

# Child & Youth Care Work

A Journal for Those Who Work with Orphaned, Vulnerable and at Risk Children and Youth and their Families



Thinking Through A Relational  
and Developmental Lens

By Jack Phelan

Ponderings on Power

By Jackie Winfield

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS



# 2013 – The good and the bad

By Merle Allsopp

Or in this editorial, the bad and the good!

Some weeks ago a child in a secure care centre died after being injured by child and youth care workers during an attempt to run away from the facility where he was ordered to live for a period. I know little of the detail of the matter, but I do know that a boy has died and that a child and youth care worker is on trial for murder. One life is lost and another will never be the same again. The South African justice system will set about determining the culpability of the child and youth care worker and responding to his circumstances accordingly, but this is a tragedy.

It is a tragedy for the child who lost his life; it is a tragedy for the family who have lost a son; it is a tragedy for the child and youth care worker and for his family; and it is a tragedy for our child protection system; and for residential care in our country. Yes, the courts will set about understanding the child and youth care worker's direct responsibility in this matter. And it will be tempting for us to lay the blame for this loss of life directly and solely on the child and youth care worker involved. No doubt the Department of Social Development will follow with internal enquires which may lead to changes in the organisation in which this occurred.

But surely this terrible happening should focus our attention on the broader factors that have led us as a sector to this point where one of us

has behaved in this way. When a child has needlessly lost his life like this we must at least be catalysed by this loss to action – action that will be directed at ensuring that this cannot happen again. As I say, it may be tempting for us to view this as a culpability issue for this particular child and youth care worker only. But we know that all is not well in our residential care system. If any good at all is to come from the loss of this child's life it will be because we in the sector accept a broader sense of culpability in this matter, and look to change the systemic factors that may have played a role in this tragedy. The Department of Social Development and UNICEF will shortly be engaging with a process of transformation of child and youth care centres, and we expect that this process will help to make progress towards providing the standard of residential care that we can be proud of. Having said that, each of us has a role to play, as individual social service professionals, and as organisational managers. We have a role to play if we are in the NGO sector and if we are in government – in creating the kind of residential care that is good for children. We need each of us to work on our sphere of influence to ensure that we are doing the best we can do to make our country's child and youth care centres what they should be – places of safety, care and healing for our very troubled and troubling young people.

And another word on the bad in 2013 before the good ... Child and youth care centres have struggled in a good

number of provinces this year as a result of the delays experienced in the payment of government subsidies. Most child and youth care centres, if not all, rely heavily on government subsidy payments for their day-to-day running. Most facilities do not have large reserves, and no way to raise loans, so a delay in the receipt of subsidy payments can mean that organisations are consumed for many months with the matter of survival – when their core business is to be havens of nurturing, calm, understanding, generosity and warmth. It is very hard to be all of these things when one's very existence is threatened – and in the matter of the delay in subsidies, this is a disaster born of systemic difficulties within provincial departments. Delayed payments from provincial governments have become almost the order of the day – especially when entering the new financial year, and cannot but impact on service delivery. Well done to all who made it through the year – but we know of organisations which have not. This is a matter for the urgent attention of all in the first quarter of 2014 as we move towards the end of the financial year.

And onto the good...

This year saw the start of a long hoped for dream for the South African child and youth care sector coming true! Not only was the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work (PBCYC) initiated, but the proposed regulations allowing for the registration of child and youth care workers with the South

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# Thinking Through A Relational and Developmental Lens

Jack Phelan, Grant MacEwan University



## Abstract

CYC literature in the 21st century has re-thought some fundamental aspects of the helping transaction, particularly when we describe the relationship goals and developmental frameworks that practitioners utilise in the life space work which attempt to help abused and neglected youth and their families. This chapter will explore some of the implications of this revised view of CYC practice.

## Relational and Developmental, No Problem

Effective CYC practice is both relational and developmental. The common sense way of putting these ideas into practice is to recruit someone who loves children and youth, or at least is appealing and wants to be liked. Also, they should have a good set of values about what are normal and proper behaviour and attitudes for youth.

Some of the more obvious ways to understand relational skills include having an attractive personality, so that you can develop many relationships with others. Early CYC literature (Brendtro, 1969, p.57) discussed the need for CYC workers to be desirable role models for youth as a method of creating behaviour change. Some CYC practitioners had a goal of developing the most relationships with youth as a benchmark of how effective they were.

Things like being seen as the most popular counsellor or getting postcards or phone calls after youth returned to the community were proof of having good relationships. This conception of relational has been challenged by many recent thinkers, and rightly so. For the past 15 years, CYC literature has focussed on more complex understandings of the relational work required, which I will describe more fully.

**This conception of relational has been challenged by many recent thinkers, and rightly so.**

Developmental ideas have also shifted from an earlier model, which used developmental information to measure just how far from "normal" the youth had strayed. Educational programs trained CYC students to compare normal developmental behaviours and attitudes with the different ways that youth act who have suffered abuse and neglect. This conception of development focussed on problems and deficiencies, with a goal of moving the youth toward the correct way to function, based on age and a socially appropriate behavioural model. The CYC practitioner took the position of being the expert who knew what the youth needed to look like when he/she was fixed (Davison, 1995, p.229). Unfortunately, creating behavioural change based on imitation and using developmental benchmarks to set





goals for growth have not resulted in successful outcomes for most of the youth we serve.

Recent CYC literature describes the normal and logical thinking that occurs for these youth and their families because of their developmental dynamics. The challenge for effective practitioners is to appreciate the life position of the youth and to join him/her at that place. The role of coach, behaviour modifier, and promoter of normal, is no longer an effective model. Mature CYC practitioners use developmental frameworks to see the world from the logic of the youth, and relational skills to create connections that attempt to bridge the gap between the adult's perspective and the youth's beliefs about how to live successfully.

Using developmental perspectives to understand youth rather than diagnose problems has been a more recent way of using these frameworks to do effective life space work. Relational approaches that emphasize respect for the beliefs of the other, rather than being a role model or expert on life are now proposed.

## Safety and Control

Safety and management of behaviour are major goals in most CYC agency mandates. Many youth and families who come to us for help are behaving badly, often endangering themselves or others. Many of these young people will not voluntarily stop behaving badly without

some external control and this is often the initial approach needed. Safety is a fundamental part of the helping process for both sides. Yet the use of external control to create safety also creates an imbalance in the helping transaction which is not useful. So the paradox of building a safe space by taking control so that helping can occur needs some analysis. How can safety be established and maintained without poisoning the helping relationship?

Destructive behaviour is not useful, and it can be dangerous for lots of reasons. So preventing dangerous and destructive activities is an important part of providing help. How we think about safety may provide us with some guidance.

Safety does not create change or learning, it merely provides the space or opportunity to unpack the tools or medicine needed to be helpful. Safety reduces fear and anxiety, allowing people to focus more fully on what they really need. Promoting a safe environment does not require a theory of change, in fact a program or philosophy based solely on safety is really a theoretical No-Mans-Land which ignores change or growth in favour of stability and control.

Recent CYC literature has re-examined the focus on behaviour and external control, since a truly developmental and relational approach often conflicts with these methods. (Phelan, 2008, Holden, 2009).

## Life Space

Life space work is not like office-based counselling, the helping process is more physical, intimate and mundane (Smith, 2009 p. 123). The boundary dynamics are challenging because they do not occur in an artificial environment, separate from daily events. The issues and tasks are more physically practical like getting out of bed or going to school/work. The helping transaction can involve attending a court hearing together or visiting the Food Bank. Nurturing and physical caring, laughing or crying together, or just sharing space (hanging out) can be meaningful interactions. The term "client" does not resonate in effective life space work, because it creates an artificial barrier between people that creates an arms-length view of the other person and denies the mutuality inherent in how CYC practice occurs. Many models of helping have been developed to be utilized in an office setting, which is a neutral place, but not a natural place. The unpredictable dynamics and lack of environmental control present in the life space challenges the helper in unique ways.

We are bombarded in our own literature with statements that CYC practice is relationally based, and that our main tool is the relationship we establish with the youth and/or family. Yet our understanding of this relationship work is poorly articulated, both within and

Mature CYC practitioners use developmental frameworks to see the world from the logic of the youth, and relational skills to create connections that attempt to bridge the gap between the adult's perspective and the youth's beliefs about how to live successfully.



outside of our professional circles. Mature practitioners absolutely appreciate the paradox of working relationally with people who have been marginalized and punished mainly because of their fundamental inability and unwillingness to be in relationship with others. In fact, mature practitioners know that the biggest professional hurdle to overcome is connecting, because it means leaving behind one's own safe coordinates which balance and support living successfully and choosing to join people in dangerous, frightening, and lonely places.

The closest vocational parallel is people who do rescue work, finding stranded or marooned travelers in dangerous places. The youth and families we serve often act the way they do because of where they are, not who they are. When a person is in survival mode, they become very reactive and self-protective, without any need for social rules and mores. Our youth and families need someone who can join them in these dark places, not just offer advice from afar. The real skill in describing



our work is to articulate the first step out of danger, not the eventual safe destination.

An additional complication, based on attachment dynamics and mistrust beliefs, is that there is a reluctance to signal the need for a rescuer, because being vulnerable inevitably leads to being victimized. Picture a youth who has fallen into a deep hole, yet is unwilling to cry out to passer-bys for help because he believes that they will laugh at him and perhaps throw things down at him for sport. So, what is needed is a professional who can physically and emotionally join with the other person's reality, remain safe and confident in spite of the danger, and display the tools and skills to move toward a better place. Life space work at this level of connection is what effective CYC practice is all about.

Mature practitioners cannot imagine doing CYC work anywhere else than in real life space situations. They do not picture the life space as an unpredictable, anxious place, or a chess game where one is always planning future moves, but a rich, complex energy field where they are fully engaged. When faced with challenges, they look inside, not outside for solutions. Creating connections with others is totally reliant on how you are, not how the other person is. Opportunities for engaging are everywhere and do not need to be pre-planned. Structures, routines, rules and events are background and emotional energy is foreground. The act of caring and building connections creates the healing and growth required for successful living, and the mature practitioner has this focus at all times (Gharibaghi & Stuart, 2013).

Some practical examples may be useful;

- A community youth worker gradually builds stronger connections between each youth and herself, among the

## How can safety be established and maintained without poisoning the helping relationship?

local group of youths, and between each youth and the community, in order to establish logical reasons to act responsibly and with social empathy. Behavior control is unimportant, except when it threatens to undermine connections. So, she becomes safe and predictable, helps youth to trust each other more, and offers opportunities to contribute to the community. Typical anti-authority behaviour is only challenged when it blocks building connections. When things are going badly, she asks herself how she could be doing it differently, and does not look to blame.

- Family support workers see angry, mistrustful families as trying to keep themselves safe, protecting themselves from change for good reasons. The daily chaos is a way to avoid bigger fears of loss and danger. Success will emerge when the worker gets better at joining and supporting existing relationships to be healthier, often through nurturing adults, bringing physical relief and resources, and living alongside the family without judgements or advice. Effective family support workers impact family dynamics without creating dependence on their presence.

- In residential treatment settings, the mature practitioner will slowly shift from a safe, predictable rule and routine person, to a caring individual adult, by making a favourite snack, or sharing a special interest, or knowing when to back off. Soon she becomes a more substantial adult presence and can create good choices through



relationship energy. After this, the real treatment work begins, and the youth sees the worker as a person who is starting to understand him and yet still likes him. As the youth expresses the pain underneath, the worker does not back away.

The actual things that mature practitioners do in daily interactions look quite simple. Bringing a loaf of bread and a coloring book on a family visit does not seem too complicated, yet the nurturing message, both from welcome food and the pleasure of mom and worker playing together by coloring, builds an experience of caring that the mother will eventually be able to transfer to her mothering energy. The timing, content and delivery of this simple/complex learning are quite sophisticated.

Supporting an ego-centric and fearful youth to both be open to nurturing and to become nurturing may involve gardening and caring for plants, or asking her to teach you a skill. The eventual activity looks simple, the judgement about when and how to create the learning is complex. Supporting youth to be angry, not teaching anger management techniques, can be messy and yet very productive. Unfortunately, most of our youth have excellent reasons to be angry, and the pain underneath can often only be reached after legitimizing their emotional experiences (Anglin, 2003, p.109) Unskilled workers should not attempt this. Yet the life space offers tremendous opportunities to explore these predictable dynamics. Mature practitioners use punishment infrequently, although it is occasionally the right response. Behavior control is rarely the focus for mature CYC practitioners, unless safety is acutely at risk. Relationship work, when done well, increases connection and social empathy, opens youth to examining

choices and ego-centric logic, and develops self-control. Skilful CYC practitioners not only do relational work very well, they also resist anything that undermines this focus.

Mature practitioners are often frustrated by supervisors who expect them to focus on cleanliness and good order rather than good treatment.

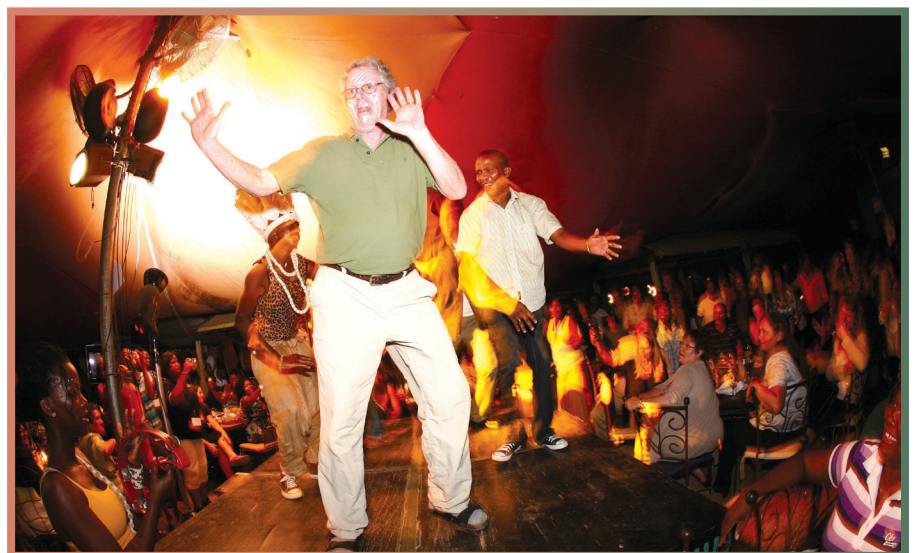
Recent CYC literature on the life space has expanded this concept even further with the inclusion of the internet and cyberspace as life space realities (Gharabaghi & Stuart, 2012, p.7)

### Lunch Ideas

The most useful ideas are ones which can be simply stated, easily visualised, and lead to more complex thinking. CYC work is practiced in the life space of both the practitioner and the people he/she is supporting, which is a place of straightforward, simple realities. Mark Krueger (2010) calls this "lunch ideas". CYC practice, when it is done well, is both developmental and relational. That is, it requires an understanding of the ability and social maturity of the other person and it also requires a safe mutuality between both people usually developed slowly through a process of trust building and caring on the part of the CYC practitioner.

