

# The **child care worker**

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**Cover Picture:** Legendary violinist Lord Yehudi Menuhin, now in his late 70s, working with a group of school children as he promotes the social value of music. Story on page 5



## **NACCW**

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS  
IS AN INDEPENDENT NON-RACIAL ORGANISATION  
WHICH PROVIDES THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
TO IMPROVE STANDARDS OF CARE AND TREATMENT  
FOR CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS



Federation Internationale des Communautés Educatives  
International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)



Association Internationale des Educateurs de Jeunes Inadaptés  
International Association of Workers with Troubled Children

Leonard Davis reminds us that the children we work with have existences beyond our agencies.

## Roles and relationships in the living unit

Each man, woman or child living in a residential home or school has a number of roles: primarily as resident, but also perhaps as wife, mother, son, daughter or cousin.

Staff, too, have roles: primarily as residential workers, but also as parents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts.

Both will have idealised pictures of the way in which these roles should be carried out.

Some roles have been performed adequately in the past; a number may still be competently filled despite heavy odds; and others may have been messed up.

In the TV adaptation of *Roots* Alex Haley speaks for some residents: "I could set down the last word on failure – as son, as father, as writer."

Residents may experience their role failure in both family and work (or school) with a depth of feeling equal to that shown by Alex Haley. For some, the chance to correct their mistakes, to try again, may be long past.

### Needed

I remember the five-year-old Anderson twins, Christine and Charlotte, and their older brother James. Christine and Charlotte lived in one house unit, while 12-year-old James was in the boys' unit on the other side of the campus. Mrs Anderson was a voluntary patient in a nearby mental hospital and Mr Anderson (the father of James but not of Christine and Charlotte) stayed whenever possible in Salvation Army hostels, visiting his family from time to time. James was always ready to protect and defend his sisters, and brought them small gifts nearly every week.

This was a desperate group of people, with different needs and expectations, held to-

gether by a great deal of affection, and trying to sustain the family roles, yet prevented by the geographical distance which separated some of them; by their earlier lack of success in coping as a family; and, in the case of the adults, by the unpredictable nature of their behaviour.

Neither the mental hospital nor the children's home provided consistent opportunities for the Anderson family to engage for any worthwhile period in their various roles.

Often when she visited on Saturday afternoons, Mrs Anderson appeared vague and listless. Yet, for hours she would sit quietly with Christine and Charlotte by her side, combing their hair and working at the corn row (or cane row) plaiting in the ancient African style.

In this aspect of her maternal role, Mrs Anderson remained in command. No members of staff had the skill to care for her children's hair in such a traditional way. They relied on her weekly visit.

### Visitors and residents

The role of *visitor* is not easy, and we often underestimate the difficulties faced by relatives or friends when visiting children or adults in residential establishments. In many cases they are really confronted with the question "What do you say after you've said Hello?"

It is unnatural for some people to sit formally for an hour or so, perhaps in a tiny interview room, or in a massive lounge with a crowd of other people. It may seem strange to discuss very personal matters in a vacuum and away from the cut and thrust of their day-to-day shared environment and common experiences.

The role of *resident* is equally difficult. Most establishments

have a closer definition of the "good" resident than they would care to admit.

One problem for the newly admitted resident must be having to "ask permission" – for things which only a few weeks or days before he may have had entirely within his own control: about going out, about coming in, about making a telephone call, about smoking or about inviting a friend into the bedroom.

### Staff roles

As residential workers (and to ensure that residents do match up to the expectations of the establishment) staff have to remain within their role, observing, anticipating, asserting their authority and, in some instances, demanding conformity. If residents step too far out of their role, they may find themselves labelled by the staff as "awkward".

When members of the staff appear to be moving out of their role, they will quickly be pulled back into line by colleagues, and if persistent in breaking the recognised (but often unspoken) codes, they may become isolated or even scapegoated.

The role differences between staff and residents are accentuated in various ways, for example by the fact that one group is paid to look after the other; that they may eat in separate places; that staff have keys; that staff may have personal transport and are therefore more mobile; and that staff may have information about the residents which they themselves do not possess.

Of course, these role differences are accentuated to varying degrees in different establishments, the range extending from residential schools where the senior staff may have built for themselves God-like roles, to other residential units where role blurring and power sharing are constantly being worked at. Subtle forces keep people in roles, and we should ask ourselves the question: To what extent do roles impede the development of relationships? Residential homes often place heavy constraints on the emergence of loving relationships between residents, between staff and residents, and between residents and members of the local community.

Indeed, the organisational and physical framework of the home may be designed to prevent such love relationships from arising. On the other hand, in the most mature residential centres, a wide variety of relationships may be encouraged.

### Loving and being loved

Unfortunately, not every resident has a family member to whom he or she may relate, and not every resident is able to find and sustain a satisfying relationship with someone outside the home or school.

Some residents may be so unattractive, damaged or damaging that, without considerable help, they are unlikely ever to engage in the warm relationships aspired to by most human beings.

Yet, as François Truffaut reminds us in his film *L'argent de poche*, life is so arranged that we cannot do without loving and being loved.

Love is often an embarrassing word in residential settings. I cannot remember the last time I heard it used positively in a case conference.

The role models demanded of some care givers do not allow love to exist.

Fears of "involvement", age-old taboos, and the strong sexual connotations associated with the development of close relationships, serve to keep individuals in check.

Real relationships occur between people, whether family members or not, and not between people acting out roles – although efficient role performance often provides a solid backcloth for a different quality of exchange to take place.

I remember a young girl called Susan. How she disliked living with the nuns in a community home! She did everything possible to make them dislike her and reject her.

One day when I visited Susan she was in a particularly bad mood, shouting and swearing at Mother "X" because of some alleged injustice.

The patient sister turned quietly to Susan, patted her on the head and said: "I love you too, my dear."

And she really meant it. □

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As the debate of many years approaches the more concrete form of a new White Paper on Welfare, the Ministry of Social Welfare has released a discussion document including future thinking about work with families, children and youth ...



# Developing new welfare legislation

The intentions of the discussion document are included in a Preamble, which states: For the first time in our history, all South Africans are called upon to participate in the development of an equitable, people-centred, democratic and appropriate social welfare system.

The goal of social welfare is a humane, peaceful, just and caring society in which people can meet their basic human needs, release their creative energies, achieve their aspirations, and participate fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life.

## Families

The discussion document focusses very specifically on children in the context of their families:

Social changes in society have resulted in changes in the nature, structure and form of families, all of which should be acknowledged, including their social, religious and cultural diversity.

Families have been particularly

negatively affected by social, economic and political changes, urbanisation and migration patterns, a growing subculture of violence, the inequitable distribution of resources, and changes in the traditional roles of women and men.

## Functioning families

Major contributors to family stress, dysfunction and breakdown, are the increasing economic problems facing households. Those living below the poverty datum line as well as poor single parent families which are predominantly female-headed households, are worst affected.

In talking of children and their families, the document states: The well-being of children depends on the ability of families to function effectively. Because children are vulnerable they need to grow up in a nurturing and secure family that can ensure their survival, development, protection and participation in family and social life. Not only do families

give their members a sense of belonging; they are also responsible for imparting values and life skills. Families create security; they set limits on behaviour, and together with the spiritual foundation they provide, instill notions of discipline. All these factors are essential for the healthy development of any society.

## Situation Analysis

The document includes a brief analysis of children in a wide range of special circumstances: *Children in difficult circumstances* refers to those who are denied the most basic human rights and whose growth and development are consequently impaired.

*Children in disadvantaged communities.* The majority of South African families and children live in unhealthy, unsafe, disadvantaged communities. Overcrowding, a lack of housing and basic amenities such as sanitation and recreational facilities, and a lack of public transport, have serious consequences for the stability and security of families.

*Preschool children* from birth to 36 months and in the three to six year age groups are particularly vulnerable. There are an estimated 9 947 000 children up to the age of nine years who are in need of early childhood development (ECD) services.

*Children in out-of-home care* numbers have increased. According to the latest statistics from the Department of Welfare, there are 29 000 children in residential care and 39 024 children in foster care. The expenditure on foster care grants was R129 801 360 as at 31 May 1994. From January 1992 to January 1993, 3 076 children were abandoned by their parents according to the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare.

*Children with mental and physical disabilities* are discriminated against and are denied opportunities such as access to education, recreation and public transport. Some disabilities are the result of poverty and preventable diseases such as measles, or injuries sustained as a result of political violence. Black children living in rural areas or in informal settlements are the

most vulnerable to disablement of this nature.

There are inadequate support facilities to assist families to keep more severely disabled children in the home environment for as long as possible.

*Child abuse and neglect* is a serious and growing problem. Sexually exploited children are particularly vulnerable.

*Juvenile Offenders* continue to cause concern. Proper assessment of child offenders by probation officers is seriously lacking. Not all arrested children see a social worker.

*Street children* are said to number around 10 000 in South Africa. It is widely believed that this number has increased substantially over the last few years.

