

She had verbalised her wish to go to the beach for an ice cream. The staff had not forgotten this wish and had made the necessary arrangements. Zama, a wheelchair and the child care worker were duly loaded into the Kombi and taken down to the beach. A simple activity which so many of us take for granted often has great meaning to a sick child.

Special arrangements had been made for Zama and her brother to spend time with their mother, whose health was deteriorating rapidly. We had arranged a food parcel for the period and our child care workers conducted home visits to assess Zama's health and provide her mother with support as she too was very ill. A few days into their visit we were informed that Zama had died peacefully in her sleep. This was exactly 6 weeks after she had been admitted into our programme. We were pleased that the effort had been made for them to spend time with their mother. 10 days later Zama's mother died.

What we learned from Zama

As child and youth care workers working with children and families affected by HIV/AIDS, we have learned the following valuable lessons from one child's last days:

- the importance of never losing sight of this child's uniqueness, and despite the severity of her/his illness, he/she has wishes and dreams.
- that even when depleted of all energy and resources by this disease, most families want their children with them or to be with them up until the end.
- as child care workers we have the responsibility of providing opportunities for memorable moments, especially for those family members who survive.
- it is important to take time out to provide the child with that which for many of us is normal and ordinary, like a drive to the shopping centre, feeding the ducks at the park, small things that cost nothing except for time and presence.
- we must make the seemingly impossible possible through thinking outside of the box.
- we must ensure that inclusiveness and participation takes place at all levels of planning and discussion for the family.
- and never forget the importance of little things that make children feel safe, secure and special, such as a gentle touch, a warm smile, or stopping to smell a flower.
- the importance of answering the 'hard' questions as honestly as possible and really listening to what the child needs.

Being alongside someone during the process of dying is surely the closest one can be to the reality of one's own mortality. ▀

A Book Review by Ruth Bruintjies

Mad Isn't Bad

A Child's Book about Anger

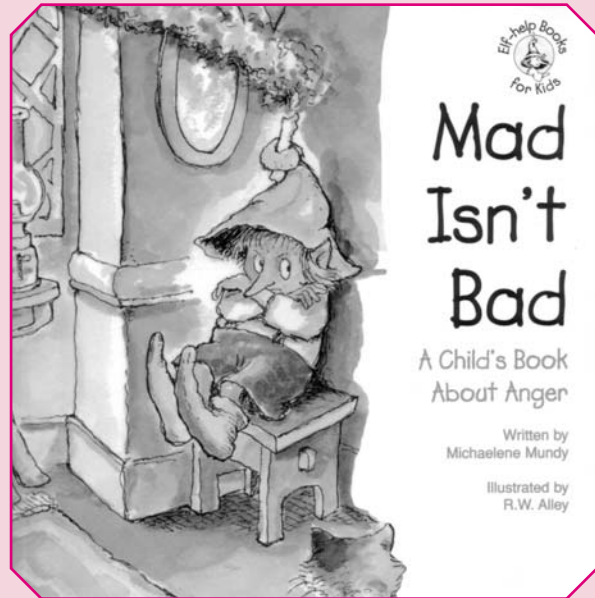
Author – Michaelene Mundy

Mad Isn't bad says children do have choices – just as caring adults have choices about what to teach children about anger. Through understanding what anger feels like and what triggers it, we can learn and teach healthy ways to handle it.

Mad Isn't Bad is a book every caring adult will appreciate. It offers children a positive and honest view of anger and what to do with it and can help adults, too.

What a find for us in Child & Youth Care! A simple tool to use with children.

Daily we see children expressing their pain through anger. Very often child care workers struggle with how to work with a child who shows his/her anger very aggressively. It helps when we are able to reach the child at the point where he/she has been let down, feels frustrated, or withdraws because of not knowing how to express their feelings. We know how difficult this is with youth who are relationship reluctant. In this colourful, practical little book we are shown ways in which helping children cope with their anger could facilitate healthy relationships with adults as it does with their peers.



Here we have a wonderful resource which offers very short chapters on –

Mad can even be good.

What makes you mad?

What does mad feel like?

Why you need to let out your anger.

You can CHOOSE what to do.

When you're mad, SAY SO!

Good ways to let out anger.

Get help from Caring Adults.

Being mad at God.

When people are angry at You.

Forgiving others, and forgiving yourself.

Staff Development

By Himla Makhan

The administration plays a vital role in the progress that staff make while they are in the organization. Staff development in-service training and outside training falls into the hands of the administrator. The administrator makes decisions and advocates on behalf of the staff. Opportunities should be provided to help staff reach their potential. The person within the organization should be given the chance. Every child and youth care worker must have a supervisor.