It is very hard to learn how to think developmentally, because it requires you to stop assuming that others think the same way that you do. Complex descriptions such as "meaning making" (Garfat, 1998, p.21) are built on the basic task of thinking developmentally. An example may help; every child between 2 and 5 years old thinks like a sociopath, not able to care for anyone but himself, yet we do not label them as such, we see it as a developmental stage that will change as they mature. When we are confronted by a teenager who is stuck in the developmental processes of a three year old, it is not easy to think developmentally and support her to move forward into four and five year old thinking, instead we often see pathology.

When the two year old shouts "NO" to every request, we are mildly challenged, but see it as a developmental stage that is not going to be helped by fining him a dollar every time he does this, yet we often deal with profanity (an immature teen's way of saying NO) in this way. The basic difference between people who need life space interventions, an intense method of treatment, and people who can be helped by once a week therapeutic conversations, is developmental. The less socially aware and mature you are, the more developmental support you need and life space work will be more useful.





Simply put, people who are developmentally stuck at lower stages are more ego-centric and unsafe in the world. We have no problem thinking about young children this way, but it requires skill and training to think about teens and adults this way.

### So where does Relational Practice fit into this?

Skilled CYC practitioners know that there is no opportunity for change and growth without building a safe relationship first. Yet this relationship alone does not create real change, even when sometimes it creates imitative behaviour, which was described 40 years ago as a form of role modelling. Using relational approaches to focus on behavioural change is not really helpful, unless there is a developmental shift also occurring.

Creating a safe relationship with someone supports him/her to begin to see beyond him/herself, to become less ego-centric and more able to explore the world of other people safely. As a safe relationship develops, the CYC practitioner is able to discuss how she thinks and feels when the youth behaves in different ways, and the youth is learning to take other people into consideration, to become more socially aware. This builds a social logic into the youth's critical thinking which is less ego-centric. This can only happen after the youth is able to be vulnerable (safely) in the relationship. As the youth begins to acquire a socially aware logic about how to behave, he/she starts to consider what impact they are having on others, which is what 5-8 year olds typically are becoming more aware of.

Recent CYC literature on relationship building emphasizes the creation of an In-Between space that brings the helper out of his usual personality and opens up a common ground place called the interpersonal in-between, which is a safe meeting area where both the adult

and the youth can join together (Garfat, 2008). This is not asking the youth to think like you do, or a place of role modelling, but a risky yet useful joining of both people's world views without judgement.

**Helpers see the need to be willingly invited to create influence, while the other person is trying to be vulnerable and powerful at the same time.**

This is the foundation for connecting with youth who are living in a very desperate place by using a developmental framework, and this foundation creates developmental growth through the use of relational learning. Simple yet complex ideas.

### Thinking About Helping

How you think about what you are doing determines how it is done. Helping another person is both a simple and a very complex task. How I think about the task will be a critical factor, yet sometimes I attempt to help without thinking about what is happening. When you want help and I want to help and we agree about what needs to be done, then things are easier (you have

**The helping dance is a delicate balance for both partners. When either person believes that they must always be in control of the helping relationship, then they are thinking badly.**

a cut finger and I have a Band-Aid). Sometimes the person needing help does not know how to ask or what help is needed, so they look for an expert who knows more than they do. Sometimes the helper sees the need for change even though it is not understood by the other. Sometimes the person needing help knows what they need, but the helper does not concur. Sometimes the awareness of both people about the helping process is in conflict, or the commitment to the necessary transactions is unequal.

Power and control are major dynamics for both sides in the helping transaction. Self-image and fear of vulnerability create powerful emotions, with safety and trust constantly needed by all involved. Competence is a big issue, the helper wants to come across as skilful, and the other person wants to be respected as capable also. Helpers see the need to be willingly invited to create influence, while the other person is trying to be vulnerable and powerful at the same time. The helping dance is a delicate balance for both partners. When either person believes that they must always be in control of the helping relationship, then they are thinking badly. The willingness to let the other dancer lead occasionally has to happen (Krueger, 2004, p.15).

Unfortunately, there is a power imbalance in our helping interactions. The adult helper needs to continually monitor his/her use of power.

### Power Is Naturally Fearful

This title comes from an article on the Spanish Inquisition and its cruelties which I recently read (Gopnik, 2012, p.70). One sentence stands out for me, "The values of tolerance are one of the most difficult lessons to impart, not because people are naturally cruel, but because power is naturally fearful." To





have power over someone else and to have the capability to keep oneself safe enough to resist being fearful seems to be necessary in order to be tolerant (open to the value of another point of view). CYC practitioners are powerful people in the lives of the youth and families we serve and self-awareness about our powerfulness is essential. Relationships, especially helping relationships, are complex interactions, fraught with potential for disagreements. When you add the naturally occurring conflictual dynamics of adults and teenagers, there is a high need for tolerance and open-minded humility. Building bridges and connection are much more useful than trying to impose beliefs and controls. Power and control are major dynamics in the connections we create with others, and safety and trust are constantly on the mind of both people in the helping process. Helpers see the need to be willingly invited to create influence, while the other person is trying to be vulnerable and powerful at the same time. The need for control often dominates the thinking of both sides. Both people often think that they know better (think more accurately) about what is needed, which is actually not a problem, because they are both right in their own way. In fact, the process of creating an open discussion exploring the "rightness" of each point of view will be the most helpful approach.

It is the beliefs and thoughts about power and control which block the helping process, not who knows better about what is needed (whose truth is correct). Relational CYC practitioners believe that the youth is the expert on himself, and if there is a real connection, it is based on a respect for the logical choices which have been made in the past, even though they were not the most socially useful. Hopefully, the adult can enrich and expand the youth's perspective, by creating a

**Abused and neglected youth do not share the logical perspective of a safer, more connected person.**

bridge which allows both views of the world to be honestly examined. The ability to create an open dialogue which compares the best fit for each person's set of facts and logic to the situation at hand is what is needed.

Power is naturally fearful, to return to our theme, and it is the ability to control our fear which is a key helping skill. Fear is focussed on self, not the other, with fight or flight being the normal response. When there is a power imbalance in a relationship, which is typical of CYC interactions, then fear and reactive responses are natural. The helper, feeling unsafe, will focus on his own needs and use the power imbalance to impose control, while the youth, feeling unsafe, will react to the power imbalance with a fight or flight response.

**The helper, feeling unsafe, will focus on his own needs and use the power imbalance to impose control, while the youth, feeling unsafe, will react to the power imbalance with a fight or flight response.**

Mature CYC practitioners can manage the natural fear which having power (and responsibility for control) creates

through personal confidence in professional competence that comes with increasing experience. Tolerance, humility and the ability to bridge differences do not exist in fearful situations, so skilled CYC helpers can manage both their own and the other persons natural fearfulness.

Being an effective helper will require a rigorous and regular examination of the dynamics of power, fearfulness and personal safety. Being in control of yourself does not really require you to be in control of the other person or the rightness of the opinions considered.

## Knowing More

Both people often think that they know better (think more accurately) about what is needed, which is actually not a problem, because they are both right in their own way. The humility and respect displayed by the helper, sometimes labelled a "one-down" stance is not just a technique but a fundamental belief system about people that is essential, especially in Life Space work. Each of us is the expert on our own lives and effective helpers support people to discover the answers from inside the self. So it is beliefs and thoughts about power and control in relationships which block the helping process, not who knows better about what is needed (whose truth is correct).

Recent CYC literature discusses post-modern views as useful for our practice, which emphasize that there is not just one way to arrive at truth, or even if it is helpful to focus on truth, since it is quite relative (Skott-Myhre, 2011, p.43). The formulation of what is assumed to be true is often merely the logic and world view of the group that happens to be more powerful.

## Logic

Experience in joining with people where they live and breathe creates an expanded awareness in the CYC practitioner. Abused and neglected youth do not share the logical perspective of a safer, more connected person. The expanded awareness which develops in a truly developmentally trained CYC practitioner creates a respect for other ways of viewing events in the life space which help him to relax his logical paradigm. In effect he starts to see the complexity in the thought that my logic is the only way to be logical, except for your logic.

When my wife and I have differing opinions, which happens sometimes, I try to show her that she is not being logical. This argument never seems to work, even though it makes perfect sense to me. In fact she often responds that I am not being logical, then describes her "truth" which is not logical at all to me.

I also believe that I have a few suggestions which would improve her as a person, which she also rejects, often with several of her own suggestions about how I might improve. This of course does not seem logical or useful to me.

Perhaps my experience resonates with some readers who may also be challenged by their partner's logic. We all have our own beliefs about the world around us, which creates our logic and reasoning.

I will describe the concept of humility, which is the ability to stay curious and unthreatened when confronted with attitudes and beliefs that contradict your own cherished ideas about life truths. The skill needed is to build bridges between my logic and yours, not to convince you that my logic is better. Youths who have suffered abuse and neglect usually have a logic about life

truths which challenges most of our socially appropriate norms and rules. In fact, when I have tried to use my logic about relationships, social rules and even what is fair and just, their response has been quite frustrating. The more I appeal to common sense (my logic), the more annoying and obstreperous the other person seems to become. Often I can get other CYC people on my team to agree with me about my logic, but even the weight of our collective logic fails to be convincing to these youths .

**Fortunately, one of us is actually getting paid to be more understanding, so the task, while difficult, is possible. Humility is the first step.**

I find that logical consequences, so cherished by me and the rest of the team, often do not fit the logic of the youth, and the frustration evident in the youths' responses mirrors my frustration at their lack of understanding (i.e. my logical perspective) of what is happening.

I also regularly describe in reports, treatment contracts, and daily logs the logical suggestions that I have created for how they can improve as persons, which I can make them sign, but they do not seem to "own" them (see above description of my wife).

**Many youth and families in our care have no hope that the future will be better than the past, so they live in the moment, which creates lots of difficulties.**

Rather than trying to get the youth to be more logical, I started to realize that they were very logical already, and that I needed to create bridges between our differing logic about how the world works. This is not an easy task in any relationship, but especially when our beliefs are potentially so divergent. Fortunately, one of us is actually getting paid to be more understanding, so the task, while difficult, is possible. Humility is the first step.

## Humility

CYC practitioners are aware of the laundry of skills and abilities that have been compiled over the years by employers, academics and professional bodies in an attempt to quantify the qualities of an effective CYC professional. The telephone book sized documents make the average saint look quite average by comparison. At the risk of adding to the unmanageable, I would like to discuss humility as a key ingredient.

My favourite post-modernist couple Hans and Kathy Skott-Myhre (2011, p.44) (2010, p.8) often reject the use of developmental approaches in our work because it contains a built-in assumption of superior knowledge in the helper. This destroys any genuine relational possibilities in the helping process because of the unequal power in the relationship. I admit it took me a while to absorb this idea in a useful way, but I now see it as a helpful perspective. This is where humility becomes important.

Humility is the ability to stay curious and unthreatened when confronted with attitudes and beliefs that contradict your own cherished ideas about life truths. Respect for the other person is an essential piece, but also the courage to not react defensively is important.



Culturally different people challenge our humility as well as people with different political and religious views. The usual response to people who differ from our beliefs is to tolerate their right to that opinion because we are not responsible for what they believe. However, this is not true when our own children are involved. Parents often try to shape and create values and beliefs in their own children that mirror theirs.

CYC practitioners are in powerful and parental roles much of the time in their work. Sometimes the need to be controlling is a requirement foisted upon them by employers or funders, other times it is a personal need. Unfortunately, the youth and families sent to us for help need us to be humble and respectful of the differences between us rather than powerful and controlling. So far in their lives everyone who has been challenged by the different, often asocial and illegal, behaviours they display has tried to coerce them to change. Telling these youth and families to act differently has not been helpful, even when the teller has great power and influence. The same person who would not tell someone of a different culture, religion or political persuasion to be more like them, often does exactly that when working with vulnerable people who think and act differently. Just because we have the power to control people is not a good reason to do it.

Safety is an important issue when working with youth and families, and I am not advocating standing by passively when people are creating dangerous situations. However, safety does not create change, it only creates safety. If your goal is to support change, then you must do much more than just control the situation for safety.

Humility leads to curiosity about differences. Our approaches should build bridges between our differences instead of avoiding or trying to eliminate differences altogether. Our helping

**Humility is the ability to stay curious and unthreatened when confronted with attitudes and beliefs that contradict your own cherished ideas about life truths.**

assumptions and intentions need to be regularly examined and challenged in team meetings so that we do not try to manage our anxiety about what is challenging about the other person's beliefs by forcing our framework onto them (Gharabaghi & Phelan, 2011). Many youth and families in our care have no hope that the future will be better than the past, so they live in the moment, which creates lots of difficulties. When we tell, yell at, counsel and modify them through our power position, it does not create bridges between our differences.

**Telling these youth and families to act differently has not been helpful, even when the teller has great power and influence.**

It may be very challenging to respect a person who lives in the moment, trusts no one and values little that does not personally benefit them immediately.

Humility, the ability to stay curious and unthreatened when confronted with attitudes and beliefs that contradict your own cherished ideas about life truths, is a quality that consistently will keep you focussed on the real goal of helping, which is to create bridges and new understanding for both you and the other person.

This may not sound like a particularly difficult task, so let me provide a concrete example.

## Logical Lying

Well-functioning youth do not tell lies. Also, a youth who respects a particular adult would not lie to him. People do not lie when they will be easily caught in the deceit because they want to protect their reputation. The logic in all these statements is fairly obvious. The familiar Johari Window metaphor is useful here. We are most lacking awareness when we enter the quadrant of our self which is the area labelled "what you don't know and you are not aware that you don't know it". Mark Krueger (2004, p.8) has described effective CYC practice as being able to dance well with the youth or families, i.e. match their rhythm and energy as we attempt to engage with them. I believe that many CYC practitioners and agencies believe that they are good "dancers" because they have never seen anyone dance better, but in fact they are not dancing well at all.

I want to pose a very regularly occurring interaction between CYC practitioner and a youth as an example of this state of benign ignorance. It occurs because behavioural events are more powerful than developmental awareness when the practitioner is not supported to understand how to do relationally based, developmental CYC practice. Unfortunately, there is enormous support for a behavioural view because a great many people doing CYC work do not know that they are making major mistakes in how they interpret and respond to the people they are supposedly trying to help.