*Working children* under the age of 15 years are prohibited by legislation. However, in some instances, a particular job can be excluded and a particular person or persons can be exempted from this prohibition. Little is known about the nature and extent of the phenomenon of working children, and little has been done to relieve the situation.

*Substance abuse* among school children, especially older boys, is increasing. More accurate statistics are needed. Substance abuse is more prevalent at entertainment areas, and large numbers of street children abuse inhalants.

*Children of divorcing parents* are a vulnerable group and require special attention. The Family Advocate's Office functions in terms of the Mediation in Certain Divorce Matters Act (No. 24 of 1987). It also assists with identifying and assisting children in situations where the conflict between the parents could result in abuse and the withholding of maintenance.

## Approach and Guidelines

The document recommends an approach to the problems enumerated in the Situation Analysis, once again emphasising the combined focus of children and families.

The aim of family and child welfare services is to preserve and strengthen families so that they can provide a suitable environment for the physical, emotional and social development of all their members.

Family-based policies and programmes should reflect the changing nature and structure of families.

Programmes should be devised to strengthen families, and to reconcile family and work responsibilities. Significant efforts need to be made to transform family relationships which currently contribute to the subordination of women and children. Those in need of special support are families with children under five years, single-parent families, and those families caring for children and members with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

### Guidelines

Programmes to families and children should be based on the following guidelines:

- Families in need should receive comprehensive protection and support from the state and organisations of civil society.
- Poor families and children should be given first priority in the allocation of resources, the transfer of information and skills, and in the determination of priorities for socio-economic development.
- Respect for human dignity and family responsibility and autonomy should be upheld. Social welfare personnel should foster self-reliance, and promote the personal growth and social competence of families and children through capacity-building and empowerment programmes.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that families and children have equal access to services which will promote social competence in the different stages of the life-cycle.
- Helping efforts should concentrate firstly on prevention, by enhancing family functioning, then on protection, lastly on the provision of statutory services.
- Interventions should strive to provide for the meaningful participation of all family members, especially children, in activities aimed at promoting their well-being. Any activities involving children should be appropriate to their age and development.

### STRATEGIES TO MEET CRITICAL NEEDS

A number of strategies are proposed to address each of the areas in the Situation Analysis. The promotion of family life is given pride of place, and strategies include:

- Life-skills training throughout the school-going years, aimed at developing interpersonal skills and the development of self-esteem, decision-making and problem-solving.
- Family enrichment, and parenting programmes.
- Re-examination of divorce laws; couples will be encouraged to use mediation services. The business sector will be encouraged to create environments which are supportive of family life, for example, through granting of family leave at times of family crises. Enhancing networks between families and within the community, and to support each other and promote family life. A variety of strategies for preschool and school-going children are suggested.

### Adoption, foster care

A small amount of space is devoted to children for whom alternative care is required.

Adoption is seen as an effective means of permanency planning for children whose families are unable to meet their basic needs.

Subsidised adoptions will be considered as an alternative to foster care for families who are permanently caring for children with special needs, and traditional systems of adoption will be acknowledged.

Foster care is a low-cost, family-centred and community-based way to care for children whose parents are unable to do so adequately. Traditional and indigenous systems of foster care will be recognised.

### Residential care

The complete text of this section follows:

- Where placement of children in family and community-based programmes is not an option, children will be placed in residential facilities, but only as a last resort.

■ Residential facilities will be multi-purpose, and less rigid and formal than currently. The approach to children in residential care and to families will be focused on the individual in the context of his/her social environment.

■ Adoption and foster care are alternatives which will be explored as part of permanency planning for children in residential care. It is critical that children and parents be involved in decision-making in such processes.

■ Joint responsibility is needed between the Department of Welfare and the Department of Education for schools of industry. Responsibilities need to be defined. The Department of Welfare also needs to be actively involved in the functioning of reform schools, especially for children under 18 years.

■ Residential care models which are cost-effective will be explored. Pilot programmes will be used to evaluate existing programmes.

■ The training and retraining of child-care and youth-care workers in residential facilities will be provided. Such training programmes will aim to improve the capacity of these workers to render both preventative and protective services, and to assist social workers.

### Other areas

There are sections dealing with maintenance grants and support for families of children with disabilities, including the idea that disabled children should as far as possible be accommodated in mainstream education.

In a section dealing with violence, the outlawing of corporal punishment in state-run and subsidised services and facilities is planned, together with an awareness campaign about the negative effects of corporal punishment. Such a campaign will also create awareness about alternative means of conflict resolution. This section also recommends the reform of the legal system to create a child-friendly service. This includes the protection of child witnesses and the

development of bail and sentence procedures that are effective in protecting children and promoting the rehabilitation of offenders, and public awareness campaigns and advocacy strategies to promote children's rights.

Other sections deal with juvenile offending, and suggest that in view of the fragmentation in addressing the needs of juvenile offenders within government departments and between NGOs, consensus will be sought on a holistic and integrated response. The strategy for working children records that comprehensive research will be undertaken into the nature, extent, patterns, causes and impact of the working-child phenomenon. The service emphasis will be on prevention and protection.

### Street children

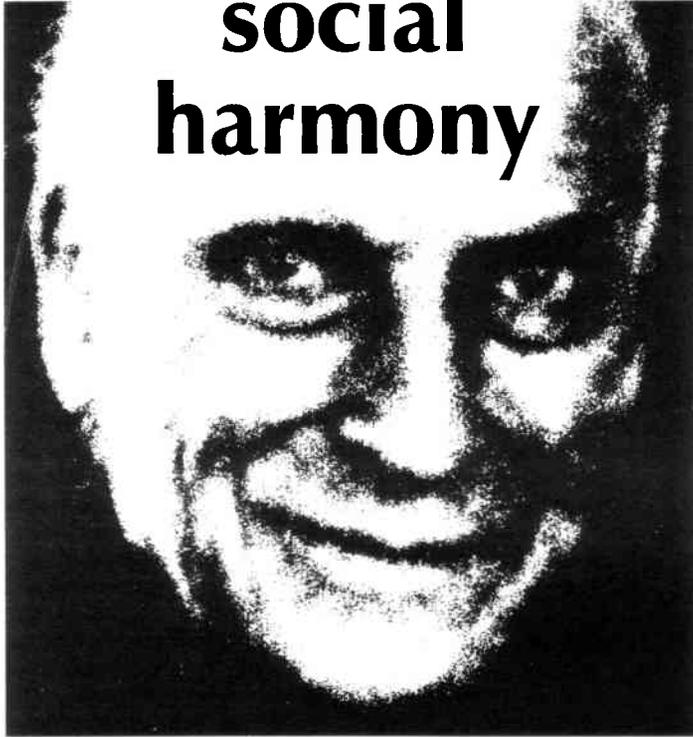
Vulnerable children, says the discussion document, will be prevented from becoming street children; street children will be reconciled with their families and communities; and, if the latter is impossible, alternative ways to reintegrate street children into society will be explored and made use of.

Shelters will be treated as an interim measure and will operate as assessment centres and safe houses. Also, no child will be kept in a shelter or assessment centre for longer than 14 days without suitable assessment and permanency planning. Shelter programmes will include the preparation of younger street children for formal schooling and older street children for the employment market through relevant programmes such as life and job skills.

Street or outreach workers (that is, trained child and youth workers) will be employed by assessment centres for the early identification and referral of vulnerable children (for example, runaways to safe houses).

Treatment programmes (for example, for substance abuse) will be child-friendly. Lastly, the Child Care Act will be revised to make provision for the needs of street children, the education of the public, and advocacy for children's rights. □

# A maestro's lessons in social harmony



YEHUDI MENUHIN is one of the few living musicians whose status verges on the legendary. Since his sensational world tours as a 12-year-old, his reputation as one of the foremost violinists of this century has never been in doubt. In recent years his passion for life and humanity has increasingly marked him out as something of a visionary. He is currently spearheading a scheme which, he believes, will help reduce levels of crime and violence among young people, by revolutionising the teaching of music in primary schools.

*The Voices Foundation* is part of a pan-European project set up by Menuhin, which is dedicated to drawing out the musician in every youngster through singing – and it does mean every youngster. Any reader who remembers being singled out as a ‘croaker’ or ‘growler’ at school and asked to mime rather than sing the carols in the Christmas concert, may be interested to know that the Voices Foundation is horrified by such practices and believes

there is no such thing as ‘tone-deafness’. The director of the foundation, Susan Digby, says, ‘So-called tone-deafness is not an aural problem but a psychological one. You won’t find any tone-deafness in an African tribe, nor in any situations where music is functional. Here, often the youngsters who have difficulties are those who are in situations where it is not natural to sing, yet they might be the people who are particularly sensitive to their own sound. If they open their mouths and someone says, “That’s a horrible sound!” they immediately clam up and the signals become confused, causing a psychological block.’

**Transforming fear**  
Of particular importance to Yehudi Menuhin is the belief that such a plan could be an antidote to crime. He explains: ‘We build walls against ourselves as well as against other people. Music is one of the key elements for transforming an atmosphere of fear, hatred, prejudice and violence in schools. This work is much more fundamental than

merely a use for words. We can focus on our own vibrations and breathing but in a spirit of communication, of openness, of trust. All these elements come from that beginning which is the voice.’