Young, free spirited, frivolous, care free graduates leaving the learning institution and stepping into the working world require careful help with their development. Changes have to be made. They now have to be responsible, accountable, effective and efficient, reliable, independent, punctual – the challenges are enormous.

The first stage of the young graduate's journey is the wilderness. They are anxious and lonely facing a new challenge. They are counting on the mature and experienced supervisor to hold their hands as they take their first steps into the journey of child and youth development. These students and young graduates need to be nurtured and supported through this challenging period. The transition is not easy and a good supervisor will realize this. But when one has been in the field for a long time, it is easy to forget this. You expect the new student to perform as well as the others because he or she is a worker who has come with a qualification. The supervisor must remember that the student has come with all the theory and now needs the opportunity to put this into practice – with a lot of support and guidance because he / she is in transition. Let us as managers provide the in-service training and quality of supervision needed to ensure that the student can feel a sense of belonging in the field of child and youth care and can use their skills to become independent and give generously to the young people in their care. ▲

Arguing Against Corporal Punishment

By Professor Julia Sloth-Nielsen

We use a range of different words to describe the use of physical force against children. Common examples are hitting, slapping or smacking, 'a good beating', 'six of the best', 'a thrashing', 'a good hiding' (in Afrikaans " 'n goeie klap"), and others which are less familiar in South Africa. These words may seem neutral or even positive – but note the use of the words 'good' or 'best' which often get added to put a positive spin on the practice of hitting children! Even though corporal punishment may vary from a light tap on the wrist to severe violence causing injury, all forms of violence used against a human being actually constitute assault. Children are bearers of human rights from the moment of their birth, and are entitled to have their physical integrity and human dignity respected in the same way as any adult. They also have a right to equal protection under the law.

Frequently used arguments justifying corporal punishment



"It never did me any harm"

Many proponents argue that they were hit as children and that corporal punishment did them no harm. It is true that people most often practice corporal punishment because they themselves were subjected to it as children. Children learn from, and identify with, their parents and teachers. However times and societal attitudes have changed. It has become widely recognised by practitioners in the child protection field that inappropriate discipline

methods are often a precursor to child-abuse. Corporal punishment can have serious psychological effects. According to experts, children who feel humiliated and degraded, become angry and resentful towards those who punish them in this way. This in turn leads to repressed anger which can be manifested in hatred towards themselves or others. Corporal punishment can also lead to bullying behaviour, because it sends the message that it is acceptable to hurt others. Parents often react out of anger, frustration or because they are tired and stressed, as well as because they do not know about the possibility of using other non-physical options. Parents who do try using alternatives report success, and in countries where corporal punishment has been prohibited, comprehensive research indicates that over time, societal support for physical punishment has diminished to the point where it is negligible.

"It is acceptable to use corporal punishment on the grounds of my culture"

Physical punishment of children is very common in most societies and cultures. Indeed, if one puts Christians, Muslims, customary law adherents and other groups together in a room, they will often all claim that corporal punishment is part of 'their' culture. However, as a tradition, it is certainly not 'owned' by any one group. Zulu, Xhosa and other African cultures seem to be replete with sayings which suggest that corporal punishment is not the preferred child rearing practice.

"Surely there is a difference between a vicious beating and a little smack - that can't be called abuse?"

Trying to draw lines inevitably sends a message that some forms of corporal punishment are acceptable. Children have the same rights as the rest of us to be protected from all forms of violence. Children, because they are small and their bodies have not matured, are fragile and especially susceptible to physical injury. There is no single study that shows that physical punishment does any good, but plenty of international research illustrating how physical punishment has done harm. The question may be asked 'but is there not a permissible form or reasonable degree of corporal punishment of children which society should tolerate'? Nobody would get away with asking such a question about violence to women; can you imagine a debate about how hard one should be allowed to slap a woman, at what age, on what parts of the body and so on? The view of the Committee on the Rights of the Child has been that it is not possible to define acceptable forms of violence against children. ▲

Adapted from: Hitting children is wrong – A plea to end corporal punishment in South Africa (Save the Children: Sweden)



Donald Nghonyama

**Regional Chairperson
– Limpopo**

I was born at Bungeni and grew up in rural villages in the Limpopo Province. I grew up in a traditional big family. I completed my matric in 1991 at Macema High School. I always dreamed of becoming a medical doctor (my father was a traditional healer). I hoped that one day I would be able to understand and practice both types of healing. After matric my plans did not go as planned due to some challenges at the time and I had to start looking for a job.