Picture this interaction; a youth comes home after school, the CYC practitioner greets him and asks about his day at school. The youth states that he attended all his classes and things were



okay. Both the youth and the worker are aware that the school reports any absences every day before 5pm. The CYC practitioner gets a call from the school stating that this youth was absent for the entire day. Discussions later on, both with the youth and with the other workers will be focussed on this "lying behaviour" and perhaps adding adjectives like pathological or bold-faced. The case plan for this youth will include lying as a major issue to be modified or eliminated, using behavioural reinforcements (punishment) as well as guilt inducement. The illogical thinking of the youth (he knew I would find out the truth in another hour) would be further evidence of how troubled and untrustworthy the youth is. This interaction would cause the CYC workers to be more suspicious of this youth's ability to be helped.

Awareness of moral development theory would create a very different result. Abused and neglected youths have a much more self-protective logic about right and wrong, they do not evaluate good and bad by how it affects others, only how it affects themselves. So a behaviour is good if it keeps me safe from harm, and a behaviour is bad if it creates punishment. When the youth was questioned about school, he was doing a good thing to say that he attended all day. It would have been morally wrong for him to freely admit to being absent, since it would have resulted in being punished. The fact that the school was going to call later is irrelevant in his decision, and he truly believes in the moral correctness of his behaviour. Punishment and guilt are useless responses, since they only further convince the youth that you both do not understand him and do not know how to help him.

When the CYC practitioner misinterprets this behaviour as lying, he is totally misjudging the intent and moral correctness of the youth, and the youth is very aware of this lack of understanding between them, although the practitioner is not (he doesn't know what he doesn't know). Relational connections between them are weakened, and the youth's trust in the helper being able to help him is diminished.

**The CYC practitioner, using his own belief system, sees a need for a logical consequence here and I agree with him. We only differ on what the logical consequence actually is**

This simple transaction occurs daily with abused and neglected youth, and our "not knowing" response prevents us from being helpful.

The use of humility, the ability to stay curious and unthreatened when confronted with attitudes and beliefs which contradict your own cherished ideas about life truths, is needed regularly if we are to be successful helpers. Utilizing developmental awareness here will prevent relational damage and any adult resentment based on our own life logic will not be helpful.

A skilled practitioner knows that it is not helpful to ask questions that put both the young person and himself in a no-

win situation. He knows better than to ask any questions that will require the youth to incriminate himself. Let me continue with this line of thinking about being relational and developmental, with another example. I will be posing a residential program example, but be assured that the setting can be modified to a school, street corner, hospital or family home. I have lived in the CYC world for many years and I often see practitioners misjudge, often by overestimating, the developmental capacity of the youths and families we serve. The result is frustration on both sides and relational resistance building for everyone involved. One of the usual situations that create this relational disconnect is when a worker is using logical consequences (a jargon term that we have all come to accept without critical review) to teach a youth to be more sensible.

Let me pose a situation:

A youth in a group home is expected to wash the dinner dishes before going out for the evening. He is given a choice by his worker to do them immediately, or to have a short break before starting. All his friends are heading for the park right after dinner, and he goes with them, unable to resist the pull of his friends, leaving the dirty dishes in the sink. The worker is upset with this turn of events, and ends up washing the dishes himself. When the youth returns a few hours later, the worker angrily confronts the youth and gives him a logical consequence of doing two chores the next day.

Unfortunately, this youth does not see the logic in this and storms away, to brood and grumble about how unfair this is. The worker is feeling quite justified and blames the youth for not thinking logically, perhaps even commenting on this youth's inability to grasp the obvious in his log book entry.





The worker does not reflect on how this event has damaged his relationship with the youth, and may even see it as a step forward, citing realistic boundaries, etc.. Humility, as I have previously framed it, is the ability to stay curious and unthreatened when confronted with attitudes and beliefs that contradict your own cherished ideas about life truths. The goal is to build bridges between my logic and yours, not to force my logic onto you.

The CYC practitioner, using his own belief system, sees a need for a logical consequence here and I agree with him. We only differ on what the logical consequence actually is. I would suggest that the problem here is that this worker overestimated this youth's ability to have enough self-control to resist the temptation to leave with his friends and as a result of this the consequence is that the worker had to do the dishes, which is very logical to both of them, and the teaching value of the consequence will be useful for the worker.

A conversation between the young person and the worker can follow this incident, with the worker expressing disappointment in the youth's lack

of maturity, perhaps stating that the worker has overestimated the youth's ability to make good choices. Hopefully, the young person would feel the need to convince the worker.

When workers are trained to be developmental and relational, then the problem here is an overestimation of the maturity of the youth and this is the CYC practitioner's issue as much as the youth's. Valuing a relational connection as a crucial part of the helping dynamic would stop a worker from deliberately doing anything to weaken this bond. I can hear the groans and protests about letting the youth get away with something. I want to invoke your ability to be humble, then think about the relational cost and physical effort required to implement the double chore logical consequence. Then reflect on how it will actually make the worker less able to think developmentally, because it is a very unsophisticated and self centered response, more focused on the worker's needs than the youth's. Now I can hear the whole team, perhaps including the supervisor, commenting on how I probably never worked with difficult youth, and I can assure you that I did. New or untrained workers should not try this skill of humility until

they are safe within themselves around these difficult youth, but skilled CYC practitioners can smile and see the logic in this and similar consequences that occur when we misjudge youth in our attempts to create life lessons.

## Conclusion

Effective CYC practice is both developmental and relational. Our shift in emphasis over the past 15 years has been to see youth and families as complex, competent people who do not require instruction and external control, but developmental growth and relational connection. The focus has shifted from the youth to the professional practitioner and his need to be able to join people in dark and fearful world views, then to support them to safely move toward a more satisfying destination. The concept of the reflective practitioner, open to the influence of the other person and willing to be fully present, has been developed in many different places in CYC literature. The thinking of many different writers and thinkers such as the El Salto group has resulted in a direction for new research and CYC training that will continue to expand and develop for many more years. ■

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*Editorial continued...*

African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) were released for public comment late this year. This means firstly that the PBCYC has worked to create regulations that it thinks will best serve the regulation of the child and youth care field. The field has then been given the opportunity to agree with these – or add further comments to them or propose changes. These comments will be reviewed and the regulations will then be forwarded to the SACSSP, and hopefully then taken to the Minister of Social Development – who has the power to make them into the law of our country.

If all goes well we should see the child and youth care field being statutorily regulated by early next year as the first child and youth care workers begin to register with the Council. This will see our field realise a vision that has been pursued relentlessly for over three decades! More importantly, it will usher in a new era in the development of the child and youth care field, with workers being held to standards of service

delivery, and a new statutory body also working towards the betterment of the field. Most importantly, it will help to create the kind of South African child and youth care workforce which so many have been working to bring about for many years – one that is made up of competent, dignified workers serving children professionally. This is a wonderful thing to have happened this year!

This year too saw the start of the largest initiative to develop child and youth care workers that our country – and maybe even the world – has ever seen! The Minister's initiative to scale up the Isibindi model has begun in earnest with 68 new Isibindi projects beginning in seven provinces, including a thousand new child and youth care workers so far. These child and youth care workers are taking services to some of our country's unserved and poorest areas, reaching children who seriously need protection and care given the very harsh socio economic conditions under which they live. We are privileged as a sector to be

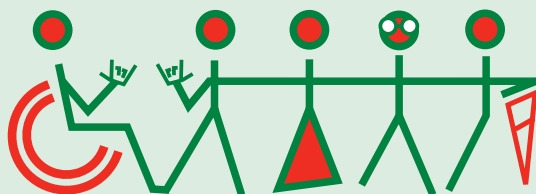
working together as government and NGOs – both NACCW and a range of implementing partners – to bring about such a significant growth in the reach of services to children in so short a time. So as we close 2013, we welcome into our community of child and youth care workers new people in towns and villages across the country, in Calvinia and Sutherland, in Memel and Steynsrus and in Begasfort. We give thanks for the many, many child and youth care workers who have delivered wonderful services to children in child and youth care centres across the country. And we look forward to a year of continued service in 2014 – knowing that we will continue to work towards improving the quality of child and youth care practice and services in the new year.

May those in our organisation who celebrate at this time of the year, have a blessed Christmas, and may we go into the new year refreshed and ready to take on the challenges that 2014 will, no doubt, bring. ■

## Disability Poem

Everything that is created by God is perfect.  
 At first, when people look at me, they wonder.  
 But I'm a perfect image of God.  
 We are sometimes discriminated against.  
 We are sometimes not counted.  
 We are sometimes hidden, not even talked about.  
 We are sometimes not important.  
 In all of these sometimes, I'm fully able and capable.  
 I am strong and courageous.  
 I can see in the dark.  
 I use my elbows while others use their hands to twist knobs.  
 I use my feet to write while others use them for walking.  
 Others hear noises of Life, I hear the inner peace of a heartbeat.  
 I have conquered fear, overcome obstacles.  
 I am me.  
 Nothing about us without us!

*By Urshula Pienaar, CYCW and disability facilitator  
 Carryou Ministry, Toekomsrus, Gauteng*



**NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US**



# Report on the march at Bisho, Provincial Department of Health

Lulamile Yedwa


This march comes from the investigative report compiled by Treatment Action Campaign in partnership with Section 27 after they noticed that the health system and services of this department were collapsing. Many attempts were made to alarm the head of the department and it is shocking to say that apparently no attempt was made to address such a crisis. The TAC and Section 27 called for this march together with all other stakeholders and the Isibindi projects were part of the campaign. We had about 40 CYCWs representing the profession from the East London and King William's Town teams.

The march was organised in a professional manner. We all gathered at the Bisho Stadium as a meeting point and were briefed before we walked about a kilometre to the provincial

office. Thousands of delegates/activists, doctors, nurses, health care workers, child and youth care workers, and labour union representatives were singing revolutionary songs and calling for action from the MEC, Mr Sicelo Gqobana. Traffic police had to block the road for marchers, and normal day to day business in that area had to come to a complete stop. I was amazed with the energy and strong will of the people.

On our arrival at the buildings, the audience was addressed by the leaders of the march and we were caught by surprise to see Mr Zwelinzima Vavi who came and stood up in support of the campaign. He was given a chance to share his frustration about service delivery in particular in relation to the Eastern Cape. He highlighted the importance of the role played by the health professionals and stakeholders

who "under difficult circumstances discharged their services for the betterment of the poor". We felt his presence and support.

Demands were made to the department by the Executive Director, Mark Heywood to come up with the best plan for this crisis and "were given 30 days to do so and the demand was for them to design a concrete, possible and realistic plan for the first time not the second time". It was made clear that if this does not happen, a huge strike would follow soon. Mr Ngxabashe, Head of Department came to receive the memoranda and promised to follow up on the matters raised in the soonest time possible. On our departure marchers were served with refreshments. 



# PLAY BALL!



Alex Botha

A look at the physicality of activities and how gender impacts on it. The activities that girls and boys take part in often differ significantly. This is in part due to the views society holds of what boys or girls “should” do or how they should behave...and how clean they need to be when doing it!

## Boys, bold and busy

Boys are generally praised for being boisterous, for playing soccer, for playing rugby, for chasing each other and wrestling each other to the ground. They are encouraged to take part in traditional activities, such as stick fighting. They climb and explore and flex their muscles. Dirt and sweat and stains are seen as part of being a boy. Boys need large open spaces for many of their activities.

In terms of health they are more likely to develop good gross motor skills such as being able to catch and throw and lift (this makes the muscles less prone to tearing or straining when doing physical work), they do weight bearing exercise (which strengthens bones and joints) and burn off calories.

However, the danger exists that certain areas of development may for some young people be under-developed. Here fine motor skill is an example. Consider such skills as the ability to handle a pen properly and write fast enough to keep up in school. Core muscle strength and supple muscles (which allows one for example to be able to sit still and not “hang” on furniture or against walls) is also a good example. Because physical activity in boys are sanctioned, a boy may overcompensate by achieving on the sports field and some teachers and parents may minimize a fine motor skill problem or core muscle issue by saying “he’s just a boy, boys can’t sit still, they want to be active”.

The fact that there are more formal play areas for boys than girls strengthens covertly the position of privilege of boys. But! Only for boys that fall in the dominant group. If one is not sporty, if one does like to read and chat and spend time day dreaming or listening to music, one has generally only one of two choices. One could join the girls in the domestic sphere or find a secluded space to hang out in. If one spends time in the domestic environment, or with the girls of one’s age, one can be seen as gay (whether one is gay or not does not matter). Conversely, one can be seen as a potential threat to the “chastity” of the girls. Should one find refuge in secluded spaces, one may be a soft target for bullying and physical violence.

## Girls, giggle and gossip

Girls on the other hand are “supposed” to be clean and soft and quiet. Many girls are not allowed to wander off far from home, or it may not be safe to do so. They tend to occupy themselves with platting hair, drawing, colouring in and reading. They may play some physical games, such as hop scotch, skipping using pantyhose, playing “3 blikkie” and hand tennis – mostly makeshift games on makeshift surfaces. They may participate in school sports, such as netball and occasionally in soccer. They often enjoy cultural dancing and singing. There are rarely formal spaces for activities for girls, other than netball courts at schools or halls at churches. However, they cannot freely access

these venues after school or when not in a formalized group.

Most girls occupy themselves with activities that develop their fine motor skills – finger grip, fine motor coordination and also core muscle development (the muscles that holds the body up in good posture). The latter is especially developed through dancing and skipping. Good fine motor skills can help them to write faster and show neater, more legible school work. This is often praised and boosts self confidence and pride. It also underscores the value system – girls are neat, obedient and quiet. The activities most girls are involved in develop concentration, which is helped by the fact that they can manage physically to sit still through classes.

However, not being physically active can lead to a tendency to pick up weight, which in turn can make physical activity harder, leading to further avoidance. Not developing a liking for physical activity usually leads to a lack of weight bearing exercise which has been proven to impact on bone density in later years. Not having sufficient muscle tone also affects balance, which together with obesity can worsen arthritis and heighten the risk of debilitating falls in older persons.

So what happens to girls who do not fit this mould? Female soccer players have been the target of homophobic attacks. Even one of our star Banyana Banyana players had been brutally raped and



murdered because she was a lesbian. This is done in the name of “corrective rape”. Many other players have been suspected of being gay, even when they are not, as they are being accused of being “too manly”. A girl who smells of sweat or is dirty from rough play is more prone to being isolated, ridiculed, shamed and punished by teachers, parents and peers.

## Sweep! Sweep!

**Chores:** no-one likes them! In child and youth care we often caution against giving children chores that are not age appropriate, but do you know the actual physiological reasons for not giving younger children these tasks? Space allows me to only highlight one universal consequence of inappropriate physical activity, which is experienced by both girls and boys, but illustrated in different activities.

Until a child has stopped growing, the ligaments that attach muscles to bones are not strongly attached to the bone yet. As the bone lengthens the ligament also stretches. The bones and ligaments do not always grow at the same rate. (This is why sports scientists advise that children under the age of 16 do not use weights in a gym.) So how does it manifest?