**Starting with the adults**  
The process by which the Voices Foundation reaches the children is to go into a school for a whole day and train the teachers. The first task, therefore, is to make the teachers aware of their ability to sing, and thus aware of their ability to teach music through singing.

‘Some staff can be nervous to begin with,’ says Digby. ‘They are very aware of each other and worried about their performance. We try to break through very quickly in that initial session, to get them feeling comfortable about their singing and enjoying themselves, so that they can go into the classroom and use the repertoire the very next day.’

Already those schools which have tried the scheme have recorded astonishing results, not least with some of their most difficult youngsters. Teachers have noted that delinquent children who cannot function in any group activity, often huddling into a ball because they are abused at home, come out of themselves through singing, in a way that they won’t in anything else. ‘They gain confidence and self-assurance, which allows them to feel good about themselves,’ says Digby. ‘Head teachers sometimes regard music as the ultimate burden in an already over-burdened curriculum. We can say to them “Don’t worry; this is going to make your job easier, make your pupils more disciplined, and make your school a happier place”.

One of the schools to take part in the scheme is Oxford Gardens Primary School in Kensington, west London. Head teacher, Liz Raymond-Pickard, initially had doubts as her school was not historically strong in music. Those doubts

have been completely dispelled. She says, ‘The impact on the children has been enormous in way I couldn’t have predicted. Children have found their singing voices and we now hear them singing in the playground quite happily and unselfconsciously. It was such a wonderful day for them when Yehudi Menuhin came into the school, especially when he sang and jumped around with them. This has had a beneficial effect on the children’s behaviour, directly and indirectly.’ School authorities would be wise to follow Menuhin’s enterprise. As a young music teacher in a secondary modern school in Kent in the mid-Seventies, I was shocked to discover that the local music authority was less idealistic than I was. The official line was, ‘We have to impress on head teachers that music is a special skill’.

Utter tripe, of course. I could see for myself that with an enlightened head teacher and staff, the most problematic youngster gains enormously from singing in choirs and musical productions, and resentments disappear. The sense of self-worth gained from the experience changes him or her from social misfit into social asset. Anyone who has had a similar experience to mine knows only too well the positive benefits of this approach. Yehudi Menuhin would like to see this project extend to include tougher secondary schools, and also prisons. Having spent a morning with him recently, and witnessed his still boundless energy and inspirational powers, despite being in his late seventies, I can well imagine that he would be quite happy to tackle that daunting task himself. □

**Raymond Banning** reports.  
Acknowledgements: *The Oldie*.



# A Day in the Life of ...

Outward Bound Instructor **Karen Woolmer** spends a day with her group of course participants in Loitokitok, Kenya

I woke up just before 5.55 am — which we affectionately call triple 5!

This has always been a challenge to me, not being a morning person — but the whole essence of what I was doing was a challenge. I had my running gear set out and ready to go; it saves vital seconds, and doesn't require your brain to be awake yet! Once out of the house I was rewarded again with the lovely fresh air and a beautiful sunrise. It was always like this, varying beauty, but always welcoming the day.

**W**e are at 6,500 ft on the slopes of Kilimanjaro — on the Kenyan side. Yes, I am a Kenyan volunteer even though Tanzania is only 800 metres away! The other instructors emerge from their houses and the participants from their dormitories, and we converge on the grass surrounded by the Jacaranda, Red Flame and Cedar trees.

Here we do morning exercises, and then head out of the Outward Bound compound for an early morning run.

Depending on the time of year, we contend with mud or dust — and anything in between the two. Today was a bit of walking. Looking up, we saw the amazing sight of the first rays of sun on the snows of Kilimanjaro. All this beauty, and the chance to get fit too! Back through the indigenous forest and the cawing of the colobus monkeys, and a plunge (or 'morning dip') into the icy Kilimanjaro water of our swimming pool. Just in case your body hadn't woken up, there was no stopping it now!

Did this all seem futile to our participants? Not to the active ones but what about the others? Well, part of being on an Outward Bound course is that you discovered that everything we did was done for a reason. No matter who you are or what your capabilities, the idea was to just do it — and then learn from the experience. So in fact the early morning dip wasn't just to wake up your body and mind for the day, but maybe for some it would help overcome the fear of water. Shower time, and the group or patrol on duty would set the dining hall for breakfast. It wasn't our turn this morning, so a few more minutes to shower. Now it is 7.15 am ... only! There is total participation in Outward Bound; it doesn't matter *who* anyone is! In fact there is a very variety of people who attend the courses. The courses vary in length from four to 21 days, and include people such as corporate managers to school students, street children, international groups from Hong Kong, America, the armed forces, cadets, you name it, and anybody could come.

**S**o to breakfast, and I ate a hearty, welcome breakfast. Also, you know the amount of energy you'll be using up, so its necessary to eat well.

I arrange with my group to meet at 8.00am outside the library and remind them of their clothing attire which will be suited for the day's activity. They have been here a few days, and before a more individual activity I want them to do a group dynamic activity to help bond them a bit more. I also want to observe some

more of their strengths and weaknesses. The group I have is on a rehabilitation programme and is comprised of young women from the slums, adolescent girls who have been on drugs or trafficking drugs, or prostitutes and younger girls who may be mixed up in any of the above, and or living on the streets in Nairobi.

Now let's see how they tackle the two planks of wood and adjoining rope. and work out how to manoeuvre it to a drawn line and back again. We will see not only how they manoeuvre these, but how they deal with each other, who emerges as a leader or has good ideas, who gets frustrated — or any other combination of possible human qualities or emotions!

The doing of the activity is fun, interesting and a leveller. Although we don't like to compare, it reminds me again how humans are humans no matter what your background. The co-operation going on with this group may be more pronounced than with a disciplined, educated group of trainee bank managers. The activity is one part of the exercise, but the second, and in a way more important part, is the discussion afterwards, sitting around in a circle which is a tradition of Outward Bound.

I facilitate a discussion saying as little as possible myself but encouraging and provoking them to say how they feel, what lessons they learnt and how to apply them to real life. The first few times they did this they found it difficult, but today they have really opened up so much. Words like co-operation, teamwork, leadership, co-ordination were used, and some of them were really seeing the point. They said how in their lives they need people, how they can work or study better through support, etc. I am trying to notice who is taking this in. The more they are honest in their feelings and application, the more we have to work with, and the more they will learn. It also gives me some pointers for our one-to-one chats as the course progresses. They were certainly having a lot of fun and ended up in hysterics when one of the girls at the

back slipped off and the rest fell like a pack of cards. There was some interesting exchange of words in their mother tongue as they had to go back to the beginning and start again — that was one of the conditions!

With the trolley activity over they found out why I had asked them to dress in a certain way. We trotted over to some huge trees and they saw, excitedly, ropes and wooden platforms and wires hanging amongst the trees. There were a few exclamations of "We're not going up there are we?!" — and others who looked keen to get going straight away.

After a safety talk and strapping everyone into their safety gear, I gave them a brief 'psyching' on the lines of — "now this is an individual challenge, go for it, and see what you can do". This rope course was first built back in the 1950's and has seen thousands of people through it, including prominent members of the Kenyan government. I have constantly met senior and older people in Nairobi who have very fond memories of their Outward Bound course, and can quote the course number and the year as if it were yesterday. One thing they always ask about is the ropes course. Just like in years gone by, there were lots of screams and also lots of wonderfully gratifying smiles. Our objective in this activity is for people to overcome fear and believe in themselves more. This need is so true of most people, but particularly so with this group. They need a lot of compassion and building up of their self-esteem. Society has dealt them a raw deal and we hope this helps to rectify it. Judging by some of the comments in the debriefing session, they were thrilled with themselves and started to say things like "now I know nothing is impossible, I can do anything now".

**I**t is now lunchtime and our turn to set the tables. Joel, the chief cook who has been at Outward Bound for over 30 years, and his staff who match his number of years, have prepared another very good 'uninstitutional' type meal. For the rest of my



*The girl I talked to was really enthralled by what was happening to her. She said she had never been outside Nairobi, only as far as the airport, 10 kms, and thought that all this "stuff" was for tourists.*

Life I will remember their unselfish and tireless dedication to this establishment; they have truly inspired me. What a lot of noise! The three patrols are back together and the volume has really increased. They are sharing stories of what they have been doing during the morning. We give the girls what they are generally deprived of, so food is in plenty. My group is washing up. This is another tradition — much to the amusement of some of the men who come on the course who haven't washed up since childhood, if at all, but they still do it! Usually the instructors are there with their group, but we need to have a quick meeting to finalise the afternoon activities. PO (we all use initials) is the logistics coordinator and he reminds us of some of the details for the forthcoming expedition, and on the last bits of gear and food that need collecting. We have a brief discussion, led by the course director, as to how things are going, and all seems smooth. Problems are normal, and we know it is our job to work on them and keep getting the best from the participants.