I went to Pretoria and this is where my future unfolded bringing something I never expected. I was employed at a private school which was at its beginning stages, a project under Tumelong Mission as some kind of a general assistant. When I started the school Kulani Private Primary School had only eighteen children the majority were children of Mozambican refugees. I registered with UNISA and later with Johannesburg College of Education to do a diploma in Education. I got promoted to leadership positions when still very young and I don't think I understood what was happening in my life. I was a shy person and that helped me to stay tightly in my shoes regardless of all the praises I received.

In January 1997 I left Kulani and joined a Department for people with disabilities at Lekgema near Klipgat as a project coordinator. While I was at Lekgema a need arose at Stinkwater to start sister project with focus on disabled children and adults and together with the team, I was working with, we started the Stinkwater project for People with Disabilities. In June 1996, Mrs Mary Ann Carpenter (the former Director of Tumelong) discussed with me the challenge Winterveldt Community was facing in terms of crime committed by young people. We started discussing the possibilities of youth programs and Mrs Carpenter introduced me to the documents on family preservation, The Life Centre concept and professional foster care. We both agreed, that the Life Centre concept sounded like the right tool we needed in Winterveldt. We researched about this Life Centre Concept and put together a business plan on how the program would run, who would be involved and the anticipated results for the program.

In October I visited Phand'ulwazi in King Williamstown. This visit has always stayed fresh in my memory as it

was my entry into child and youth care work. As amazing as the work was, it never felt impossible to me. I could imagine the different approaches on different kinds of challenges youth were facing. I could see the so-called aggressive youth and the car hi-jackers choosing a way of life, a way supported and appreciated by the people who love them, I could see them emerging as new leaders.

Bokamoso Life Centre was started in January 1999. I was the founder and the first manager. I had an opportunity to work with young people who were challenging and I felt proud when they realized their potential and fell in love again with their parents and communities. I have always enjoyed seeing youth change and become better people and regain their pride.

I had a family within the Bokamoso team. We did so much together and I grew as a person among them.

In August 2001 I left Bokamoso to go to the Limpopo province. I always felt an urge to go back home to do something. Something within me insisted that I should bring Child and Youth Care to the Province. I started with the relationship that I grew between me, the child and youth care work and the NACCW, and arranged training for the stakeholders working with children and youth in the Giyani region. We did our first ever training in child and youth care - Creating Safe Communities for Children and Youth in 2000. In 2000/2001 we started with the BQCC 2000 at Bungeni attended by 33 students. This training made me feel better but still felt that I could do more if I stayed in the area. Then I started Tlangelani Community Projects Development Organisation attached to the Diocese of St. Mark. In the rural areas where I grew up but they lacked direction and support. I saw an opportunity to try something different community child and youth care work and provide community projects with support and direction. In the last two years Tlangelani has been in operation, we started six projects in five different villages. They cover areas of: After school Care Programs, family preservation, library and other youth related information, dance, drama and acting and one project in partnership with NACCW known as Isibindi model for the care orphans.

I would like to thank the different teams I worked with for their contribution in my life and work experience, i.e. Tumelong Mission, Bokamoso staff, the staff and clients of Lekgema and Stinkwater centers for People with Disabilities, Kulani staff, NACCW staff for the membership and support, Tlangelani staff and everyone who directly or indirectly had an influence in my life.

Child and Youth Care Work and Learnerships

The term “learnership” has emerged in previous articles on SAQA. This month’s discussion seeks to continue to clarify this concept in response to readers questions.

How are learnership programmes developed?

Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA’s) must approve every learnership program before it can be forwarded to the Department of Labour. The SETA’s have been given this role since they are well placed to assess if an intended learnership programme will meet a need and if this is in an occupation where there are likely to be jobs or self-employment opportunities.

The Department of Labour will register learnerships that meet criteria laid out in regulations.

It will be open to any employer, group of employers, trade association, professional body, training provider and community group to design and develop a learnership in close liaison with the relevant SETA.

The development of a learnership has a number of stages and these will include:

- Scanning the labour market to identify areas of skill shortage or opportunity
- Defining the occupation and skills areas to be covered by the learnership
- Developing skills profiles
- Identifying the outcomes of the programmes and its different stages
- Liaising with a Standards Generation Body if there is one, or if not forming one
- Working on unit standards and the qualification
- Developing programme learning materials
- Designing assessment arrangements

- Securing agreement to the registration of the intended learnership and making sure that the provisions of the Skills Development Act and the Learnership Regulations have been complied with.