**Carrying siblings** - When a child carries a child, the weight to weight ratio between the one who picks up and the one that is picked up is not the same as between an adult and a toddler. Apart from the fact that children’s muscles are weaker, they also have to work harder, whilst being less securely attached to the bone.

This means that the baby is picked up and placed on a hip that, as explained above, still has ligaments that can stretch and tear. Regularly doing this can lead to the ligaments stretching

disproportionately, leading to the pelvis tilting somewhat, as well as putting stress on the cushions between the vertebra of the back. In later years this often leads to chronic back problems. It also has consequences for the baby or toddler being picked up. The child is often picked up by one arm, which puts strain not only on the muscles, but can also pull the arm out of the socket, which can lead to a lot of pain.

**Chopping wood** – children are usually given the same axe to use as adults. In the same way as a child picking up a child, muscles and ligaments are put under much more strain than if the same action was performed by an adult. A child has less control over an axe than an adult. This increases the risk of hurting muscles and ligaments if the axe is swung incorrectly or lands skew.

## So what can we do?

Remember the holistic approach:

### Physical level

We need to monitor children’s development in terms of muscle tone (how much strength they have when resisting pressure eg. when pushing, punching or kicking against your hands), fine motor skills (pencil grip, picking up small objects, colouring or cutting along a line), gross motor skills (how high can they jump, how fast can they run) and core muscle strength (can they stand on one foot, balance on a brick or stone, stand or sit up straight for a reasonable period of time)

### Sociopolitical level

We need to become aware of the subtle messages our environment sends children and youth – does it provide an equal amount of space for both girls and boys? Does it provide for variety of activities, whether a child is active or more reserved? Does it provide safety for and inclusion of non-dominant groups,

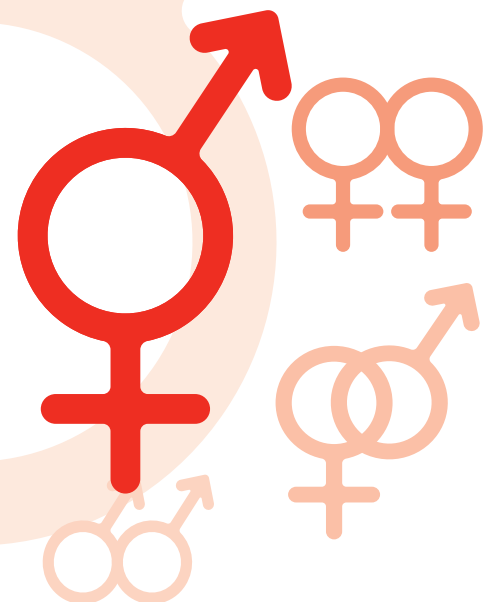
such as children with special needs, or children with a different sexual or gender orientation, or children that do not fit the norm for their gender?

## Align your actions and your words

We need to teach children acceptance of and the importance of diversity through our actions. Who do you focus most of your attention on? Who do you spend the most time with? Who are given praise or who do you interact with in terms of conversation and expressing interest in what they are doing?

We need to use inclusive language. Do you actively discourage and reprimand name calling and joking at the expense of others? Do you discuss the pro’s and con’s of different activities or ways of being? Do you teach children better words for things or ways of being? It is one thing to try to extinguish hurtful language, but one also have to teach appropriate alternatives and give examples of how to look at things differently.

Gender is a helpful lens that enables us to see the gaps, the pitfalls, in our physical and social environments. However, it can also help us to create a better physical and sociopolitical environment for everyone. ■





## FULL TRANSCRIPT: President Obama's speech on the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington



President Obama delivered the following remarks at the "Let Freedom Ring" ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington on Aug. 28, 2013, at the Lincoln Memorial

**PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA:** To the King family, who have sacrificed and inspired so much, to President Clinton, President Carter, Vice President Biden, Jill, fellow Americans, five decades ago today, Americans came to this honored place to lay claim to a promise made at our founding.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In 1963, almost 200 years after those words were set to paper, a full century after a great war was fought and emancipation proclaimed, that promise, those truths remained unmet. And so they came by the thousands, from every corner of our country -- men and women, young and old, blacks who longed for freedom and whites who could no longer accept freedom

for themselves while witnessing the subjugation of others. Across the land, congregations sent them off with food and with prayer. In the middle of the night, entire blocks of Harlem came out to wish them well.

With the few dollars they scrimped from their labor, some bought tickets and boarded buses, even if they couldn't always sit where they wanted to sit. Those with less money hitchhiked, or walked. They were seamstresses, and steelworkers, and students, and teachers, maids and pullman porters. They shared simple meals and bunked together on floors.

And then, on a hot summer day, they assembled here, in our nation's capital, under the shadow of the great emancipator, to offer testimony of injustice, to petition their government for redress and to awaken America's long-slumbering conscience.

We rightly and best remember Dr. King's soaring oratory that day, how he gave mighty voice to the quiet hopes of millions, how he offered a salvation path for oppressed and oppressors alike. His words belong to the ages, possessing a power and prophecy unmatched in our time.

But we would do well to recall that day itself also belonged to those ordinary people whose names never appeared in the history books, never got on TV. Many had gone to segregated schools and sat at segregated lunch counters, had lived in towns where they couldn't vote, in cities where their votes didn't matter. There were couples in love who couldn't marry, soldiers who fought for freedom abroad that they found denied to them at home. They had seen loved ones beaten and children fire-hosed. And they had every reason to lash out in anger or resign themselves to a bitter fate.



And yet they chose a different path. In the face of hatred, they prayed for their tormentors. In the face of violence, they stood up and sat in with the moral force of nonviolence. Willingly, they went to jail to protest unjust laws, their cells swelling with the sound of freedom songs. A lifetime of indignities had taught them that no man can take away the dignity and grace that God grants us. They had learned through hard experience what Frederick Douglas once taught: that freedom is not given; it must be won through struggle and discipline, persistence and faith. That was the spirit they brought here that day.

That was the spirit young people like John Lewis brought that day. That was

the spirit that they carried with them like a torch back to their cities and their neighborhoods, that steady flame of conscience and courage that would sustain them through the campaigns to come, through boycotts and voter registration drives and smaller marches, far from the spotlight, through the loss of four little girls in Birmingham, the carnage of Edmund Pettus Bridge and the agony of Dallas, California, Memphis. Through setbacks and heartbreaks and gnawing doubt, that flame of justice flickered and never died. And because they kept marching, America changed. Because they marched, the civil rights law was passed. Because they marched, the voting rights law was signed. Because they marched, doors of opportunity

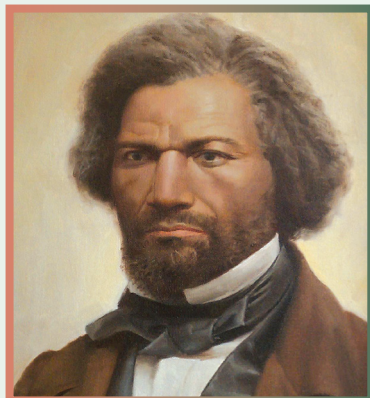
and education swung open so their daughters and sons could finally imagine a life for themselves beyond washing somebody else's laundry or shining somebody else's shoes. Because they marched, city councils changed and state legislatures changed and Congress changed and, yes, eventually the White House changed.

Because they marched, America became more free and more fair, not just for African-Americans but for women and Latinos, Asians and Native Americans, for Catholics, Jews and Muslims, for gays, for Americans with disabilities.

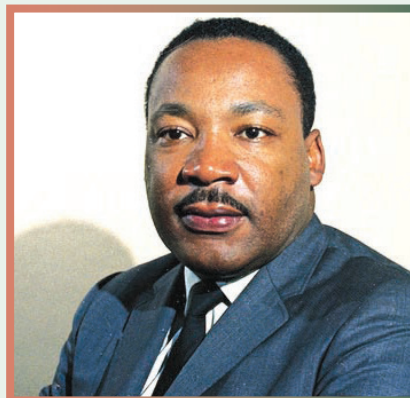
America changed for you and for me. 



Obama awards John Lewis with The Presidential Medal of Freedom;



Frederick Douglass was an African-American social reformer, orator, writer and statesman. After escaping from slavery, he became a leader of the abolitionist movement, gaining note for his dazzling oratory and incisive antislavery writing



Martin Luther King, Jr. was an American clergyman, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience.



Rosa Louise McCauley Parks was an African-American civil rights activist, whom the U.S. Congress called "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement".







# How to Present Your Visuals

We all know about 'death by PowerPoint', however it is not always the slide that must take the blame, rather how we present them. Here are a few tips to get your message across.

## 1. Where to stand

As we read from left to right, our eye muscles are trained to automatically move back to the left side of the page after completing a row. If we then stand on the right hand side of the screen (in terms of the audience), we are causing them to strain their eye muscles. This forces them to either want to look at the screen or look away from the presenter and lose focus on what the presenter is saying. So, to maintain control and assist in getting the message across, stand on the left side of the screen (as viewed from the audience).

## 2. Prompt from the screen

When you wish to get the audiences' attention back to the screen, gesture with your left hand towards the screen. This is particularly important when you present with an electronic presenter or remote mouse as when the audiences' attention is on you, they may not be aware that you have moved on to another slide. This creates a trust in you.

## 3. Don't read off the screen

It is only when you have not prepared or rehearsed thoroughly that you find that you need to keep reading off the screen. Do not do what the audience is capable of doing. Reading is not presenting. You must know

the content of your presentation to be able to speak around the visuals. One or two words in bullet point form together with a visual is acceptable. The audience want to know 'what is the story behind the bullet point'.

## 4. Avoid lasers

Slides should be easy enough to read and understandable enough to pick up the message in just a few seconds. If you require a pointer to highlight certain information on the slide, then it means that your slide is too busy and complicated. Look for other means to simplify what it is you wish to address.

## 5. Close laptop

When presenting with your laptop in front of you, either close the laptop or switch off the laptop screen. When you need to prompt, use the main screen as this is the reference point for the audience. By prompting from the main screen, you are staying in touch with the audience. The only time when you may prompt from the laptop screen, is when your image is projected on large monitors.

## 6. Limit animation

Any movement of any kind becomes a distraction for the audience; your own unnecessary pacing, distracting hand gestures, members of the audience walking in and out of the auditorium

or even your slide animation! Usually there is no need to have information on your slides entering and exiting with movement. These also cause a distraction. Rather let them just 'appear'. You want to keep the attention on you, not on the slide. They create a relationship with you - not your slides.

## 7. Hold in your right hand

As we have already discussed, you will be standing on the right hand side (your right) of the screen. To gesture from the screen you will use your left arm. So, to prevent any further distractions, hold any item in your right hand - whether you are using a microphone, a prompt card, a remote mouse, etc. (obviously not all at once). You want to prevent any of these items from 'flying' around the room and becoming a distraction.

## 8. Eye contact

The slide should have more visuals than words, so to view what is being projected, make a quick glance at the screen and then back to the audience as quickly as possible. It is also for this reason that your laptop screen should be switched off - to prevent you from reading off the laptop and not looking at the audience.

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# EVERY THING IS POSSIBLE

## NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

By Bandlakazi Mazongolo



My name is Bandlakazi Mazongolo, I am 35 years of age. Presently I am an Isibindi mentor based in the NACCW Cape Town office. I am the third born of five children. I started attending school and matriculated in the Eastern Cape. As I grew up I had an ambition to become a social worker, however due to lack of financial support I was unable to study further since my mother who brought us up single handedly was unemployed and could thus not afford to pay for my studies.

After matriculating I moved to Western Cape (Cape Town) where I fell under pressure and nearly lost my focus

of becoming a social worker. I then moved to Saldanha Bay to start a new life. There I learned about the Isibindi project. Desperate to study and to be financially independent, I then applied, and after being shortlisted and interviewed I started my training and working as a learner child and youth care worker in April 2006. In September of that year my leadership skills were identified by my mentor and I was then sent to the consultative supervision training. This was followed by the training of the trainers training, and followed by the disability facilitator's training. When the disability program was initiated in the Isibindi project in 2011 I started working as both project manager and disability facilitator and the rest is history! Seeing the difference I brought to the lives of orphans, families and vulnerable children as a child and youth care worker I realized that this is what I wanted to do. I engaged with different stakeholders within the child and youth care fraternity and represented the program in different forums. I attended government functions including the Minister of Social Development's budget speech in

2012 and 2013. Over and the above all the highlights of my career as a child and youth care worker was when I represented the organization in hosting and welcoming American President Barack Obama during his South African visit.

I was as humbled by this experience as it did not only bring joy and happiness on that occasion. I still relive the experience – the security arrangements (which were very tight), the media coverage which resembled a movie scene, and the humane, humble approach with which the man Barack Obama carried himself and accepted me and others. It more than humbled me.

My message to my colleagues, young people and families is that, irrespective of your background, with the necessary support, encouragement from mentors, family and friends, and with your own commitment you will reach your goal you reach great heights! I would like to acknowledge my family, former trainers, mentors, NACCW staff, colleagues and friends, since without your support I would not have reached this milestone.



# Consultation and Participation of Children

## A Complex Process Not to be Undertaken Thoughtlessly

Meet Cassandra, 16 years old, placed 2011 at Ons Plek Projects. Cassandra was 15 years old when she began sleeping out overnight (without parental permission) at friends houses, taking drugs, going to parties and bunking school. Her parents were deeply concerned, trying one strategy after another to gain control over her destructive behaviour. They listened to her problems, they tried imposing punishments, and they tried bribing her with promises of rewards for changed behaviour. All to no avail! Matters came to a head when Cassandra was suspended from school for consistent bunking. A social worker from DSD was called in. Cassandra blamed her parents claiming physical and verbal abuse of her as being the cause of her behaviour. No evidence could be found to support her allegations. The social worker approached Ons Plek CCYC for placement to contain Cassandra.

During the pre-admission interview with parents, Cassandra and the designated social worker Ons Plek explained our method of working. We named two basic tenants of our methods: counselling to provide the child with support; and the provision of rules and consequences to provide structure and encourage self-responsibility. A specific measure in her case was that she would attend our internal bridging school until such time as her behaviour showed she could be trusted to resume going to school on her own.

As her behaviour had been going on for a year it would take time to change. The parents were prepared by us for this and they agreed to our rules for Cassandra. Cassandra settled in immediately. She was a strong confident girl, who was experienced as manipulative, often rude and was often on consequences for breaking the rules.

The parents, who were very concerned parents, constantly questioned our every action on her behalf or appealed to the designated social worker to intervene. However, after each panel discussion was held they agreed that the consequences were reasonable. For example, if she left bridging school class for an hour she would have to complete that hour in the afternoon as well as do homework. If she repeatedly skipped an hour of the class the one hour would increase to two hours plus homework. By knowing the consequence in advance she was empowered to choose whether to sit in school with everyone else or do extra work. She could not avoid the work altogether.