**M**eeeting over and we meet with all of our groups together and brief them on their final preparations. We had already started some preparation and

had issued them their gear, rucksacks, sleeping bags and cooking equipment. I was impressed by their organisation and the swift way they undertook the last bits of packing. Within an hour we were ready to be off. With our map and compass, and a designated leader, we headed out of the centre. We waved good-bye to the other groups who were going off in different directions and who we would catch up with in a few days at the Rhino rock climbing site. Our group, which incidentally is called KIBO, after the highest peak on Mount Kilimanjaro, headed off towards town. By now it was mid-afternoon. The local people are used to us now but many still find it strange to see us carrying our rucksacks with us. I mean why would anyone want to do that?! Especially Kenyan women, with all they have to carry at the best of times! You

mean you are doing this for fun?! It's very colourful, especially as there are so many Masai about. The Nairobi girls look inquisitively and the Masai return the interest, especially as the girls are wearing trousers! It isn't long though, before we're out of town and taking B-lines down the paths of shambas. Our map is 15 years old (although it is the latest one available) and where there used to be forest or bush we now have a lot of cultivated areas. We get lots of "pole", meaning "sorry", from the local people. The girls are excited as they are really feeling the thrill of being in the open country, something they are not used to. But a few are already dragging behind now and not finding it quite so pleasant, and complaining of heavy packs and blisters.

A lot of the learning goes on as we walk, adjusting packs, treating blisters, talking about the environment — and also about compassion, which is needed now and is certainly something these girls have not had much of in their lives. Because we left at mid-afternoon the first day's hike wasn't intended to be too long, although if they had made mistakes with the compass and bearings it might have taken them longer. Even though I am with them, they have to learn from their mistakes, don't they, and the next day I wasn't going to be with them all the time.

Our destination was at the bottom of a hill. It was on a huge farm owned by a Somali who had been brought up by Masai, someone who was truly a friend of Outward Bound.

Some bickering had started as some of the girls were tired, but they set about organising

camp, the firewood, supper preparations, putting up the tents and getting some water. I had used the time on the way to have some individual chats, and continued this at camp.

**A**s instructors we try not to do tasks because this takes the initiative from the group, and after all, it is their course, so I used the time to continue to chat, having given them some guidelines. The girl I talked to was really enthralled by what was happening to her. She said she had never been outside Nairobi, only as far as the airport, 10 kms, and thought that all this "stuff" was for tourists. She said she was having the best time. I asked her since when, and she replied: "Ever". She was about 26! Supper was cooked and I enjoyed one of the best Ugali (maize meal) dishes I have ever had. We reflected on the day and talked about what went well and what could be done better, so that tomorrow's hike could go as smoothly as possible.

Of course, the main point is that they are learning something from it. They were all pretty exhausted, so retired at the earliest opportunity. I sat outside for a while longer and made some notes in my log book, as we were going to do a report on each of the girls, to help both them and their sponsor in the future.

That done, I looked up. I love the moon and stars, especially out here on the plains, and tonight was particularly clear. It is not uncommon to see shooting stars, and they always appear so magical to me. The day ended almost as it began, but this time with the moon lighting up the snow of Kilimanjaro. □

## Outward Bound

The first Outward Bound school ("for short-term character training") was opened in 1941. It included aspects such as fitness, leadership, seamanship, and rescue. Lawrence Holt, chairman of a shipping line and financier of

the initial project, saw it as "training for citizenship through the sea," and it was he who invented the title Outward Bound.

The service and rescue components were basic. The school's second Warden, J.F. Fuller, believed that "nothing attracts the young more than the call 'You are needed'." Historian G.M. Trevelyan baptised the school's new sailing

ketch, Garibaldi, saying: "Without the instinct for adventure in young men, any civilisation, however enlightened, any state, however well-ordered, must wilt and wither." Since those early days of four-week schools for 15-19-year-olds, Outward Bound has become an internationally known adventure training movement.

# Saigon's street kids stand up for themselves

THE leader is a bald, wiry youth with a round face who insists he is 17 years old, but he looks 14. His shorts and once-white shirt are grimy and worn thin. Nguyen Hoang Anh Tuan says he left his family two years ago after he had trouble getting along with the grandmother he was sent to live with when his parents divorced.

Tuan and his friends, members of a protective group of eight boys, live in the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, the business capital of Vietnam, which is still informally called Saigon. The city is the epicentre of the economic transformation that began in Vietnam in the late 1980s, when the country's Communist rulers decided to embrace free-market economics. Although the change has brought prosperity to many in Vietnam, the free market is one reason that Tuan is not with his family.

Schools have begun to charge parents small fees for building maintenance and even tuition, creating a burden for poor families. Fees were also introduced in the health-care system. And Vietnamese who used to receive food from Communist cooperatives are now in greater need of cash, so parents often pull their children from school and put them to work.

## Economic fallout

Nghiem Xuan Tue, director of the Vietnamese government's Programmes of Protection for Displaced Children, calls his charges one of the "negative phenomena" arising from the revival of state-sanctioned capitalism. Other officials deny the connection, and social workers caution that it may be too soon to draw any definitive conclusions.

Talking to the youths themselves leaves less room for ambiguity.

A 13-year-old named Tran Nhan Dung, one of Tuan's friends, says he left home because his mother wanted him to stay out of school and sell lottery tickets and newspapers. This wasn't the only reason he left the coastal city of Vung Tao for Saigon – he says his father had taken a mistress but he "didn't like" being forced to work.

Tuan says he never got much education, "because my family did not want to pay for my school." Social workers have plenty of labels for Tuan and Dung and the millions like them who populate the thoroughfares of many cities throughout the world. One of the Vietnamese terms is "unlucky children." UNICEF, the United Nations organization concerned with the world's youths, uses the appropriately bureaucratic "children in especially difficult circumstances." Mostly they are called "street kids" – children who live from hand to mouth in public places, scrounging for food, security, and affection.

## Numbers still small here

Compared with the growing populations of street kids in some cities in South Asia and Latin America, the numbers in Vietnam are small. Estimates are shaky but officials and non-governmental social workers say that 2,000 Vietnamese children, and mostly boys, are full-fledged street kids – completely independent youths who have no connection to their families. There are vastly more children who maintain some connections with parents or relatives but do not go to school; their number may be anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000. Like many governments around the world, the official Vietnamese response to street children has been to round them up occasionally and confine them in institutions.

Experts have warned against this strategy, arguing that children who have sacrificed much for independence cannot be helped by depriving them of their freedom.

The government now is showing more interest in helping the children on their own terms, working with them on the street and trying to return them to their families, according to Timothy Bond, the Saigon representative of Terre des Hommes, a Swiss organization



that runs programmes for street children here. But, he adds: "It is still a fact that the government continues to pick them off the streets and put them in a closed institution." One problem, he says, is that the liberalization that has freed many parts of the economy has not reached the social-service sector. The government has yet to pass a law legalizing non-governmental organizations that could help street kids, and many officials remain suspicious of sanctioning such groups.

One Western social worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity, attributed the suspicion to the Communist government's reluctance to allow organizations that could become political.

"When you're talking about empowering the poor to stand up for their rights ... the worker says, "this notion is rather threatening".

Meanwhile, on the streets of Saigon, the children are trying to stay alive.

Tuan says the boys beg for money, sometimes in the tourist areas of the city. When that doesn't work, they scavenge

food from restaurants. They also get some help from a few charitable organisations, both Vietnamese and foreign, that operate in Saigon.

## Taking care of each other

One of the boys in the group, named only Ti, is small with pointy hair and bright eyes. He left the hill town of Dalat a year ago, he explains, because his parents died and his aunt didn't stop bigger boys from bullying him.

He guesses he is 10 years old. Is it any better here in Saigon, on the street? "We protect him," answers Dung, as Tuan and the other boys nod.

They sit close together, almost on top of each other. During the course of an hour-long interview, the boys communicate as much by wanting to be touched as with their words.

The boys are asked what they want to do when they grow up. A few of them talk about owning a small business.

"I want some privacy," says 10-year-old Nguyen Tuan Tai. □

From Cameron Barr, writing in the *Monitor*

Valerie Dovey reports in *Track Two* on the implementation of a valuable programme by the Youth Project of UCT's Centre for Conflict Resolution which pioneers and promotes a climate of problem-solving and conflict-resolution amongst school children

## Ripples and rumbles: Towards peaceable school communities

Mr Hendrickse sits in his office, busy with the administrative load that is the lot of the principal of a large primary school. A confident knock on his door, and outside stand three Standard 4 pupils, two boys and a girl. The girl is the spokesperson and she tells of a conflict between the boys. It started off with one taking something belonging to the other and moved swiftly into kicking and hitting mode. The boys have agreed to try to deal with this problem another way — through a mediation process, talking it out, a process with which the school body is already familiar.

The eleven-year-old girl asks Mr Hendrickse if he will co-mediate with her. The principal obliges, the group is invited to sit down in his office and so starts a problem-solving process with a difference.

