

# The **child care worker**

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**Cover Picture:** What face lies behind the mask? *Photograph: Stephen Livick*



## **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



Fédération Internationale des Communautés Éducatives  
International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)



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

Timothy Ryan, the AFL-CIO's representative based in South Asia, considers the tragic death of a remarkable small boy

# Iqbal Masih's life: a call to human rights vigilance

ANYONE who knew Iqbal Masih, the 12-year-old boy assassinated earlier this year in Lahore, Pakistan, by someone believed to be a feudal landlord and carpet manufacturer, was struck by his brilliance. I don't simply mean his intellectual abilities, though once rescued from slavery at a carpet loom this young activist demonstrated a tremendous aptitude for learning. He went through five years of school curriculum in three. Although malnutrition and abuse left him, at the age of 12, physically smaller and more frail than my nine-year-old daughter, it was clear that his mind, his ambition, and his spirit burned brightly.

When I saw him last December in Karachi on his return from the United States, where he received a Reebok Human Rights Award, he was filled with the excitement of his first airplane ride, a new Instamatic camera, his visit with other schoolchildren in Boston, and the unimaginable promise that one day he might attend a university. (Brandeis University had pledged to give a four-year scholarship to Iqbal when he finished his studies in Pakistan.) Then someone motivated by greed, by fear, by hatred, pulled the trigger of a shotgun and obliterated this promise.

## Risked life

I first met Iqbal last year through my work with the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF) as a representative of the AFL-CIO in South Asia. The BLLF has worked dauntlessly for years to free thousands of bonded and child labourers, Iqbal among them. After working six years at a carpet loom, starting at the age of four, Iqbal was rescued by the BLLF when he was 10.

Iqbal's rescue was due in no small part to his own guts. Last December he told me that one day two years ago, in the village where he was enslaved as a carpet weaver, he saw BLLF posters declaring that bonded and child labour was illegal under Pakistan law, and he secretly contacted BLLF activists. At the risk of his own life, Iqbal



led the BLLF to the carpet looms where they rescued hundreds of children, who might still be in slavery if not for his courage. ' It seems medieval, and perhaps it is, but for years carpet manufacturers, brick kiln owners, landowners, and manufacturers of sporting goods and other products in Pakistan have maintained an unrelenting grip on bonded labourers and children. Some estimates run as high as 20 million bonded and child labourers. At least half a million children are employed in the carpet trade alone. Because of the current tension between Islamic and Christian communities in Pakistan, some would say the killing of Iqbal was a purely religious matter. On one level this is a mere smoke

screen. But on a more complex and sinister level, there is some connection between the fact that Iqbal was Christian and the fact that he was pressed into slavery in the first place. Iqbal's story has an economic and political subtext: Politicians and businessmen in Pakistan form a tight web of relationships based on kin, clan, and caste. They count on family members who occupy positions of authority in local, provincial, national and police bodies to look the other way when laws are violated, or, in many cases, to actively participate in crimes against workers and minorities.

Poverty is often the surface excuse for a problem with deeper roots. It's a fallacy to see Iqbal's death solely as the result of brutal economics, rather than the outcome of broader, more pervasive violations of fundamen-

tal human rights.

On one level Iqbal's story is surely economic — poor people have less education, less income, less power than the rich. Even though it was outlawed in 1992 under Pakistan's Bonded Labour Abolition Act, the "advance" system that bonds people to their employers continues unabated. This system ensnared Iqbal at the age of four. The BLLF has taken some cases to court, but police and employer intimidation, along with judges' unwillingness to enforce the law, has prevented any prosecutions under the 1992 law.

## Outsiders

It's at a deeper, generally hidden level that Iqbal's tragedy intersects with millions of

*His experience implores us to look beyond "poverty" or "economic hardship" as an explanation of why so many men, women, and children in traditional societies are exploited*