After a month her parents could no longer contain their worry about Cassandra missing school. They demanded that she be sent back to school. Ons Plek reminded them that her return to school was our permanent goal. School life demands fitting into a structure and being motivated to use the opportunity. She was not demonstrating this at Ons Plek in any way. If we took

the risk of returning her to school before she showed any change she would probably not attend school. She had already shown her parents that prior to admission she had bunked – even when her parents drove her to school. The reasons for her being put in care had not changed and the power to change lay in her own hands. As an intelligent child she clearly understood, at age 16 that her return was up to her. It was also pointed out that the parents' constant efforts to "protect" their child from any consequences of her behaviour, including intervening in the school and in relation to our approach, was not conducive to change. They were preventing her from learning to take responsibility.

Cassandra's mother arrived unannounced one day to collect both Cassandra and her belongings, stating that the DSD social worker sanctioned this. A telephone call to the designated social worker confirmed this, saying the child and parents wanted her home! After only one month's treatment for an entrenched behavioural problem the designated social worker discharged the child!

- No change had occurred in the behaviour of child or parents;
- No consultation had taken place between so called equal team members i.e. external social worker and internal treatment team;



- The child's wish to return home, the parents complaints took precedence over the Act which had removed her.

### How did this happen? What did the social worker tell the court?

A study of 20 children recently placed at Ons Plek Projects shows 70% were removed mid-stream during the stabilisation treatment program. All were placed at Ons Plek to stabilise long term anti-social and uncontrollable behaviour which required 4 – 8 months treatment. All received a comprehensive program of counselling to treat emotional causes of such behaviour; programmes to accept normal societal limits and discipline; schooling either at our bridging school or formal school; and reunification with family. Some of the children were adept at misusing the protection methods for children against secondary abuse set in place in the Act. They made false allegations against staff to gullible (or scared or inexperienced perhaps) external social workers who swooped down, without giving us a chance to investigate, and removed the children. We had to laugh when a DSD social worker fetched a child who claimed staff abuse, did not wait for an investigation which would take 4 hours and against our advice, delivered her to an emergency placement. On their arrival she was told by the child "Oh this place isn't nicer than Ons

Plek. I was lying about Ons Plek staff! Take me back!" Good quick action by external social worker! Wrong action!

It is good to have a mechanism for a child to appeal to an outside person.

It is very harmful when the child is moved without due consideration of the viewpoint of caregivers who are registered and approved because:

- The child concludes that they are all powerful;
- CYCC staff are rendered hopeless to enforce any discipline;
- The CYCC becomes ungovernable and chaotic;
- The lives of staff are further put at risk with children, who were already uncontrollable and often violent, realising that they only have to complain and they will be believed over and above the staff and they will not be held accountable.

CCYC Centres often have more professional knowledge about a child and his family than an external social worker who has done a brief investigation and a few interviews with child and family during the child's stay in the Centre. Yet the Centre interacts with the child 24/7, sees the child interact with peers, staff, parents, schools etc and sees or speaks on the phone to parents quite often to arrange home visits. The Act skews decision making power towards the external social worker who very, very often has limited knowledge of the case. The logic is probably that the CYCC may have a vested interest in keeping the child longer than necessary. The Act does not take into account that external social workers have vested interests in avoiding work with angry parents, getting the case off their books or may be duped by their very limited interactions with parents. The Act contradicts itself when it

demands professional standards and treatment of CCYC's but places all the effective power in the hands of the external social worker.

The term "consult the child" is and always has been a practice of good social workers. Consult the child means, consult and take into account the child's views. It does not mean "Do as the child says". The child is still a child, not always capable of making decisions in her best interest. Sometimes making decisions in a child's best interests is not what the child wants and not what the parent wants. This may lead to professionals being sued. We are the professionals who bear the brunt of this destructiveness. There is nothing new about this. If we bow to parents and children's unreasonable pressure we could be contravening the Act. The Act exists precisely because parents do not always act in their children's best interests.

### Amendments To The Act

The Act must be amended so that the views of the CYCC are held in esteem every time a placement is varied, whether to another placement or to place the child at home. At present the designated social worker – many of whom know the child and family less well than the CYCC – chooses whether she will include information from the panel discussion and CYCC's report. At the very least the CYCC's should submit a written recommendation to the magistrate and not only to the social worker. In cases where the CYCC disagrees with the external social worker, a staff member must be present in court. Only then can a magistrate make a considered decision with all the facts before him/her. ■

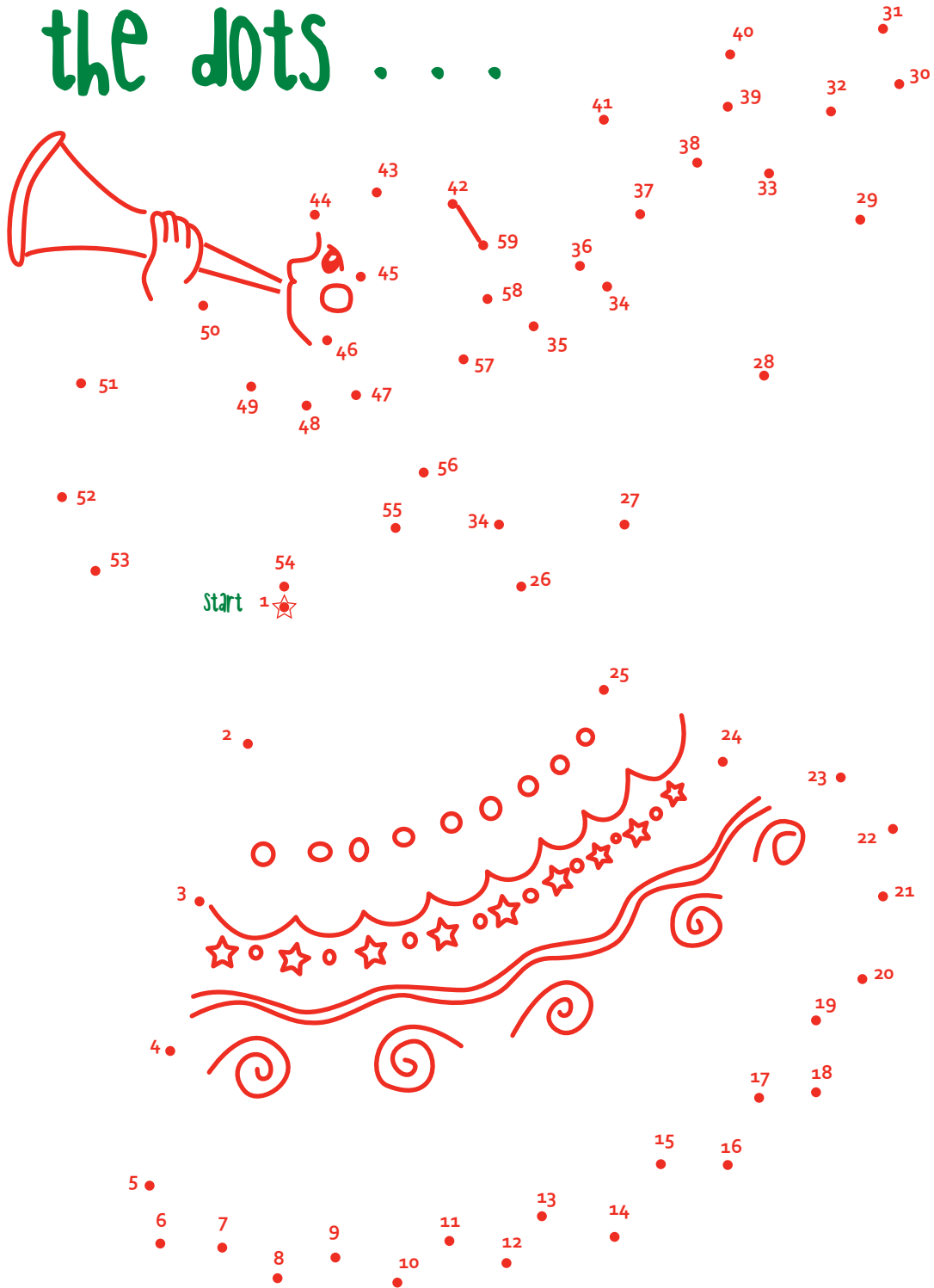


# Activities



These activities bring you cost effective games that require little or no resources except fun and imagination

## Join the dots . . .





# CHRISTMAS TREE MAZE

Can you find your way from the base of the Christmas tree to the star?

Once you find your way to the star, you may colour in and decorate your Christmas tree.



# Are children's rights prioritised at a time of budget cuts? Assessing the adequacy of the 2013/14 social development budgets for funding of Children's Act services

Debbie Budlender and Paula Proudlock

## SUMMARY

For the detailed paper please see [www.ci.org.za](http://www.ci.org.za) under the Children's Act link or contact [debbie.budlender@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.budlender@gmail.com) or [paula.proudlock@uct.ac.za](mailto:paula.proudlock@uct.ac.za)

### Introduction

The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 is South Africa's primary law for realising children's constitutional rights to care, protection and social services. It does this by obliging the provincial MECs for Social Development to provide, fund and regulate a range of social welfare services for children and their families.

These services include:

- Partial care and early childhood development programmes
- Drop-in centres
- Prevention and early intervention programmes
- Protection services
- Foster care placement and supervision
- Adoption placement
- Child and youth care centres.

One way of assessing government's progress in implementing the Act is to monitor the budget that is allocated for the services listed above. This study analyses the budget sub-programmes within the provincial social development budgets that most closely match the services listed in the Children's Act, namely child care and protection, HIV/AIDS, and family care and support. Table 1 below indicates what type of Children's Act services are most likely to be funded under these budget sub-programmes.

Table 1 : Location of Children's Act services within budget sub-programmes

Budget sub-programme	Services that are likely to be funded under this sub-programme
Child care and protection	Partial care, early childhood development (ECD), protection services, some prevention and early intervention services, foster care placement and supervision, adoption, temporary safe care, child and youth care centres.
HIV/AIDS	Some prevention and early intervention services such as home and community based care and other types of support programmes for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), and drop-in centres.
Family care and support	Some prevention and early intervention programmes especially child and family counseling, family mediation services, family preservation and parenting skills programmes.

We also examine the sub-programme professional and administrative support. Four of the provinces (Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng and North West) appear to locate most of the relevant staff salaries within the separate service delivery sub-programmes listed in table 1 above, while five (KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga Northern Cape, Western Cape) appear to locate most of their social welfare services staff salaries in the professional and administrative support sub-programme.

On an annual basis each province receives a portion (called the provincial equitable share) of the revenue collected at a national level by the South African Revenue Service (SARS). This money

accounts for more than nine-tenths of the province's revenue. In theory, the provincial legislatures make the final decision over how this money is allocated between the provincial departments. However, in practice the decisions are made by the provincial executives.

National government can influence how the provinces allocate the budget between their departments by passing national laws such as the South African Schools Act, National Health Act and the Children's Act which place mandates on the provinces to provide and fund education, health and social welfare services respectively. National government can also influence the level



of funding by prescribing norms and standards which specify the quality and quantity of the services that must be provided.

Provinces can also receive revenue in the form of conditional grants. This money is channelled through national departments and can only be used for the purpose for which it is given. For example, in 2013/14 some provinces receive a conditional grant for social sector expanded public works (EPWP).

National government can also provide additional funds within the equitable share for specific sector priorities. These sector priorities are negotiated and agreed upon between the Minister of Finance, the national Minister for Social Development and provincial MECs for Social Development in co-operative government forums such as MINMEC, the Budget Council and Budget Forum. Because this additional money is part of the provincial equitable share, provinces can decide how they will spend it. However, there is an expectation that provinces will use the money for the agreed purposes due to the constitutional and statutory principles of co-operative governance.

In this year's analysis we pay special attention to these additional allocations. They include:

- R650 million in 2013/14 and R700 million in 2014/15 for Isibindi and ECD;
- R938 million over the three years of the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) of 2013/14 to 2015/16 for the employment of social work graduates; and
- R600 million over the three years of the MTEF of 2013/14 to 2015/ for non-profit organisations (NPOs).

The detailed longer paper (available on [www.ci.org.za](http://www.ci.org.za)) is divided into four sections:

(1) The first part explains what the Children's Act says in terms of services that government is required to provide and its obligations in terms of funding. It also describes the methodology used for our analysis.

(2) The second section analyses the budget sub-programmes of the provincial departments of social development that are most relevant for implementation of the Children's Act. It includes a comparison of the total allocations for these sub-programmes with the estimates produced in the costing exercise of the Children's Bill. It also includes discussion of under spending. Further, it includes an assessment of the extent to which the provincial departments are allocating all the available (including "additional") funds provided this year for children's services.

(3) The third section discusses five special focus areas, namely government personnel, NPO transfers, Isibindi, ECD, and reform schools and schools of industry.

(4) The final section provides the key conclusions based on the analysis.

**The summary that follows highlights some key points from the longer paper.**

## Key points for noting in this year's paper

This is our seventh annual analysis of the budget available for implementing the Children's Act. Key points that stand

out as noteworthy in this year's analysis include the following:

### Constrained fiscal environment requires cuts to budget "baselines"

The provincial budgets tabled in 2013 must be understood against the background of a constrained fiscal environment. The budget guidelines provided to provinces in August 2012 outlined a series of expectations as to how national and provincial agencies should plan their budgets for the 2013/14 MTEF to help cope with the global economic and financial crisis. All agencies were told to reduce their budget "baselines" – i.e. the estimates for these years reflected in the 2012 budget books – by 1% for 2013/14, 2% for 2014/15, and 3% for 2015/16. The intention was that government would then use the amounts "saved" to fund infrastructure projects as well as the higher-than-expected increases in government salaries agreed to in the 2012 salary negotiations, without requiring an increase in the size of the overall budget.

### Additional allocations for sector priorities enable average real growth for children's services

The first four numeric columns of Table 2 show the amounts allocated in each province for the three relevant sub-programmes and relevant staff for 2012/13 and the three years of the MTEF. The final four shaded columns show the real increase for each year of the MTEF and averaged over the three years.