This incident was related to parents at a large Parent-Teachers' Association (PTA) meeting at the school recently. It was a good news story, one of empowerment being put into practice at pupil and principal level.

There was also the telling of a bad news story. The day before the PTA meeting, a nine-year-old Standard 2 pupil at the school was shot and killed in gang cross-fire. He wasn't even part of the conflict. He just happened to be in the way of a bullet meant for someone else. The bad news stories present the Youth Project with particular challenges as it tries to promote the concept of peace education and constructive conflict resolution among pupils, teachers and parents in our school communities.

So many of those with whom the Project starts working

equate conflict with violence and other negative associations. But what else can be expected when this is a daily reality for these young people, with violent manifestations of conflict in their homes, schools and communities?

Violent responses to conflict are described graphically in the news media, and marketed actively by the entertainment media. Disrespect for other people is played out in a variety of ways ranging from abusive verbal and non-verbal communication in homes, to the more visible manifestations at broader levels of society.

It is in this context that the Youth Project is trying to talk

peace to children, parents and teachers, and help them understand and buy into the idea that there are alternatives to the ways of 'fight', on one hand — the ways of muscle, physical and emotional abuse, blatant violence and power played out negatively — and that there are also alternatives to the ways of 'flight', on the other hand — the ways of running away, putting one's heads into the sand, living with a 'victim' mind-set and feeling totally disempowered and helpless in the face of conflict.

Against seemingly overwhelming odds, the Youth Project tries to share the conviction that all have roles to play as peace builders, peace makers and peace educators.

The Youth Project perseveres because of a belief in the values that underlie its conflict resolution training, which is designed to equip young people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that challenge them to seek quality 'fix', 'flow' or 'win-win' alternatives to the 'fight' and 'flight' responses.

### Principles and values

The training is grounded in a philosophical framework which highlights the importance of three fundamental building blocks as bases for problem-solving and constructive conflict resolution:

- (a) affirmation, that is valuing of ourselves and each other;
- (b) communication; and
- (c) co-operation.

This framework is presented metaphorically with constructive conflict resolution as the tip of an iceberg and the building blocks as its foundation.

What are some of the values behind the Youth Project's training? First, a belief that conflict can have positive value and that it is only by approaching, confronting and grappling with it, when appropriate, that the 'gold' in it can be 'mined', that one can get in touch with differences and thereby find the elements for possible resolution. Implicit here are the positive values of peaceful expression of conflict and diversity.

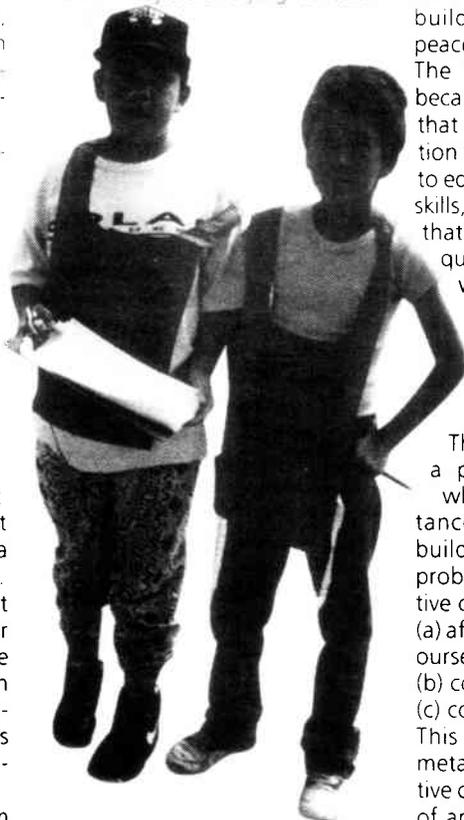
Second, a belief that the voluntary resolution of conflict is a positive value. This is an expression of disputant power and personal investment in a process which encourages people to take responsibility for resolving a problem themselves, or using an impartial third person to assist them to do so. It allows them to retain control over their problem and take ownership of a solution which they see as workable.

Third, a belief that setting up systems in homes, schools and communities where these values can be demonstrated has positive value. The ideal scenario is one of 'peaceable' school communities.

What is meant by this? The Youth Project sees the school community as being inclusive of pupils, principals, teaching and other school staff, management boards, parents and the wider community in which the school is located. The 'peaceable' school community is one that is characterised by attitudes and behaviours of mutual respect in all interactions and constructive conflict resolution processes which are 'bought into' by all. (Note: *The Youth Project uses the word 'peaceable' rather than 'peaceful', with a purpose: 'peaceable' is more dynamic, and has associations with activity, momentum, potential and growth.*)

### Peer mediation

School-based peer mediation programmes, pioneered in the USA and now systematised in primary and high schools in many parts of the world, are an example of the kind of system the Youth Project advocates. Peer mediation is an approach to pupil conflict resolution and peacemaking and a means of transforming pupil conflicts into constructive learning experiences and opportunities for growth.



Pupil-to-pupil conflicts are handled by the disputants themselves with the assistance of specially trained peer mediators or conflict managers, rather than by principals and teachers. It is a voluntary and confidential process bound by specific groundrules. It follows a step-by-step formula which assists pupils to work through immediate problems, take responsibility for generating their own solutions, agree on those that are practical and mutually acceptable, and then work at implementing these. In so doing, it enables young people to develop a basis for future problem-solving.

### Peer mediation training programmes

In January 1995 the Youth Project introduced pilot peer mediation training programmes for teachers from a number of primary and high schools in Cape Town. This is an ongoing learning experience which is generating all sorts of ripples. Below is a brief discussion of the Youth Project's work with primary school teachers and the kinds of ripples they themselves are creating.

The experience has been a process in itself, often initiated with awareness presentations and basic conflict resolution training programmes for the entire staff of individual schools, or for teachers from a number of schools. Participation in the three-day programme was encouraged from teachers who had received some basic conflict resolution training and who were specifically interested in and committed to initiating programmes in their schools.

Materials from two USA organisations were used to guide this training, but participants were encouraged to consider critically what could and would be appropriate and workable for their own settings.

The whole process has been documented in a systematic way, which provide a valuable basis for critical reflection.

The training agenda revisited some of the Project's basic conflict resolution course components, presented opportunities for participants to mediate in role-play situations, and then looked at the practicalities of actually implementing a programme in their respective schools. A number of conflict

resolution practitioners acted as coaches during the role-plays. One of the most valuable exercises, according to both the trainers' assessment and participant evaluations, was the small group design and presentation of teaching activities or lessons based on selected aspects of the training.

The same participants attended a follow-up workshop with a specific focus on co-mediation. They were also given an opportunity to share what they had been doing in their schools in the interim.

### Ripple effects

Part of the challenge to participants in the training programmes is to find active ways of marketing the concepts to their staff and pupil bodies, and moving the process forward, i.e. generating their own ripple effects. This has begun to take place.

Three of the participant schools have presented role-plays during the school assembly drawing on traditional stories of conflict, i.e. those of *Peter Rabbit and Farmer McGregor*, and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

Teachers have dressed up and acted out roles as the parties in conflict and the mediators.

One school has invited a neighbouring school to a repeat assembly presentation. The Youth Project videotaped this event and now has a valuable new resource, generated in a local context, for awareness and training programmes.

These assemblies have provided a forum for introducing the mediation process and familiarising pupils and other staff with the term 'mediation'.

This has now become something of a buzz word in the schools, but one which has meaning and credibility. It's part of a new conflict resolution vocabulary in schools which also includes words such as 'groundrules', 'active' or 'I-Care listening', 'I-messages' and 'fighting fair'. This is a vocabulary which enables youngsters to get in touch with feelings and to express these in confident ways.

Participants have also been sharing what they have learned with other teachers during staff meetings, in-service training slots, and in special workshops. One teacher team has enlisted 22 staff volunteers to give up a day of their holidays for a train-

ing programme they are presenting; another has established a nine-person conflict resolution staff team to take the process forward. One participant has taken the message to teachers from other schools and to student teachers at a training college. The principal of one of the participant schools has been talking to a group of fellow principals.

There are ripples, too, in classrooms, where teachers are finding ways of integrating the concepts of constructive conflict resolution into their teaching, and applying its principles to daily occurrences of classroom conflict. Teachers are designing their own materials and involving pupils in developing resources. At one school, for example, Sub B and Special Class pupils have used their art lessons to decorate 'Fighting Fair' posters for strategic display in every classroom and in the foyer.

The whole Standard 5 and Senior Special Class at the same school experienced a school day with a difference recently when they participated in a conflict resolution training workshop presented by two teachers who had attended the Youth Project's course. Pupils were asked to generate ideas for their own role-play situations and parents were brought into the process by providing refreshments.

Pupils and teachers have been mediating informally in classrooms and other settings. This is becoming a natural way to deal with conflicts as they arise. Effective teacher modelling has obviously paved the way for this.

### Constructive conflict resolution at work

A recent incident provides a graphic illustration of constructive conflict resolution and pupil and teacher empowerment at work. The incident centred around the problematic interpersonal behaviour of a troubled youngster from a difficult home environment, which was affecting a group of girls in Standard 5.