Pakistani citizens and helps to explain the oppressive social and cultural patterns that are partly responsible for his death. The fact is, most people who are bonded and enslaved are converted Muslims, indigenous tribal people, Hindus, and Christians — in short, anyone outside the mainstream of Sunni Islamic society. This insight reveals the intrinsic link between "economic" or "labour" issues and pervasive problems of intolerance and discrimination based on race, language, and ethnicity. So we're not just talking here about poverty and economic hardship, or one brave little boy's death. We're talking about enslavement based on race and language and religion, about the treatment of human beings as commodities, as slave labour, and the slow grinding to death of people who not only are denied economic advancement, but also a chance at education, decent housing, clean water the things that make life livable. Iqbal's death must have a greater meaning beyond the tragedy of a bright meteor snuffed out by greed and corruption. His experience implores us to look beyond "poverty" or "economic hardship" as an explanation of why so many men, women, and children in traditional societies are exploited — to see the rights of child workers and bonded workers as part of a continuum of overall human rights that must be defended at all costs. □

With acknowledgements to *The Christian Science Monitor*. Graphic: Tom Hughes



The wide-ranging **Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk** is hard at work on short-term crisis intervention and transformation of the child and youth care system. They report on their —

# Programme of Action

## Vision

Children and youth are our most treasured asset: they and their families are valued and capable and contribute to a caring and healthy society.

## Mission

To design and implement an integrated child and youth care system.

## Obligations

In order to design and implement an integrated Child and Youth Care system which is based on a new model, the Inter-Ministerial Committee must fulfill certain obligations:

1. *An obligation to work towards social change*, i.e., change in the socio-economic circumstances which impinge on the lives of the children and youth and their families.
2. *An obligation to undertake human resources development*, develop employment opportunities, and generally build the capacity of service providers, communities, families, and young people.
3. *An obligation to devise relevant and workable models of child and youth care practice at all levels of the system.* This implies a programme of pilot projects that will:
  - (a) assist in establishing what

are ecologically and developmentally appropriate child and youth services in this country;

(b) provide policy makers with vital information in the design of legislation, policy, service frameworks, and intervention strategies.

4. *An obligation to strive towards prevention, early intervention and community-based programmes for young people at risk, and their families.* This implies a programme that embodies the principles of

- (a) prevention rather than cure;
- (b) empowerment rather than dependency; and
- (c) permanency planning and family preservation.

5. *An obligation to standardise child and youth care service delivery* and to bring it in line with accepted international ethics and principles of practice.

- This implies a programme which includes;
- (a) establishing standards
  - (b) networking and consultation;
  - (c) accountability;
  - (d) monitoring and quality control; and
  - (e) international consultation and liaison.

## The initiation of the Inter-ministerial Committee

The unco-ordinated release and transfer of more than 2000 children awaiting trial on 8 May 1995 exacerbated the long-standing crisis in the child and youth care system. In attempting to solve these problems it became clear that piecemeal solutions were neither possible nor appropriate and that a new vision and system for effectively serving young people and families was required.

During May 1995, the South African Cabinet with the full sanction of President Mandela resolved that an interim *Inter-ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk* be established to manage the process of crisis intervention and transformation over a time-limited period. The process was officially announced to the South African public on the 17th July 1995. The committee which consists of the seven national Non-Government organisations and the Ministries of Welfare, Justice, Education, Health, Correctional Services, Safety and Security, RDP, and Labour is chaired nationally and provincially by the Minister of Welfare.

## The principles of the new model

**Accountability:** Everyone who intervenes with young people and their families should be held accountable for the delivery of an appropriate and quality service

**Empowerment:** The resourcefulness of each young person and their family should be promoted by providing opportunities to utilise and build their own support networks and to act on their own choices and sense of responsibility.

**Participation:** Young people and their families should be actively involved in all the stages of the intervention process.

**Family-Centred:** Positive developmental experiences within a community context should be ensured for each family. Support and guidance should be provided through regular assessment and action planning which enhances the family's development over time.

**Community-based:** Wherever possible community-based programme options for young people and families should be developed and used as the first priority.

**Continuum of care:** young people at risk (and their families) should have access to a range of different related services on a continuum of care, ensuring access to the most empowering and least restrictive programmes appropriate to their individual needs.

**Integration:** Services should be inter-sectoral and delivered by a multi disciplinary team wherever appropriate.

**Continuity of care:** The changing social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural needs of the young person and their family should be recognised and addressed throughout the intervention process. Additional support and resources should be available after disengagement.

**Normalisation:** The young person and their family should be exposed to activities and opportunities which promote developmental needs from the perspective of normal development.

**Effective and efficient:** All actions with young people and their families should be tendered in the most effective and efficient way possible.

**Child-centred:** Positive devel-

opmental experiences should be ensured for young people, both individually and collectively. Appropriate guidance and support should be ensured through regular assessment and action planning which enhances the young person's development over time.