Table 2 Total allocations for Children's Act services

	Budget allocations				Annual real % increase			
	2012/13 Adjusted	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/-14	2014/-15	2015/-16	3-yr average
Eastern Cape	454 971	750 416	784 324	850 646	56%	-1%	3%	17%
Free State	384 742	413 932	425 927	433 630	2%	-2%	-3%	-1%
Gauteng	1 327 428	1 604 447	2 012 305	2 334 488	14%	19%	11%	15%
KwaZulu- Natal	739 075	890 794	948 170	1 025 415	14%	1%	3%	6%
Limpopo	457 758	496 673	526 944	559 752	2%	1%	1%	1%
Mpumalanga	285 148	413 428	478 871	516 350	37%	10%	3%	16%
Northern Cape	141 346	196 907	207 749	220 946	32%	0%	1%	10%
North West	316 022	342 284	365 709	392 910	2%	1%	2%	2%
Western Cape	524 729	605 088	668 680	720 201	9%	5%	3%	5%
Total	4 631 220	5 713 967	6 418 679	7 054 338	17%	7%	5%	9%

Despite the general requirement for budget reductions, when looking at all the provinces' budgets combined, the allocation to children's welfare services has not been reduced. Instead the combined figure shows substantial real budget growth i.e. the combined total is bigger even after adjusting for inflation. The last column in table 2 below shows that for all provinces combined the allocations for Children's Act services increase by a real annual average of 9% over the three years of the MTEF. This annual average reflects a cross-province average increase of 17% between 2012/13 and 2013/14, followed

by lower real increases of 7% and 5% respectively for the outer two years of the MTEF. The increases are mainly due to the additional allocations for the agreed priority areas.

However there is great variation across the provinces. Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Northern Cape all reflect double-digit real average annual increases over the MTEF period. In contrast, Free State records an average real decrease of -1%, Limpopo has a real average increase of only 1% and in North West the average increase is only 2%. These three provinces show little evidence of intention to improve

services for children. It is difficult to understand how they decided on these low allocations given all the additional allocations for Children's Act-related services.

**ECD, Isibindi, NPOs and social work graduates prioritised for additional allocations**

Table 3 shows the extra amount that would have been allocated by the Division of Revenue Act 2013 to each province for each of the agreed priorities.

Table 3 Provincial amounts of additional equitable share allocations for 2013/14 (R000)

Province	ECD & Isibindi	NPOs	Social work graduates	Victim empowerment	Total
Eastern Cape	96 850	14 900	17 880	5 364	134 994
Free State	38 350	5 900	7 080	2 124	53 454
Gauteng	118 300	18 200	21 840	6 552	164 892
KwaZulu-Natal	141 050	21 700	26 040	7 812	196 602
Limpopo	79 950	12 300	14 760	4 428	111 438
Mpumalanga	52 650	8 100	9 720	2 916	73 386
Northern Cape	17 550	2 700	3 240	972	24 462
North West	43 550	6 700	8 040	2 412	60 702
Western Cape	61 750	9 500	11 400	3 420	86 070
Total	R650 000	R100 000	R120 000	R36 000	R786 000





## Five provinces are not using all their available funding for Children's Act services

In the longer paper we compare the actual allocations for Children's Act services for 2013/14 with the funds available. Funds available include the normal provincial equitable share allocation plus the additional allocations.

While there are clear increases in all the targeted areas when all provinces are combined and when the allocations are compared with the allocations for these areas predicted in the 2012 budget books, our assessment suggests that provinces are not always using the full available and additional allocations. Limpopo is the worst performer on this measure allocating only 85% of the funds available, and North West (88%), Free State (91%), KwaZulu-Natal (92%) and Western Cape (95%) also appear to be under-utilising the available and additional funds. The Free State's under-usage of R41 million of its available funding is particularly concerning given the provincial department's argument in the NAWONGO court case that it does not have sufficient budget to adequately fund NPOs. In contrast, some provinces have topped up the additional allocations from own funds.

Overall, for the nine provinces combined, the combined allocations suggest that the difference between the available money and actual allocations was less than 1%, with the actual allocations less than the available money. The fact that allocations were less than the available money is cause for concern in a context where substantial growth in budgets and services is required to address the large gap between the number of vulnerable children currently reached and the number in need of services. (See page

42 of the longer paper for more details on each province's use of available and additional funds)

## Child care and protection sub-programme grows by 30%

The earmarked additional allocations to the provincial equitable share for ECD and Isibindi, NPOs and social work graduates helped ensure that the main budget sub-programme housing Children's Act services – child care and protection – was able to grow at a cross-provincial real average of 30% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. Overall, the average annual increase over the three years of the MTEF is 14%. This is double the average annual increase recorded for the 2012 MTEF. However, the 2013/14 average growth masks substantial variation between the provinces with Limpopo and Free State showing a -5% decrease and a low 1% growth respectively versus Eastern Cape's high 171% and Northern Cape's 62%.

## Two more provinces shift staff salaries into service delivery sub-programmes

The large increase for Eastern Cape mentioned above is mainly due to the shifting of government staff salaries from the professional and administrative sub-programme to the child care and protection sub-programme. North West confirms that their high increase is also partly explained by the shifting of staff from the professional and administrative support sub-programme. Eastern Cape and North West have now joined the Free State and Gauteng in housing most of their government personnel salaries under the service delivery sub-programmes instead of in the professional and administrative support sub-programme. For the North West it appears as if the shift started in

mid-2012/13 while for the Eastern Cape it started at the beginning of 2013/14. Housing the relevant staff salaries in the service delivery sub-programmes, instead of clustering them all together in one administrative sub-programme, makes it clear how much government is spending on salaries for a particular service. The five remaining provinces still have to make this shift.

## Which services are being prioritised within the child care and protection sub-programme?

The allocations for child and youth care centres account for a relatively small proportion of the child care and protection sub-programme's budget despite the fact that they are a "must provide" service. For example, in North West the allocation for children's homes amounts to 19% of the NPO transfers in this sub-programme, in Free State for 9% of the NPO transfers and in Northern Cape for 7%. This can be compared to the allocations for transfers to NPOs for ECD in these same provinces which account for 55%, 72% and 72% respectively. Given that the cost per child is much lower for ECD than for child and youth care centres, this comparison gives a clear indication that government is prioritising ECD.

However, while ECD has been prioritised when compared to other services, and is targeted through an additional allocation, this year's analysis shows that ECD does somewhat less well than last year in some provinces. For example, several of the provinces will still not have reached the amount of R15 per child per day by 2013/14. Further, not all provinces will be increasing the number of children reached by ECD services. It is also not clear from the narratives whether all will be funding the norm of 264 days per year. (See page 56 of the longer paper for more details on ECD.)

Gauteng has allocated its additional funds for employment of social work graduates to its child care and protection sub-programme to assist in reducing the foster care backlog. The province acknowledges that while foster care placements are the “first choice” for alternative care for children in need, the court process is lengthy and the requirement for continuous monitoring by social workers is onerous. Despite increasing staff to address the foster care backlog in 2013/14, Gauteng’s plans to make fewer foster care placements in 2013/14 than achieved in 2012/13. In contrast, KwaZulu-Natal plans 22 462 foster care placements for 2013/14. This represents four times as many placements in 2013/14 as in 2012/13 (for which they report 5 827 placements). Either there is a mistake in KwaZulu-Natal’s projections or they are planning a massive foster care placement drive using a new approach. (See page 22 of the longer paper for more details on foster care.)

### Ups and downs for OVC support programmes

The HIV and AIDS sub-programme does not fare well. It shows a low cross-provincial real increase of only 1% for 2013/14 and a -1% average annual decrease across the MTEF. Services that fall under this sub-programme are likely to include some prevention and early intervention services and, in particular, home- and community-based care and other support programmes for OVC. The decreases are especially worrying at a time when funding from the US Presidents Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has been drastically decreased and the number of orphans is increasing each year.

There are substantial variations across the provinces in the trends for allocations to the HIV and AIDS sub-programme. At the extremes, Mpumalanga shows a 47% increase versus North West’s -14% decrease. The unusually large increase in Mpumalanga is explained by the province housing the Isibindi allocations in this programme.

In 2012 government announced that it would embark on a five-year programme in which 10 000 community-based workers would be employed so as to provide prevention, early intervention and protection services to approximately two million orphaned and vulnerable children across the nine provinces. This would be done through capacity building of 400 or more NPO partners who would implement NACCW’s Isibindi model. The increased additional funding for the Isibindi rollout in the 2013 and 2014 budgets kick starts this planned Isibindi rollout. However the exact amount of the additional allocations is not identifiable in the budgets as the additional allocations for Isibindi and ECD were combined.

Comparisons across provinces are also difficult because provinces have housed Isibindi in two different sub-programmes. The majority have housed it in child care and protection while some, including KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga, have located it in HIV/AIDS. It is therefore not possible to assess whether sufficient budget has been allocated to Isibindi to enable the targets to be met.

Rollout of Isibindi is a very welcome move as it is a quality and cost-effective programme. However, it is important to guard against provinces using the additional allocations for Isibindi to justify cutting back of funding for other

well-functioning community-based initiatives that support OVC. This is of especial concern given the cut-backs in funding from PEPFAR to these projects and the fact that not all provinces receive and use the EPWP social sector incentive conditional grant for funding of home- and community-based services.

### What is happening with funding for family support?

The care and support to families sub-programme shows a real increase of 8% in 2013/14 when analysed across all nine provinces. Further smaller real increases are recorded for the following two years, giving an average annual real increase of 4%. This sub-programme includes allocations for some of the programmes listed as prevention and early intervention services in the Children’s Act, in particular child and family counselling, parenting skills programmes and family preservation services.

At first glance, this is a positive picture for a sub-programme that has always been relatively neglected. However, as with the other service delivery sub-programmes the cross-provincial average masks substantial variation across the provinces. While -19% and -10% decreases are planned for Eastern Cape and Western Cape respectively, Northern Cape and Mpumalanga plan increases of 173% and 95% respectively in 2013/14. For Mpumalanga, the annual real increase is 67%. However, in absolute terms, this reflects an increase from a budget of R2 million in 2012/13 to only R11 million in 2015/16. This example illustrates the historically low funding base for sub-programme and puts these seemingly large increases into perspective.





## Funding the public sector wage bill and absorbing social work graduates

The 2012 public sector wage agreement provided for a 7% increase in salaries (as against the 5,9% inflation rate at that time) for 2012, and an annual increase equivalent to the average projected consumer price inflation plus 1% for each of the next two years. The agreement also provided for an increase in the housing allowance from R800 to R900 per month, and increases in other benefits such as those relating to long service, night shift work, improved qualifications and others. These above-inflation increases explain why provinces were advised by National Treasury to use higher inflation rates for personnel than for other cost areas.

Only five provinces provide information on numbers of personnel in the social welfare programme that houses the Children's Act-related sub-programmes. Of the five provinces, all but Northern Cape have substantially larger social welfare staff numbers for 2013/14 in this year's budget book than they had predicted for 2013/14 in the 2012 budget book. In addition, all five of the provinces record an average annual increase in staff numbers over the MTEF period. In Western Cape the average increase is 9%. In Limpopo it is a massive 17%. The increases presumably reflect, at least in part, the additional allocations for employment of social work graduates.

For 2013/14 the national department of social development has allocated R250 million for social work bursaries. This is R6 million less, in nominal terms, than allocated in 2012/13. With increases in student fees, this will thus provide for fewer students than previously. In

2012/13 a total of 6 337 social work students were sponsored. By 2015/16 the number will have dropped to 4 248. The social work qualification spans four years and there are therefore fewer graduates per year than the total sponsored students per year. The bursary allocations will result in an annual average of 1 760 new social work graduates over the next four years.

Last year we noted that while the bursary allocations provided for full cost bursaries, no budget was allocated for employment of the social workers after they graduate despite the fact that one

of the conditions of the bursaries was that graduates work for government for a period after qualifying. The Minister of Finance announced in the 2013 budget speech that additional funds would be allocated through the equitable share for employment of graduates. The amounts concerned amount to R120 million in 2013/14, R305 million 2014/15 and R513 million in 2015/16. Many provinces comment on this new funding and how it will be used to "absorb" graduates. Most intend to employ all the graduates themselves under the public service, while some intend to fund NPOs to absorb some of the graduates on lower salaries than required within the public service. (See page 45 of the longer paper for more information on each provinces plans for absorbing the graduates.)

## Money meant for NPOs diverted to cover government wage bills

Several of the provinces intend to use some or all of the additional money provided for NPOs on their internal

systems for "monitoring and support" to NPOs rather than for monetary transfers to the NPOs. For example, the Eastern Cape intends to use the additional money meant for NPOs to train NPOs on reporting, governance, administration and financial management. Northern Cape also intends to use the funds for improved reporting by and monitoring of NPOs. This was not the intention behind the additional allocation for NPOs which can be gauged from the clear wording in the national budget documents stating that the "additional funding" for NPOs is "to offset reductions in donor funding".

The situation in respect of NPO funding is one of the areas of most serious concern. Increases in these transfers are much smaller than one would have expected given that most of the additions to the equitable share should have translated into increases in NPO funding. KwaZulu- Natal is explicit about using NPO transfers as a cushion to absorb the budget cuts required by the budget guidelines. Eastern Cape also has a large cut in NPO transfers.

Table 4 shows that the overall percentage of the social welfare budget allocated for transfers to NPOs increases from 47% in 2012/13 to 49% in 2013/14. Despite the additional money that will be available in the outer years of the MTEF, the percentage drops to 48,7% in 2015/16. Further, even the 2013/14 percentage is less than that for all the years prior to 2012/13. These patterns are especially perturbing in a situation of constrained budgets because NPOs are widely acknowledged to provide services at a much lower cost than government.

**Table 4 NPO transfers as a percentage of social welfare programme budget**

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 adjusted	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Eastern Cape	48.4%	43.3%	37.5%	35.0%	36.8%	34.8%	33.3%
Free State	60.3%	62.4%	59.6%	58.3%	56.0%	55.7%	54.9%
Gauteng	57.1%	62.0%	60.6%	60.7%	65.1%	60.4%	60.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	42.9%	45.7%	51.6%	35.7%	37.0%	36.6%	35.0%
Limpopo	45.2%	44.3%	48.4%	43.5%	47.4%	47.0%	46.8%
Mpumalanga	54.9%	57.6%	56.9%	45.3%	50.7%	55.5%	56.4%
Northern Cape	32.2%	34.5%	37.3%	37.3%	38.0%	37.4%	37.4%
North West	31.5%	30.5%	26.7%	25.4%	30.4%	30.5%	31.7%
Western Cape	66.1%	63.4%	64.2%	63.5%	62.9%	63.6%	64.1%
Total	51.3%	51.8%	51.5%	47.0%	49.3%	48.9%	48.7%

The positive average increase masks provincial variations. Two of the provinces show decreases while seven show increases in 2013/14. Free State continues to record a downward trend in the percentage of the budget allocated for NPOs, despite the on-going High Court case in which three judgments have found the province's policy to be unconstitutional in its underfunding of NPOs that deliver services on behalf of government.