The boy and the group of girls were invited to meet a teacher mediator in the staffroom, which was a nice adult affirmation of the value attached to this kind of process by the school. The teacher started off facilitating the *Introduction and Story-*

*Telling* stages of the mediation process.

She relates that she was surprised by the skill level, particularly the display of empathetic listening, shown by some of the girls. An illustrative comment:

"I know how he feels, Miss, my home is also like that!"

But more surprises were in store. When the process was moving to the *Problem Solving* stage, the teacher was asked to leave the room so that the youngsters could "get on with solving our own problem ourselves" — without the assistance of an adult facilitator.

The teacher went with her "gut feeling" and left the room, despite the fact that the atmosphere was emotionally charged and there were many tears.

Checking back a short while later, she found that the pupils had drawn their chairs into a close and caring circle and were totally absorbed in solving their problem. One of the girls was standing behind the boy with her hand on his shoulder. The teacher, aware of an obvious decrease of tension in the room, commented: "What I see is lots of people who want to be friends ... lots of caring and reflection. Would you like some more time?" She withdrew.

When she returned, she found all the chairs neatly arranged back in their places and no pupils in the staffroom. The problem had worked itself out and practical ways forward had been agreed upon.

A young boy with a fragile self-image had emerged from a situation which, instead of damaging him further, had been a restorative and healing experience and had set the base for building constructive future relationships with his peers.

Three cheers for a teacher who had enough confidence in the process to step aside and let it continue without her. And three cheers for the young 12 and 13-year-olds who had the confidence to move from a mediation format to a group problem-solving one — and to work through an emotionally-laden situation like this on their own.

There have also been reports of teachers using the problem-solving process to address interpersonal and intragroup staff conflicts and defuse potentially explosive situations. A number of teachers have expressed interest in becoming members of

a Youth Project support team to assist with training and resource development.

Three of the participant schools have invited the Project to spread the message of constructive conflict resolution to their parent bodies at PTA meetings. One of these schools has been instrumental in organising a pilot "Parent Power for Peace" training programme and is following this up with another which will be presented over a longer time period and involve parents from other schools.

The Youth Project is excited about schools involving parents in this way. After all, parents are part of their children's school communities. But it goes further than that. Parents have valuable and responsible roles to play as peace educators, and the Project welcomes opportunities to encourage them to do this.

Reference was made earlier to the Youth Project's perseverance — "hanging in" — because of its belief in the value of its work. The Project also perseveres because it sees its work bearing fruit, not with fanfares and great glory trails, but with the kind of ripples that are developing in school communities. Exhilarating and exciting stuff is what the good news stories, like Mr Hendrickse's and others, are made of.

The ripples might be drops in the ocean, but they won't just disappear, because in this field they gather a momentum of their own. They produce results which are qualitative and which play a vital part in making a difference in individual lives and in the climates of classrooms, playgrounds, staffrooms and school communities. There is potential for empowerment all along the way, and implicit in this a challenge to schools and also to individual pupils, teachers and parents, to spread the good news stories further afield and become models and sources of learning and support for others.

This is how the ripples can become rumbles and the rumbles, resonant roars. This will help ensure that the concepts of peace education, peace making, and peace building become viable realities in the lives of young people, and the "peaceable way" which they can confidently choose now and in their futures. □

## Child DEVELOPMENT

**Barbara Kahan** writes in the UK's *Child Care Forum* on helping young people in need to deal with sexual anxieties

# The trouble with Sex

How many of us can remember how we felt at fourteen, fifteen, perhaps younger, realising with frightening anxiety that eyes were too small, ears stuck out, hair was too straight or too curly, breasts seemed to be determined not to grow, or were growing so fast they had become an embarrassment, or a penis was missing "ideal proportions" by inches?

Why was it all so worrying, preoccupying our minds and leading to hours in front of a mirror? Our need to be confident of our appearance and attractiveness to peers led to the pursuit of magical treatment for spots, deodorants which guaranteed romance and cosmetics which produce beauty without fail.

Sex, the life force, growing up — call it what you like — was relentless, absorbing and at times overwhelming.

Parents struggle to react appropriately, curbing irritation till it erupts; attempting to speak the language and risking rejection and scorn; flagging up the days between now — and when their children "settle down", find a long-term partner, stop being adolescent, whatever is needed for the longed-for respite. Such sensitivity and need for approval and confidence affects secure young people.

Those whose family lives shatter into a thousand pieces around them have the same feelings, but even less manageable because of the many upheavals they have to endure. Even when parental role models are good, young people still have problems. When they are not, they have little guidance to follow in their search for maturity.

## Children in care

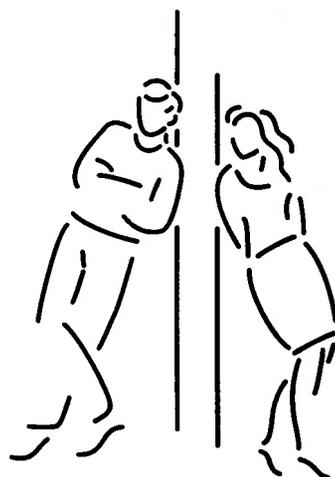
At this point many child care staff face the problem of trying to provide parental-type support, but without the benefit of early bonding years, or even adequate information on files in many cases! They also face not one or two teenagers, but a group, eight or ten, hopefully not all in despair on the same day but even that is possible! What should their approach be?

Can they perhaps sometimes be more effective than parents who often have great difficulty discussing sexual matters with their children? The book *Growing Up In Groups\** offers some suggestions.

## Someone will listen

First the anxiety and distress must be acknowledged and openness between the adults and young people is vital. The young people need to know someone will listen if they want to seek comfort or advice. Openness means knowing you can talk if you wish but are not under any pressure to do so. In order to be open with the young, staff also have to be open with each other, being honest about individual orientation, aware of their own sexuality and their attitude to other people's. Some young people may present gay or lesbian issues and staff need to be confident and able, without difficulty, to deal with homophobia as well as being sympathetic to individual young people. Bullying can focus on sex and physical appearance, sometimes as a way of distracting attention from the bully's own feelings of inadequacy.

It is natural for young people to experiment with sex, but that does not mean that anything goes. The role of staff in "managing" this aspect of behaviour needs to be seen as similar to that of a good parent. It will be helpful to establish some ground rules, discussed and agreed by the young people, and then kept to as far as possible with their support. It won't work every time; parents know that nothing does, but that doesn't mean it is not worth trying.



## Staff roles

The age of staff can be significant. Young staff may understand the feelings of the young people and how they set their priorities, but they must be sure of the support of older staff in maintaining important boundaries. Any staff members who sense a sexual component in the relationship between them and the young people need to acknowledge the situation and use the advice and experience of colleagues in ensuring that feelings are not allowed to escalate and create major problems.

The task of residential staff is always difficult. In managing sexual issues individual and collective skill and patience are needed. Staff need to model desirable adult behaviour — even when off duty if they are in proximity to the young people.

They also need to be able to control their own natural hurt and resentment when occasionally young people, full of anger and pain themselves, turn to abuse of the adults, which with the sharpness of young tongues can be particularly wounding. It is not easy to remember that to a fifteen year old even a twenty five year old is probably already "past it"!

Helping young people in need to deal with their sexual anxieties and growing up can never be easy, but it may carry some surprising rewards when, like weary parents, staff least expect it.

\**Growing up in Groups* by Barbara Kahan. 1994, HMSO.

# Bedtime Reading Redeemed

James Finn Garner: **Politically Correct Bedtime Stories**  
Souvenir Press, London

How awful that we once rode roughshod over the susceptibilities of so many groups by actually reading the stories of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen to our children at bedtime. Now, according to author James Garner, "we have the opportunity – and the obligation – to rethink these 'classic' stories so that they reflect more enlightened times."

Thirteen of our favourite stories are retold in such a way that nobody is insulted or has their rights taken lightly. Best to let the writing speak for itself – with the text of the now politically corrected version of Little Red Riding Hood:

There once was a young person named Red Riding Hood who lived with her mother on the edge of a large wood. One day her mother asked her to take a basket of fresh fruit and mineral water to her grandmother's house — not because this was womyn's work, mind you, but because the deed was generous and helped engender a feeling of community. Furthermore, her grandmother was not sick, but rather was in full physical and mental health and was fully capable of taking care of herself as a mature adult. So Red Riding Hood set off with her basket through the woods. Many people believed that the forest was a foreboding and dangerous place and never set foot in it. Red Riding Hood, however, was confident enough in her own budding sexuality that such obvious Freudian imagery did not intimidate her. On the way to Grandma's house, Red Riding Hood was accosted by a wolf, who asked

her what was in her basket. She replied, 'Some healthful snacks for my grandmother, who is certainly capable of taking care of herself as a mature adult.' The wolf said, 'You know, my dear, it isn't safe for a little girl to walk through these woods alone.' Red Riding Hood said, 'I find your sexist remark offensive in the extreme, but I will ignore it because of your traditional status as an outcast from society, the stress of which has caused you to develop your own, entirely valid, worldview. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must be on my way.' Red Riding Hood walked on along the main path.