This may seem to be a complex process, but a number of booklets and guidelines have been prepared.

The Department of Labour has also established a **Learnership Support Service**. This provides assistance to SETA’s and it is these bodies that are taking the lead role in the design and development of learnerships.

Funding learnerships

Under the Skills Development act, SETA’s have the duty to disburse grants in line with published funding regulations.

Employers will be able to claim grants for Learnerships each time a learnership agreement is entered. These grants will only be available once learnerships are registered with the Department of Labour. On every learnership registration form, the **amount** of the grant the SETA may pay to employers will be recorded. The size of the grant will take many variables into account. If an employer provides a learnership for an unemployed person the employer may also be able to claim grant towards the allowance that must be paid to the learner. However, employers should note that they must get the approval of the SETA for the grant **before** they proceed with an agreement with the learner – as the grants will depend

on whether or not sufficient funds are available from the SETA. A SETA can decide whether or not to pay the grant.

What are the benefits of Learnerships?

Effective Learnerships that flow smoothly and produce learners who are well trained and qualified will contribute immensely to the economic growth and development of the country.

Without learnerships the skill shortages that currently exist, and which are likely to get worse, will not be overcome.

Organizations benefit from Learnerships by being able to employ people with qualifications that are high quality and relevant. Employees are trained to the exacting South Africa Qualifications Authority approved standards. Staff development within an organization is enhanced because the employees have a recognized, measurable qualification that they are proud of and wish to maintain. There are also benefits for employees. A good qualification will provide a basis for further personal development. Work standards and job satisfaction are improved and the learner has greater self-image and self-esteem. ▲

(Taken from: www.vhusila.org.za)

Please submit any questions you might have to The Director, NACCCW, PO Box 36407, Glosderry, 7702 for fax 021 762 5352.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

By Angie Chislett

There are many reasons one goes into child and youth care work. Whatever your reason may be, I hope and pray that it includes a genuine commitment to providing the best possible care to children and youth.

I have spent a number of weeks over the past two years supervising students as well as observing students in different settings. To my joy, a number of these students give it their all, and show pleasing results at the end of their practicals. However, on the other end of the scale, there are many who seem to think that practicals are nothing more than time off from lectures and frequently bunk or are absent from their duties.

I had experienced the same issues during the previous four years whilst being a student myself. Many of my classmates had the same negative attitude: "Why do we need to go to prac? It's the same thing everyday. They won't miss me if I'm not there."

Well, you know what? They did miss out and they were missed. Staff and children were expecting them, and were disappointed. Their duties became someone else's

responsibility and the people that really suffered were the children.

I don't know where to begin to try and explain the importance of practical work, and the huge opportunity you as students are being afforded by working in the life-space of children and youth. You are getting a chance which many people do not get. By showing professionalism, responsibility, initiative and passion during your practicals, you are paving your own career paths.

The organisation at which I am working now is the one where I completed my practicals. The reason for this is that my practicals were my life. They were hard, tiring and stressful. But more than that, they were what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Qualified child and youth care workers do not sit in an office or lecture room for the day. They are out there, interacting, playing, observing, building relationships, teaching young people and much much more. This takes enthusiasm, courage, dedication and a large amount of commitment. The biggest commitment is to the children we work with. If you are not totally committed to your practicals, I would suggest that you think about your chosen career. ▲

Angie Chislett completed her B.Tech (Child and Youth Development) in 2002 and is employed in a pre-school in Durban.