### Comparing the budget to the costing estimates reveals a large gap

As in previous years, we compare the budget allocations with the estimates of the costing of the Children's Bill done in 2005, which provided estimates of what is needed to implement the Children's Act over a six-year period. In making this comparison, we take 2009 as the first year in recognition of the fact that it took several years for the legislation to be enacted.

The actual allocation is calculated by adding up the three service delivery sub-programmes that contain Children's Act services plus 25% of the professional and administrative support sub-programme for the provinces that house all their staff in this sub-programme.

**Table 5 Comparison of actual allocations with costing estimates for 2013/14**

Actual budget allocation 2013/14	Amount the costing report estimated would be needed in 2013/14	
	IP low scenario	FC high scenario
R5,7 billion	R12,9 billion	R85,8 billion

The comparison reveals a large gap between what should be allocated versus what is being allocated. The allocations for 2013/14 are less than half, at 44%, of the estimated "implementation plan" (IP) amount. Yet the IP estimates take as their base the very inadequate levels of service available in 2005 and provide for lower quality services. If the comparison is done with the "full cost" (FC) costing estimate which provides for estimated objective needs and higher quality services, the 2013/14 allocations amount for a tiny 7% of the estimated cost.

### Conclusion

The costing report revealed that in 2005 government was funding only 25% of the cost of implementing the old Child Care Act. Historically social welfare services for children have therefore been grossly under-funded in South Africa. This under-funding needs to be juxtaposed against the context of South Africa's high rates of child abuse, abandonment and orphaning. In 2010, the Children's

Act ushered in a new era by recognising government's constitutional obligations to realise children's rights to care, protection and social services and by making it clear that government is primarily responsible for providing and funding the comprehensive range of social welfare services for children. Given the historically low funding base for this area of services, if we are to achieve the objectives of the Children's Act we need to see continuous above average real budget growth in the sub-programmes that house children's welfare services.

In the context on an on-going economic crisis and on-going high levels of unemployment, families are under material and psychological stress to make ends meet. Under these conditions children are at even greater risk of vulnerability, under-development, abandonment, neglect and abuse. Growing the budget allocations for programmes and services that strengthen and support vulnerable families will lessen this risk and keep children safe. ■







## 7 Tips to Run a Smooth Event

Being a Program Director requires you to cement the entire event together so that the audience have an exceptional experience. Here are some ways to achieve this.

### 1. Understanding the Event

Make sure that you understand the type of event that is being staged. It may be a wedding, a company farewell or a marketing function, etc. By having a good understanding of the event will give you additional confidence that is always required by the MC. A clear understanding of the event will assist you to make better decisions and also to know what you must speak about. Know in detail the people you are to introduce so you do not embarrass them or more so, yourself.

### 2. Communicate with the Event Planner

The first and most important function of the MC, is to communicate well in advance with the event planner and/or coordinator. This should not be left close to the event, rather months before. You will require information regarding the schedule, the order of events, who the speakers are and what they are speaking about, the type of guests, VIP's, what the guests want to get out of the function, etc. This will give you ample opportunity to prepare for each occurrence and to relate to the expectations of the guests.

### 3. Relax

If you are tense, you create a tense audience. It is quite normal to feel nervous, but never let that on to the audience. Smile genuinely. It helps you to relax and indicates to the audience that you too are enjoying yourself.

### 4. Remember what your Function is

Your responsibility is to the audience, to entertain them, keep them informed, to be the catalyst as the event moves from one feature to the next, to assist the speaker or feature if they require anything.

### 5. Prepare

Know exactly what it is you want to say and rehearse the lines together with gestures, actions, vocal inflection and enthusiasm. The more preparation that you are prepared to put in, the less nervous you will be and the less chance there will be about forgetting your lines.

### 6. Don't Cry over Spilt Milk

So you made a mistake. Nothing unusual about that - most people do! Most times it is only you that knows about it and even if others do pick it up, just move on as if it never happened. If something does go wrong that is out of your control, for example the lights go out; a humorous one-liner will usually help.

### 7. Keep the Audience Focussed

Depending on the audience and the event, it may help to ask them a question to bring back their focus and to get them more involved.

A newsletter for growing minds from KETLER PRESENTATIONS

For more information  
[www.ketler.co.za](http://www.ketler.co.za)



# List of International Days as Sighted by The United Nations

International days-United Nations observances

<http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml>

## January

- 27 International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
- 31 Street Children's Day

## February

- 4 World Cancer Day
- 6 International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation
- 11 World Day of the Sick instituted by Pope John Paul II
- 13 World Radio Day
- 20 World Day of Social Justice
- 21 International Mother Language Day

## March

- 8 International Women's Day
- 19 World Social Work Day
- 20 International Day of Happiness
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21 World Poetry Day
- 21 International Day of Nowruz
- 21 World Down Syndrome Day
- 21 International Day of Forests and the Tree
- 22 World Water Day
- 23 World Meteorological Day
- 24 World Tuberculosis Day
- 24 International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims
- 25 International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- 25 International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members

WATER DAY 22 MARCH

- 2 World Autism Awareness Day
- 4 International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
- 6 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
- 7 Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide — World Health Day
- 7 World Health Day
- 12 International Day of Human Space Flight
- 22 International Mother Earth Day
- 23 World Book and Copyright Day Resolution 3.18 of the 28th session of the UNESCO General Conference
- 23 English Language Day
- 25 World Malaria Day
- 26 World Intellectual Property Day
- 28 World Day for Safety and Health at Work
- 29 Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare
- 30 International Jazz Day

## May

- 2 Thank a Child and Youth Care Worker Day
- 3 World Press Freedom Day
- 8-9 Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War
- 8 World Red Cross and Red Crescent day
- 11 World Migratory Bird Day
- 12 International Nurse's Day
- 15 International Day of Families



- 17 World Telecommunication and Information Society Day
- 17 World's AIDS Vaccine Day
- 18 International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day
- 21 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
- 22 International Day for Biological Diversity
- 23 International Day to End Obstetric Fistula
- 24 "Vesak", the Day of the Full Moon
- 29 International Day of UN Peacekeepers
- 31 World No-Tobacco Day

## June

- 1 Global Day of Parents
- 1 International Children's Day
- 4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- 5 World Environment Day
- 8 World Oceans Day
- 12 World Day against Child Labour
- 14 World Blood Donor Day
- 15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- 17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 18 Autistic Pride Day
- 20 World Refugee Day
- 23 United Nations Public Service Day
- 23 International Widows' Day
- 25 Day of the Seafarer
- 26 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
- 26 United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture





### July

- 6 (First Saturday In July) International Day of Cooperatives
- 11 World Population Day
- 17 World day for international justice
- 18 Nelson Mandela International Day
- 28 World Hepatitis Day
- 30 International Day of Friendship

### August

- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- 12 International Youth Day
- 19 World Humanitarian Day
- 23 International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition
- 29 International Day against Nuclear Tests
- 30 International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

### September

- 5 International Day of Charity
- 8 International Literacy Day
- 10 World Suicide Prevention Day [WHO]
- 12 United Nations Day for South-South Cooperations
- 15 International Day of Democracy
- 16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 21 International Day of Peace
- 26 European Day of Languages (Last week of September) World Maritime Day
- 27 World Tourism Day
- 28 World Rabies Day
- 28 International Right to Know Day



### October

- 1 International Day of Older Persons
- 2 International Day of Non-Violence
- 5 World Teachers' Day
- 7 (First Monday In October) World Habitat Day
- 9 World Post Day
- 10 World Mental Health Day
- 10 (Second Thursday In October) World Sight Day
- 11 International Day of the Girl Child
- 13 International Day for Disaster Reduction
- 15 International Day of Rural Women
- 16 World Food Day
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 24 United Nations Day
- 24 World Development Information Day
- 27 World Day for Audio-visual Heritage

### November

- 6 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- 10 World Science Day for Peace and Development
- 12 World Pneumonia Day
- 13 World kindness day
- 14 World Diabetes Day
- 16 International Day for Tolerance Resolution
- 16 World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day



- 17 International Student's Day
- 18 (Third Sunday In November) World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims
- 19 World Toilet Day
- 20 Universal Children's Day
- 20 Africa Industrialization Day
- 21 (Third Thursday In November) World Philosophy Day
- 21 World Television Day
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 29 International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

### December

- 1 World AIDS Day
- 2 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 5 International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
- 7 International Civil Aviation Day
- 9 International Anti-Corruption Day
- 10 Human Rights Day
- 10 International Animal Rights Day
- 11 International Mountain Day
- 18 International Migrants Day
- 20 International Human Solidarity Day



# PONDERINGS on POWER ...

Jackie Winfield  
Durban University of Technology

## Talking of power ...

We talk a great deal about power ... the power of love, political power, abuse of power, power shortages, the power of persuasion, girl power, being power-hungry, empowerment, horse power, the power of God, flower power, knowledge as power, personal power, the power of money, superpower, the balance of power, powerhouse, power to the people ...

And whilst we might talk often about power, it is still something with which we don't always feel entirely comfortable. Perhaps, our history of oppression and discrimination has tainted our perspective on power through long and painful association with its abuse by some at the expense of others. Perhaps, our ongoing exposure to violence and dishonesty and intimidation through our own personal experience or through the media causes us to be suspicious of anyone holding power, as though human beings are incapable of using it for anything but the satisfaction of their own needs, irrespective of the needs of others. But this does not have to be the whole story ...

What about the power of love, the fierce inner strength that a mother has to protect her child? What about the power of forgiveness, the outstretched hand of a wronged man reaching towards his accuser? What about the power of life, the urge of the premature baby to breathe despite her under-developed lungs? What about the idea

that power is a normal healthy need of human beings? And what about the consequences of people experiencing themselves as powerless ...?

## Children and power

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. They cannot match the physical strength of adults, and lack the knowledge and experience which usually comes with age. They often hold less status than adults (perhaps reflected in ideas that children should respect and obey those older than themselves), have no political power (they cannot vote in national elections), and are often treated as ignorant and unworthy. And whilst it may be argued that adults are rightfully in charge, as child and youth care workers, we might do well to consider issues of power in terms of human development ...

## The circle of courage: independence and power

Many South African child and youth care workers are familiar with the circle of courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern, 1990). In this model, belonging, mastery, independence and generosity are identified as developmental needs, the satisfaction of which contributes to wholeness, courage and self-esteem in the individual. When we use this model to guide our work, we aim to provide opportunities for young people and

families to experience belonging, mastery, independence and generosity as continuous threads woven into the fabric of their daily lives, not just as theoretical ideas discussed in a staff meeting or written into an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

In this model, the concept of independence speaks of power. Independence is far more than the simplistic idea that a person can do something on her/his own. Rather, independence may be seen as the sense a person has that she/he can influence people, objects and events in the environment, that she/he has power. Such power is "... shown in the ability to control one's behaviour ... Those lacking power feel helpless and without influence" (Brendtro et al., 1990: 45). When children experience the sense that they have appropriate power, they are autonomous, confident, assertive and responsible. They demonstrate inner control and motivation, self-discipline and leadership. Those who experience distortions of independence tend to misuse their power through intimidation, bullying, violence, manipulation or defiance. An absence of power results in submission, a lack of confidence, irresponsibility, and helplessness. Such children lack initiative, rely on others for direction and are influenced easily (Brendtro et al., 1990). It should be obvious which of these outcomes is preferable for healthy development.





## The power of children at risk

Whilst it is true that all children lack power in most societies, this is often more pronounced with children at risk. The child who has experienced abuse knows what it is to be overpowered. The child who is bullied knows how it feels to be frightened. The child who is humiliated is familiar with the sense of inferiority. Through consistent experience, helplessness can be learned to the point that a person no longer makes any attempt to avoid a negative experience and behaves as though she/he is utterly helpless to change the situation. Even when opportunities to escape unpleasantness are presented, this learned helplessness prevents any action (Seligman, 1972). The person "copes" by merely tolerating the discomfort.

## Child and youth care workers and power

As child and youth care workers, our goal is to facilitate the optimal development of young people. This process requires the active promotion of their sense of power. We need to not just let or allow children to make decisions; we need to actively seek moments when young people can experience authentic power in their lives. We can provide real choices ("how many sugars would you like in your tea?"), engage them in decisions ("shall we have a braai or a picnic?"), encourage the development of self-discipline ("at what time will you have your shower?"), and provide opportunities for leadership ("please teach me that new dance").

When young people refuse their power with "I don't know" or "I don't mind" or "You decide", we need to be conscious of what is happening. Perhaps, the young person does not believe that our words are genuine, and thinks that this is a trick and we'll impose our will anyway. Perhaps, the child will test us with a wild idea such as "I'll have my shower at midnight", and we might need to rephrase the choice within certain limits ("Midnight will be too late. Please choose a time between 7pm and 9pm").

We need to be committed to empowerment (the process of people experiencing their own power) because the healthy development of personal power is a developmental process. In other words, it takes time and it occurs through trial-and-error learning. It is important in a society where so many have experienced a lack of power that efforts are made to promote people's sense that they can make things happen in their lives. Perhaps though, the greater challenge is that many of us fear that the development of the child's power will somehow reduce our own. Our commitment to children and their development requires us to promote their independence and their power. The achievement of this requires child and youth care workers with self-awareness, with integrity, and with courage.

### REFERENCES

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- Seligman, M.E.P. 1972. Learned helplessness. Annual Review of Medicine, 43: 407-412.* ■

## Powerful quotes ...

**"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any"**

~ Alice Walker

**"What it lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do"**

~ Aristotle

**"Circumstances are beyond human control, but our conduct is in our own power"**

~ Benjamin Disraeli

**"All things are subject to interpretation, and whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth"**

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

**"To achieve, you need thought. You have to know what you are doing and that's real power"**

~ Ayn Rand



# Ombudsperson for Children

## An Independent Voice for Children and Young People!

There is increasing call for the establishment of an Ombudsperson for children in South Africa. This article by Molo Songololo, one of the Ngo's spearheading the initiative outlines the role and importance of such a position, as well as its relevance in the South African context.

### What is an Ombudsperson for children?

An OMBUDSPERSON (ombudsman) can be defined as an independent person, office or institution that defends the rights of citizens. An OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN acts as a CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN and keep an eye on how children are doing. They are usually mandated to;

- Promote the rights of the child
- Receive and investigate complaints
- Act as a spokesperson for children, consult with them and promote their views and opinions
- Monitor the progress made to implementation of the rights of the child
- Report annually to parliament, public and children on the wellbeing of children
- Hold government accountable for its commitments, obligations and actions concerning children, their rights, care, development, protection and participation

### Where does this concept come from?

The idea of an OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN (OC) - Children's Commissioner, Children's Protector, Children's Advocate, etc. - is not a new one. It originated in Sweden in the 1970s and soon spread to countries as a direct result of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which obligates state parties to put in place monitoring mechanisms to promote, monitor and report on the implementation of the UNCRC.