But, because his status outside society had freed him from slavish adherence to linear, Western-style thought, the wolf knew a quicker route to Grandma's house. He burst into the house and ate Grandma, an entirely valid course of action for a carnivore such as himself. Then, unhampered by rigid, traditionalist notions of what was masculine or feminine, he put on Grandma's night-clothes and crawled into bed. Red Riding Hood entered the cottage and said, 'Grandma, I have brought you some fat-free, sodium-free snacks to salute you in your role of a wise and nurturing matriarch.' From the bed, the wolf said softly, 'Come closer, child, so that I might see you.' Red Riding Hood said, 'Oh, I forgot you are as optically challenged as a bat. Grandma, what big eyes you have!' 'They have seen much, and forgiven much, my dear.' 'Grandma, what a big nose you have — only relatively, of course, and certainly attractive in its own way.' 'It has smelled much, and forgiven much, my dear.' 'Grandma, what big teeth you have!' The wolf said, 'I am happy with who I am and what I am,' and leaped out of bed. He grabbed Red Riding Hood in his claws, intent on devouring her. Red Riding Hood screamed, not out of alarm at the wolf's apparent tendency towards cross-dressing, but because of his wilful invasion of her personal space. Her screams were heard by a passing woodcutterperson (or log-fuel technician, as he



preferred to be called). When he burst into the cottage, he saw the melee and tried to intervene. But as he raised his axe, Red Riding Hood and the wolf both stopped.

'And just what do you think you're doing?' asked Red Riding Hood.

The woodcutter-person blinked and tried to answer, but no words came to him.

'Bursting in here like a Neanderthal, trusting your weapon to do your thinking for you!' she exclaimed. 'Sexist! Speciesist! How dare you assume that womyn and wolves can't solve their own problems without a man's help!' When she heard Red Riding Hood's impassioned speech, Grandma jumped out of the wolf's mouth, seized the woodcutter-person's axe, and cut his head off. After this ordeal, Red Riding Hood, Grandma and the wolf felt a certain commonality of purpose.

They decided to set up an alternative household based on mutual respect and co-operation, and they lived together in the woods happily ever after.

There you have it. The author almost committed the unmentionable indiscretion of calling the book *Fairy Stories for a Modern World*, and also had to leave out the story *The duckling that was judged on its personal merits and not on*

its physical appearance — because the title was just too long. In his introduction he further hedges all his bets: "If, through omission or commission, I have inadvertently displayed any sexist, racist, culturalist, nationalist, regionalist, ageist, lookist, ableist, sizeist, specieist, intellectualist, socioeconomist, ethnocentrist, phallocentrist, heteropatriarchalist or other type of bias as yet unnamed, I apologise ... In the quest to develop meaningful literature that is totally free from bias and purged of the influences of its flawed cultural past, I doubtless have made some mistakes."

So, at the end of *The Three Little Pigs*, the author assures us: "The wolf in this story was a metaphorical construct. No actual wolves were harmed in the writing of the story." The prince in *Cinderella* "was celebrating his exploitation of the dispossessed and marginalised peasantry by throwing a fancy-dress ball", and Snow White (her nickname was indicative of the discriminatory and colourist notions of associating pleasant and attractive qualities with light, and unpleasant or unattractive qualities with darkness) sought refuge with the seven vertically challenged male persons.

Adults are going to enjoy this book. But, whatever, do keep the originals for the kids! □

Child care worker and trainer **Mark Tomlinson** poses some questions which can only be answered by members of the profession ...

# The Child Care Worker: Professional — or Nanny?

Every society has its invisibles — a body of people, a minority or a professional group — who for one reason or another exist and conduct their daily activities oblivious (for the most part) to the wider community. The reasons for this may be varied and complex, and could include much about politics and ideology. But when a profession (for example, nursing) is of crucial importance to society, and its services are indispensable, and yet it is still characterised by low wages and little recognition, then something is amiss. Child and youth care in South Africa is yet to achieve the recognition afforded even to nursing.

Its lack of recognition and its invisibility, however, is not a given, nor is it unchangeable. Child and youth care is very much a profession — even with reservations over some omissions and shortcomings in its self-advocacy or presentation of itself.

However child and youth care's existence as a profession, and its advocacy for itself, are not mutually exclusive: advocacy cannot wait for child care's existence as a profession to be accepted; nor can the profession idly sit back hoping advocacy alone will ensure acceptance. Both must proceed in parallel for the greater benefit of the profession's target community — the children.

I wish to use Kelly's (1990) seven criteria as to what constitutes a profession, to illustrate some of the dilemmas facing child and youth care in South Africa — as well as to indicate some of its strengths.

## Criteria for a profession

I do not suggest that Kelly's is the last word about the necessary characteristics of a profes-

sion, nor that child and youth care in South Africa must necessarily aim to meeting all his standards.

## **The first criterion Kelly suggests is that there is a formal education level associated with any profession.**

Child and youth care in South Africa would, on this point alone, fall short on this criterion — and probably this will be true for some time to come.

The demands of the present context with the ever increasing numbers of children who will be in need of care (given the trauma associated with ongoing political and criminal violence, as well as the potentially devastating effect of HIV infection) will, even in the long term, work against the hiring of trained graduates — as we prefer to do with teachers, for example. The growing numbers of child care workers at present undertaking training, be it the BQCC or UNISA's Certificate in Child and Youth Care, are immensely encouraging. The eventual conversion of the UNISA course into a diploma and then a degree course can be seen as the beginnings of the important move towards minimum educational standards for the profession. Minimum educational and training requirements are always something to be aspired to, and ideally the minimum requirement should always be pushed a little higher. However, unlike some other professions, child and youth care is about more than an educational qualification. We need to be creative in the way we see the interaction between education, experience, in-service training and personality characteristics of child care workers (for example, capacity

for empathy, insight, endurance, etc.).

In staking our claim for the status of a profession on the grounds of a formal qualification, we should start putting together a "person specification" which combines all of these factors — creating a holistic profile more attuned to the needs of the youth in our care.

## **Kelly's second criterion is the existence of an organised body of knowledge.**

While the knowledge emanating directly from child and youth care practice has increased enormously over the last ten years, much of it comes from overseas sources. South African sources are scarce, and the creation of such a body of knowledge is hindered by the lack of local publishers and journals in which to exhibit work, but perhaps more importantly, by an inferior "mindset" which appears to discourage child care workers from attempting to write down and publish what they are doing. "I am not an intellectual", "I cannot write" and "how do I know that what I am saying has any truth" are often heard from child care workers. As more information begins to appear, the more likely it will be that publishers will sit up and take note, and the more empowered and heard child care workers will feel and, ultimately, the better will be the service.

There is no substitute for experience gained on-line, and the sharing of that experience. Much of the published work in the field comes from social workers and psychologists whose access to youth on line is limited, and who very often 'filter' what experience they have through some theoretical

construct within which they are working. This may ensure that the published work retains academic interest, but loses practical application. As someone has said, "theory is good, but it doesn't prevent reality from existing."

## **Criterion number 3 is research.**

Research activity on the part of child care workers is a much neglected area. Care workers with whom I have spoken have not given a thought to the idea of conducting research in the child care field. If anything, there is an underlying belief that child care workers were the 're-searched' rather than the researchers.

Such a belief reflects an overwhelming sense of disempowerment on the part of many child and youth care workers. Within our child care facilities there is ongoing talk of the need for pro-active interventions in the lives of those in our care. This needs to be generalised to our position as child care workers, and we need to conduct research into our own position in the system showing how this can be improved alongside that of the children in care.

While much of the above may appear to be dealing with how advocacy will enhance child care's claim to be a profession, I wish to argue that the two are inextricably bound. Much of the above, as well as that which follows, is based upon the assumption that child care is, in fact, a profession and that any discussion will do better to approach the question as to how best to ensure this is the way others perceive it and how to continually improve the service offered.

## **Kelly's fourth criterion for a profession is that it must have a code of ethics.**

The drawing up of a Code of Ethics by the NACCW is a first step in fulfilling this requirement. If such a code of ethics can receive legislative authority then we will certainly have come a long way. This should then go hand in hand with some kind of professional certification. Krueger (1986) illustrates a number of professional associations in the USA where caregivers

must be certified by their peers in order to practise. Were such a system to become mandatory, certification, together with a code of ethics governing conduct, would ensure better support for care workers, protection for the children and youth, and increased professionalism, all of which can only enhance the image profession, for those within it as well as those outside.

**A professional association supporting a long-term commitment to the occupation is the next criterion offered by Kelly.**

The role served by the NACCW in this respect is of enormous importance. It is all too easy to forget the role played by the NACCW in advocacy, training, negotiation with government, research, and its many other roles in the child care field in South Africa.

The existence of a professional association with its long term commitment to the field, while of vital importance, will fight a losing battle if there is not a concomitant improvement in the conditions of employment, i.e. salaries, hours of work, access to supervision and in-service training.