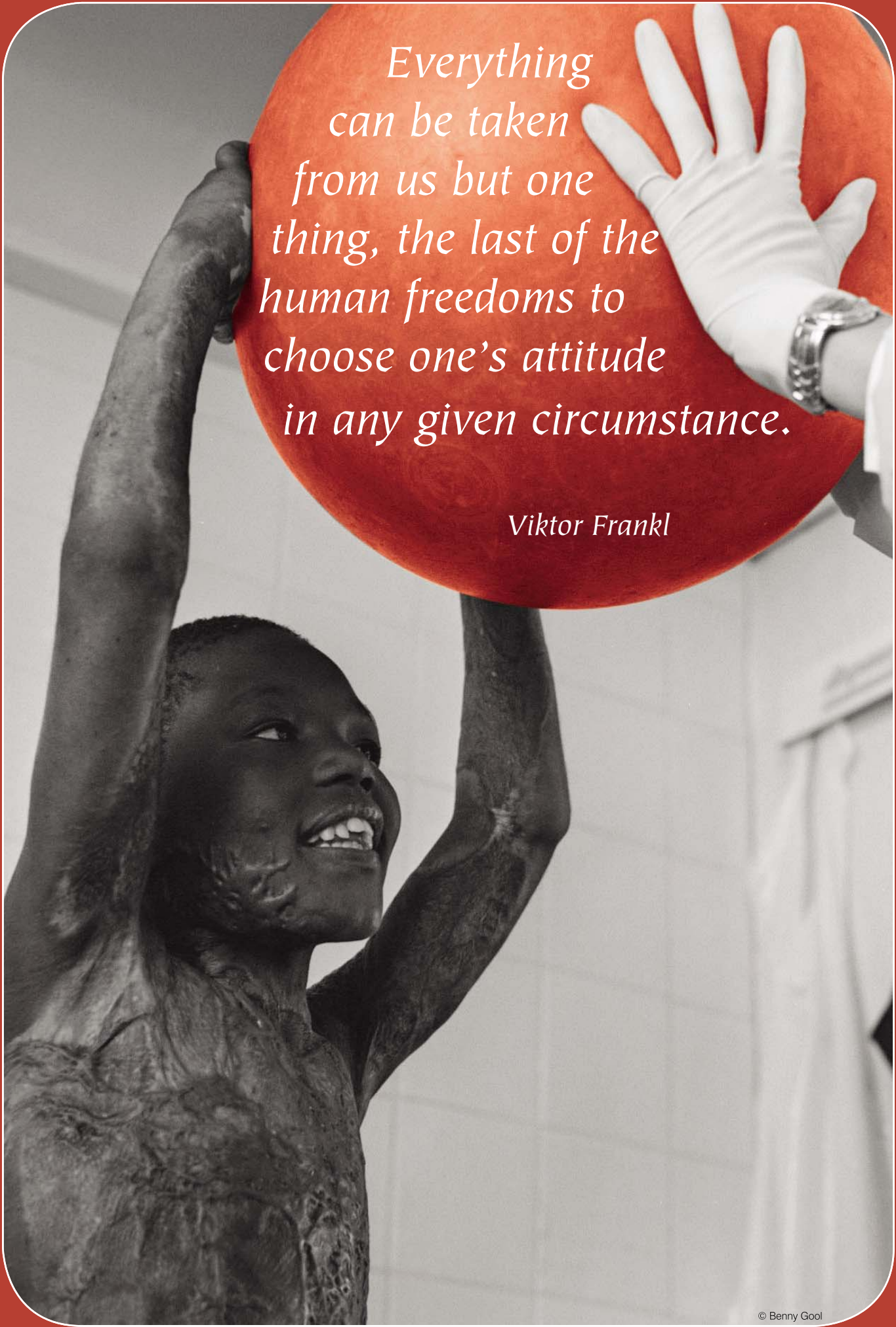
Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work

Towards the end of the year 2003, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) managed an election process in the field of child and youth care. This process was overseen by the Independent Electoral Commission and constituted a milestone in the developmental path, not only of South African child and youth care workers, but fellow practitioners the world over. This election was held in terms of the Social Work Amendment Act of 1998 which, in the post-apartheid era of setting appropriate legislation for a democratic South Africa, allowed for the establishment of bodies to regulate any autonomous social service profession. Child and youth care was deemed by the SACSSP

to be just such a discrete occupation, and was given permission to proceed with electing practitioners to serve on the first Professional Board – as the regulating body is called in the Act.

Our field went to the polls and voted. We have been awaiting the outcome of the elections for some while now. The process has been held up as we (along with the social work field) have been waiting to hear the outcome of the Minister of Social Development's appointments to the Professional Board. In terms of the legislation the Minister must appoint a member of the community, a representative of the provincial department and a member of the department at national level to the

Professional Board. After the 'high' of last year, this delay has certainly been disappointing. But as we are all very aware, election years are somewhat unpredictable. It must surely be expected that the Minister of Social Development will make these appointments after the election. Nominations for the community member will be called for in national newspapers, so practitioners are encouraged to look out for this and respond with appropriate nominations of people who understand our field. *Child and Youth Care* has decided to publish the names of those elected to the Professional Board for your information in the meanwhile. Congratulations are extended to all candidates. They are as follows: Ashley Theron, Barrie Lodge, Merle Allsopp, Sbongile Manyathi, Zeni Thumbadoo and for Education it is Jackie Winfield. ▲



*Everything
can be taken
from us but one
thing, the last of the
human freedoms to
choose one's attitude
in any given circumstance.*

Viktor Frankl