Today, about 70 countries have now established independent human right monitoring instruments for children. Mauritius was the first African country to establish an INDEPENDENT STATUTORY OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN. Mauritius was inspired by the Norwegian model. The objective of the Mauritian OC is to:

### What about South Africa?

In South Africa the idea of an 'INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY' to promote children's rights and monitor and report on children's wellbeing was discussed in the late 1980s (National Child Rights Committee) and early

1990s (The International Summit on the Right of Children in South Africa, 1992); the Constitutional Reform

Process, 1993-4; and subsequent Child Law Reform Process, which started in 1996.

To ensure compliance with the New Constitution of South Africa, the South African Law Commission (SALRC) was requested to investigate and review the Child Care Act of 1983 and make recommendations to the Minister for Social Development for the reform of this law in 1997. SALRC recommended the following in its Discussion Paper and Draft Children's Bill 2002:

*The establishment of an independent body to be called the 'Office of the Children's Protector' to operate independently, act as a watchdog over the activities of those responsible for them, prepare an annual report for tabling in Parliament; respond to complaints and indicate difficulties, if any, hampering the proper implementation of the new child care and protection legislation'.*

The Draft Children's Bill 2002 included provisions for the appointment of a CHILDREN'S PROTECTOR. It stated that the Minister must appoint a person as the Children's Protector that:





- functions separately from the Department; and
- is a public entity for the purpose of the Public Finance Management Act.

The Draft Children's Bill stated that the function of the Children's Protector must without fear, favour or prejudice monitor the implementation of this Act by:

- organs of state in all spheres of government; and
- persons and non-governmental organisations involved in the protection and well-being of children.

The recommendations enjoyed wide support from children sector NGOs, but in 2005, both the Public Protector and the SAHRC rejected the possibility of housing the Children's Protector within their offices due to a lack of finances, mandate and capacity.

The Children's Protector concept was dismissed on grounds of costs and the recommendations were subsequently dropped and did not appear in the final proposed Children's Bill.

Discussion on the need for an Ombudsperson for Children in South Africa has been going on for more than 20 years!

## Why an OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN?

The United Nations Committee on the UNCRC gives the following reasons for an establishing independent monitoring mechanism, ombudsperson for children:

- Children's developmental states make them particularly vulnerable to human rights violations.
- Children's opinions are rarely taken into account.
- Children have no vote and cannot play a meaningful role in the political process that determines Governments' response to human rights.
- Children's access to organisations that may protect their rights is generally limited.

## We have an obligation to children?

Monitoring and reporting on progress made in fulfilling obligations towards children as prescribed in the SA Constitution, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are major challenges.

Article 4 of the UNCRC obliges State parties to *"undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the present Convention."* This places a proactive obligation on governments to introduce the necessary measures to turn the principles of the UNCRC into practical realities.

Many states have established Ombudspersons for Children which promote and monitor the implementation of the Convention at a national level. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a General Comment in 2002, where it gave its view that every State

needs an independent human rights institution which can independently and effectively monitor, promote and protect children's rights.

## What are the benefits for government?

Establishing an Ombudsperson for Children holds many benefits for government. It can help to;

- Identify areas where the government is failing to comply with its obligations towards children.
- Recommend changes to law, policy and practice that are necessary to protect children's rights more effectively.
- Ensure that children's views and experiences are heard by the government.
- Serve as a resource, advising government on children's human rights, providing training and information.
- Help to anticipate potential areas of public policy likely to harm or impede the exercise of children's rights.

The former Children's Ombudsperson of Mauritius, Shirin Aumeeruddy Cziffra said *"ultimately we [ombudspersons] are able to improve laws because we are there reminding governments 'what about your children' - our work helps government to improve"*.

The Prime Minister of Norway said *"Our experience with the Office of the Ombudsman has been very positive, and*

*I truly believe that Norwegian children have derived great benefit from having an ombudsman of their own, to speak and act on their behalf."*

## Why establish an independent institution for children?

The Ombudsperson for Children in Mauritius explained the importance of the independence of the institution as follows: "An Ombudsperson for Children must be 'at arms' length with the Executive. No member of Government can dictate to the Ombudsperson for Children, or any other NHRI, nor influence any decision which the incumbent may take. The Ombudsperson for Children does not take orders from anyone but listens to all and can act upon genuine proposals made.

*An Ombudsperson for Children must set his own agenda and must act and speak freely. Silence can be a sign of wisdom in some instances, but it can also be a sign of weakness and lack of freedom especially when the circumstances are such that the Ombudsperson for Children must speak out publicly."*

## What would an OC mean for children?

The Ombudsperson for Children would act as a champion for children, and promote their rights and views. While acting as a 'voice' for children, the Ombudsperson would also work to help children speak directly and effectively themselves. If given the mandate to take individual complaints, it could assist individual children, as well as working at a national level. UNICEF explains that Ombudspersons for Children institutions;

*"... are in regular contact with children, bring their voices to decision makers, and are constantly attentive to children's best interests. An increasing number of countries across the world's regions look to these institutions for support in fulfilling their commitments to children."*

## Children's views and opinions!

Children have very specific ideas of what the Ombudsperson for Children must do. The following are some comments given in a questionnaire administered earlier this year:

- "Do research in the community and find the children who don't have families and build shelter for them" Female, 12, Welwitschia Primary School
- "To advise people abusing children to stop abusing children."- Female, 12, Simunye High School
- "Must investigate the problems and hardships children face and advise parents, individuals, organisations and government how to prevent and combat it."- Female, 16, Robinvale High
- "He or she must fight for the rights and protection of children."- Female, 12, Welwitschia Primary School
- "Monitor government concerning work regarding children". -Male, 10, Westfleur Primary School
- "Must protect the rights of children and work with children."- Female, 15, Mamre Primary School

- "Protect you and that we as children can trust. He or she help to know your rights and also looks that the government do their work."- Female, 13, Mamre Primary School
- "Must care about children and make sure that people respect children." Female, 13, Pella Primary School

## What sort of issues must the OC to take up?

The children stated that they would like the Ombudsperson for Children to deal with certain issues including:

- Child abuse and neglect;
- Peer pressure and bullying and teen pregnancy
- Family violence, alcohol and drug abuse - shootings, gangsterism and killing of children;
- Rape and sexual abuse, exploitation (prostitution) and child trafficking

Children see themselves as active participants and identified that the Ombudsperson for children must help children feel safe in their communities, help those who are poor and hungry, help with school books and uniforms and help their parents. They also want to help decided who the Ombudsperson for Children must be. They want such a person to be "

'It must be someone we can trust, someone from our community, someone who know us'.

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# Terms of Endearment: A Child Care Worker By Any Other Name

Even before we start a conversation with children, we get a clue as to how they see us and what they expect from us – from what they call us. Listening to some of the children's forms of address over the past week, we have heard the following: Miss, My sister, Meneer, Ma, O' Lady, Palie, Mam' Lady, Tannie, Nqununu (Head), "Soshi" (Short for social worker), Mam' Njokweni (honouring the surname), Boss, Sisi, Bhuti, Sir, Mr Krause, Piet.

The names children use to address us often indicate the role they expect from us in their lives. One child may be very formal, for example, introducing us to his friend as "Mrs Seymour my social worker", while another may come along and slap us on the back shouting "Hi, L.S!"

In child and youth care we are careful not to assume roles which don't belong to us. When we are working at restoring and building the relationship between a child and his mother, we should never confuse this by playing a "mother" role to the child ourselves. On the other hand, where a child has no mother, might it not be a kindness to be one for such a youngster?

The point is, we should at least think about the names and roles which the children give us.

## Complementary roles

Many young people will "use" us in a way that makes up for what they are missing or needing – an authority figure (to rely on, to rebel against), a friend (for company, to test), a teacher (to compete with, to learn from), a counsellor (to listen, to help). Perhaps this is a legitimate way to define our work? It does not mean that we stop "being ourselves"; but it might help us figure out what we should be doing.

As deprived youngsters fill in the missing pieces of their lives, we are expected to help in different ways as we make progress and/or as they grow up. At an early stage we may be providing them with shelter and security; later we may be teaching them skills; eventually we may be helping them to independence. This is the same sequence as parents go through with their own children – only for us the sequence is compressed into a shorter time.


## Responding

So how do you respond when a child calls you "Ou Pelli" or "Pop" or "Joan" or "My bro"?

We have to be sure that we retain the initiative as an adult in our programme, and that we are not being manipulated, but beyond that it's up to us to see how creative we can be –

- Can you act in the moment and make the most of what ever approach a youngster offers?
- Can you let go your dignity and your own conception of your role, and translate the kid's expectations which are wrapped up in the name he or she calls you?
- Can you be flexible enough to try some new way or relating to a child who seems to want something different from you?

...and, if you learn anything interesting from this idea, let us know!

From Pumla Mncayi and Brian Gannon, members of the editorial board. 

# Obituary

## Mvuyo Manyangwana

By Zeni Thumbadoo and Donald Nghonyama

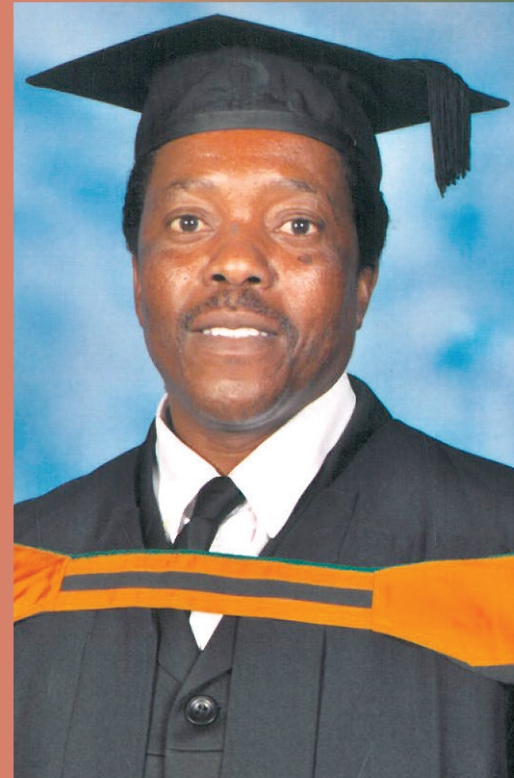
Mvuyo Manyangwana has left a legacy in child and youth care work. He was a powerful national leader in the NACCW who was known across the country for his gentle but firm advocacy on the rights of children and for the realization of a better life for families. Mvuyo served five terms as the NACCW Regional Executive Committee Chairperson in the Northern Cape. He understood that his own academic development and that of people around him is key to the success of the child and youth care profession. Mvuyo led by example in that he was one of the first child and youth care workers to enrol for the newly created degree in child and youth care work, and obtained his Diploma and then later the B.Tech degree in child and youth care work. Mvuyo was open to opportunities for learning and growth. He attended 7 different Leadership Development Seminars, and represented the NACCW at numerous national and provincial meetings – all focussed on ensuring that we service children in our country as well as is possible.

We speak of Mvuyo as a child and youth care work leader – but he was an exceptionally talented child and youth care worker. He was able to translate theory into practice. He was able to turn around some of the most challenging

young people, and set them on the right path in life. As the manager of a secure care centre he would every morning visit the children before going to his office. He understood the meaning of putting children first.

Mvuyo did not only focus on his own development. He contributed to the growth and development of the NACCW in promoting child and youth care services in our country. He also played his part as a teacher of other child and youth care workers – training child and youth care workers in the Northern Cape and around the country. Many child and youth care workers will say “I am because you were”. Without leaders and trainers like Mvuyo the field of child and youth care work would not have developed as it has. Mvuyo's spirit of Ubuntu extended itself to the children and families he serviced on a personal level too. In 1996 he and his wife Sylvia not only promoted the professional foster care program but fostered two children who were going through a difficult time, and both of them have progressed well in life.

In an NACCW promotional video on child and youth care work, Mvuyo is quoted to saying: “What Afrikanism taught us was to say if I do you a



favour or help you out of this situation, I don't expect you to pay me and you don't expect me to go around telling people... It is about giving unselfishly, unconditionally and without thinking about it or expecting to be repaid”.

Besides his work provincially and nationally, Mvuyo was selected to represent South Africa on an exchange program to Denmark to the Peter Sabroe Seminary. On his trip to Denmark, he with his colleagues were able to integrate Scandinavian and South African child and youth care practices and contribute to a strong international partnership.

To Sylvia, Dumisani, Limikhaya, Dipuo, Daniel and Nandi, your loss is not yours alone. The child youth care sector has lost a true child and youth care leader.

May Mvuyo's spirit rest in peace. We will all miss you. 





# Isibindi Launch in Eastern Cape

**Seeng Mamabolo**

On the twelfth of November 2013 we had a successful Isibindi Launch in Eastern Cape. It was graced by our NACCW National Chairperson Barrington Makhunga, our NACCW Deputy Director Donald Nghonyama, Pemmy Majodina, MEC of the Department of Social Development for....., Ward Counsellors, the Chief and Heidi Loening from UNICEF. The MEC was welcomed from about 400 meters with the boys riding horses and majorettes.

More than a thousand people attended including children and the teachers from the neighbouring schools. And many activities were done by the children to entertain people. The MEC was in tears during some activities by children.

The launch started with a briefing after the MEC arrived. During the briefing the MEC also wanted to know if Isibindi was working with other stakeholders and the ward councillor

and the committee members said the CYCWs do attend only when they are invited. Sweetness Tyeni and Bukelwa Gxotha from Isibindi King Williamstown also represented the site and they were brilliant in answering the MEC's questions in terms of the challenges that are faced by the children in the communities. It was wonderful to hear that in her speech the MEC quoted many of the things that Sweetness and Bukelwa had told her during the briefing.

Barrington gave a very powerful message during the event. The MEC also gave the message of the day and during her speech she also mentioned that her mother died when she was only three years old and she feels like if Isibindi had been there, she would have been protected by the child and youth care workers. She told children and youth that they are very lucky to have CYCWs who listen to them, who hug them and who ensure that they don't go to bed hungry and go to

school. She encouraged the community members to make use of child and youth care services and to ensure that children attend the safe park.

One of our youth also gave a testimony about the services offered by Isibindi and he encouraged other young people to come to the safe park where they will be helped. He told people that Isibindi child and youth care workers are always welcoming and that they had taught him many skills.

20 families also received food parcels and school uniforms but they were not handed to children as the MEC explained that it was the end of the year, and children would receive them next year.

The event was successful because of the teamwork between Isibindi Mentors, King Williams Town child and youth care workers and the Department of Social Development. ■



# What is Christmas?

It is tenderness for the past,  
courage for the present,  
hope for the future.

It is a fervent wish that  
every cup may overflow  
with blessings rich and eternal,  
and that every path may lead to peace.

- Agnes H. Pahro -