Krueger (1986) suggests six ways in which to prevent high staff turnover. They are

- in-service training,
- supervision,
- financial incentive,
- career advancement,
- on-the-job perks and
- status.

The problem in the South African situation is that improvement in any one area will be dependent upon progress in another area. For child care workers to achieve any level of career advancement would at least require long term service periods. However, because of poor remuneration and working conditions, staff turnover is high, and this militates against a staffing pattern whereby child care workers can advance.

This, in turn, confirms the lower status of the profession within any organisation. I am not suggesting that everything is dependent upon financial rewards, but rather illustrating how this one factor can, for example, be intimately bound to others. Very

often care workers resign, not fundamentally because of low wages but because they perceive no path along which they may advance, and because they receive little or no on-the-job support.

**Kelly's last criterion is a clientele which recognises the authority and integrity of the profession.**

Recognition by others is to a large extent dependent upon how child care workers feel about themselves. If child care workers feel empowered, if they feel that they are respected and that their authority and integrity are recognised by others within their organisations (social workers, psychologists, middle and top level management), then this is the positive picture they will present to others, and their clientele will undoubtedly recognise the authority and integrity of their position.

**Our own solution**

I have used Kelly's criteria to encourage discussion, not necessarily to apply them rigidly to the circumstances of our career in South Africa.

Not only is South Africa a unique situation, but also, child care has a unique position. Strict application of any models to our field will always prove problematic.

What we need to develop are creative responses to the demands and needs of child and youth care in South Africa.

Child care is a profession. Child care workers are professionals. It is up to us to convince others of this through our advocacy, our professionalism, our commitment, our pride — and through the development and application of our own skills.

No one else is going to do this for us.

**Bibliography**

- Kelly, Carol S. (1990) Professionalising Child and Youth Care: An Overview. In J. Anglin, C.S. Denholm, R.V. Ferguson and A.R. Pence (Eds.) *Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care*. Hawthorn Press: New York
- Krueger, Mark A. (1986) *Careless to Caring for Troubled Youth*. Washington: Child Welfare League of America.

**The PROFESSION**

In support of the article printed on these pages, we reproduce here the Code of Ethics agreed by the profession in South Africa and which is assented to upon registration as a child and youth care professional.

**Child and Youth Care Work**

# Code of Ethics and Ethical Standards

Child and Youth Care Work involves professional people providing direct care to children and youth. The Child and Youth Care professional is responsible for using his/her expertise to maintain a secure, healthy environment that will help children and youth reach their full potential. Being a professional Child and Youth Care Worker requires mastery of a body of knowledge and skills gained through both education and experience. It also requires recognition of the limitations of our present knowledge and skills and of the services we are presently equipped to provide. The goal sought is the performance of a service with integrity and competence.

A Child and Youth Care professional believes in the dignity and worth of the individual. He/she is committed to increasing a youngster's understanding of himself and others; and as a professional worker, promotes the full development of a child's potential. A Child and Youth Care professional does not use his/her professional position or relationships, nor does he/she knowingly permit his/her own services to be used by others, for purposes inconsistent with these values.

Child Care professionals, because of their holistic orientation to each child, work to ensure that the total needs of each child in their care are met. A Child Care professional understands that all behaviour is meaningful and purposeful, however disruptive, unusual, or unique it may seem.

This Code of Ethics embodies certain ethical standards of behaviour for the Child and Youth Care professional in his/her professional relationships with children, colleagues, employing agencies, the community and other professionals.

In abiding by the Code of Ethics, the Child Care professional views his/her obligations in as wide a context as the situation requires, takes all the principles into consideration, and chooses a course of action consistent with the Code's spirit and intent.





## DCCA Seminar

Students of the Diploma in Child Care Administration on the last (students only) day of the recent DCCA Annual Seminar held in a wintry Newlands, Cape Town. The first two days were attended by a larger group of forty administrators, many of them in Cape Town for the NACCW's Biennial Conference held during the previous week. Seen here with students are Seminar Leader Prof Jack Kirkland of Washington University, St Louis, USA (second from right) and DCCA Course Co-ordinator Brian Gannon (far left).



## Full-time Relief Child and Youth Care Workers

at the Verulam and Glenwood Community Houses in Durban

Our Community Houses are Family / Group Homes in the community which develop and care for up to 10 boys aged from 9 to 18 years.

### REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should preferably: -

- Hold a Child and Youth Care qualification
- Have past experience in, and enjoy working with children, youth and families
- Be bilingual (additional traditional language use will be advantageous)
- Be in possession of a valid driver's license (necessity)

These are non-residential (live-out) posts and involve both week day and weekend work. Remuneration is commensurate with experience and training in Child and Youth Care work.

### CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

12 September 1995

Please apply, in writing with CV, to:

The Principal, Boys' Towns South Africa  
187 Clark Road, Glenwood 4001

## Child Care Worker

We have a vacancy for a Child Care Worker in a Community Home.

A small self-contained flat is provided. If you have the required skills and training please telephone Mrs Shone on 0331-42-3214 for an application form.

## Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes

P O Box 949  
Pietermaritzburg 3200  
Phone (0331) 42-3214  
Fax: (0331) 42-2526

## Couple

The Johannesburg Children's Home requires the services of a couple for live-in evening child care worker. No encumbrances. Working out during the day. Experience with children and a valid driver's licence essential.

Post, Fax or deliver C.V. to  
The Director, 45 Urania  
Street, Observatory 2198  
Fax: (011) 487-3645

## The Johannesburg Children's Home

## Assistant Principal

The Home cares for needy boys aged 6 to 18. Applicants should have a recognised qualification in social work and/or child and youth care work as well as administrative, supervisory and training skills and experience in residential care.

*Written applications together with detailed CV and three references should be addressed to:*

The Chairman  
St Theresa's Board of Management  
7 St Theresa Road, Mayville, Durban 4091

## St Theresa's Home

## Child and Youth Care Workers

Two full-time and two part-time child and youth care staff are required at St Theresa's Home. The Home cares for needy boys aged 6 to 18.

Applicants should have matric or equivalent and certificated training and experience in child and youth care and management.

*Written applications, together with CV and three references should be addressed to:*

The Principal  
St Theresa's Home, 7 St Theresa Road  
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# Major Chords

We are told that musical instruments have been found dating back 30 000 years, and that ceremonial music (as part of religious rites, public gatherings and amusements, dance and story telling) predates recorded history — and may even predate human speech. Arising as it does, then, from our very deepest human roots, it is not surprising to discover music's capacity for uniting us and expressing our commonalities — rather than emphasising our differences. Musicologist Alan Schindler tells us that (apart from continuously developing Western music forms where we find much 'music for its own sake') "music is perceived as a cohesive social force or gift, most valued for the group expression of shared beliefs that transcend contemporary political events."

**Conference music**

All who were present at the plenary sessions at the recent NACCW Biennial Conference where delegates sang together, will know how true this is. We experienced the moving affirmation that, however hard different cultures and traditions in our world have been seeking to find and meet each other, we have in a real sense already done so. It has been fascinating in recent months to see the unifying impact of the traditional African song *Tsosoloso* — everywhere from

rugby fields to our conference hall! The key to this sense of involvement is that in African music the emphasis is on *participation* rather than *performance* — so that at the end, even though we may only have moved in time to the music or clapped our hands, we have the feeling that we all 'did' the song together.

**Reachable music**

The miracle of music is that its whole history remains current. There is so much music, and all of it is reachable; we can experience today the most ancient of music, and the most modern. Much Western music and popular music is individual, introspective; it takes us into ourselves.

But of traditional music Roderic Knight tells us that "an overriding stylistic trait of African music is its ability to generate an engaging mood and active involvement in the performance."

There is no harm in music which helps us to explore our individuality; but how good to experience also the richness of music which celebrates our togetherness and common humanity. To those who led and participated in the music at Conference, thank you so much!

**Using music in practice**

Our cover picture and story (page 5) translates this directly into our work with children and young people

The Voices Foundation, set up by legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin, seeks to recover for those who have lost their musical — and essential — roots.

The foundation's director says that "you won't find any tone-deafness in an African tribe, nor in any situations where music is functional." Menuhin himself goes on to make the interesting observation: "We build walls against ourselves as well as against other people. Music is one of the key elements for transforming an atmosphere of fear, hatred, prejudice and violence in schools."

We have experienced together the power of the medium of music. We need to keep it alive in our lives, and, as child care workers, to keep it alive amongst the tools of our trade.

## Welcome

In our May issue we reported on the new UK child care journal *Child Care Forum* (for all those concerned with health, law, education and the protection of children). The first four issues have been published — and as from July the sixteen-page monthly is supplemented by another 16-page journal, *Childright*, a bulletin of law and policy affecting children and young people in England and Wales. Our journal has agreed to a reciprocal publishing agreement with *Child Care Forum* whereby we will share material when appropriate. The cover price of *Forum* is £2.00 (£27.00 annual subscription).

Those who would like to subscribe may send a fax to 0944-01384-25-4406 for more information about overseas rates. □

## The child care worker

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