*Rights of young people:* The rights of young people as established in the UN Convention shall be protected.

*Restorative Justice:* The approach to young people in trouble with the law should include: resolution of conflict, family and community involvement in decision-making, diversion, and community-based interventions.

*Appropriateness:* All services to young people and their families should be the most appropriate for the individual, the family and the community.

*Family preservation:* All services should prioritise the need to have young people remain within the family context wherever possible. To this end family capacity building and accessibility to a variety of appropriate resources and supports should be of primary concern.

*Permanency planning:* Every young person should be provided with the opportunity to grow up in their own family and where this is proved not to be in their best interests or not possible, to have a time-limited plan which provides for life-long relationships in a family or community setting.

### Goals

- To alleviate the immediate crisis within the child and youth care system in such a way as to ensure that there is no further deterioration, and that all actions begin to move the system toward the new principles.
- To transform the South African child and youth care system into an integrated service based upon an ecological and developmental perspective.

### Programme objectives

- To facilitate and support the co-ordination on the inter-sectoral work within the nine provinces;
- To research and design an effective and efficient financial system which will sus-

tain the new child and youth care system;

- To provide immediate support and capacity building to personnel in order to prevent further deterioration of the system and promote the new model;
- To research, design and implement a comprehensive and integrated human resource development programme, including the capacity building of families, which supports and facilitates the transformation and implementation of a new child and youth care system;
- To research and design an effective justice process for young people;
- To design, facilitate and evaluate pilot projects within provinces which test new procedures, processes or programmes — particularly those related to prevention and early intervention, to family capacity building and to diversion from the criminal justice system;
- To consult with and learn from the international field on both youth justice and child and youth care work;
- To link with and inform existing legislative grafting procedures and processes;
- To ensure an effective database on all existing elements in the system;
- To research and design a continuum of developmental care and treatment services for the child and youth care system.

### Key strategies

- Pilot projects conducted by government departments and NGOs to test particular aspects of the new system.
- A national crisis intervention programme which involves 24-hour support, training and re-training, supervision, immediate changes to procedures and policy, and evaluation of the systemic problems which prevent crisis resolution and a move towards the new model.
- An effective human resource development infrastructure and programmes for the future.
- A process of consultation with grassroots and policy-makers.

- Design of the new system.

### Management of the process and accountability

The Inter-Ministerial Committee has appointed a working group to manage the transformation process and ensure that goals and objectives are achieved. This working group consists of NGO and Government representatives who have knowledge and expertise in the relevant aspects of child and youth care practice. The working group has been named the "Management Committee" and is made up of national project teams which each have a special focus. The chairperson, the manager, the project team leaders, and additional representatives from NGO's and Government Departments form a *Management Team* which consists of a Chairperson (Deputy-Minister of Welfare and Population Development), a Manager, and Representatives from the following Government Departments and/or Ministries: Welfare, Correctional Services, Health, Justice, Education, Safety and Security with nine Provincial Coordinators. Project teams and focus groups on the following:

- Youth Justice (reception, referral and diversion)
- Residential and community care and treatment (community care and treatment, and residential care and treatment)
- Human resources (probation and child and youth care work)
- Information and communication
- Reclaiming militarised youth (militarised youth and gangs)
- Financial
- Provincial Liaison
- Two additional members appointed by the chairperson.

### Management team's roles and responsibilities

- To manage the crisis and the transformation of the child and youth care system by ensuring that project teams have the necessary support and resources to achieve their objectives and by holding such teams accountable for progress.

- In consultation with the Deputy Minister, to recommend policy and procedural change for the transformation process.
- To integrate the work of project teams and the work done at provincial level.
- To account back to the Ministerial Committee and the Cabinet regularly and to implement the directions received from the Committee and the Cabinet
- To receive proposals on pilot projects, decide on pilot projects and monitor the progress of these projects
- To undertake a quality assessment of existing services together with an inventory of facilities and services
- To define the child and youth care system's principles and philosophy
- To develop a broad framework for services and common terminology
- To define appropriate responsibilities, policies and mechanisms for integrated, national, provincial and local systems
- To design and establish programme support, monitoring and evaluation
- To provide linkages between project teams
- To present the documented policy, procedure and programme design for the new child and youth care system to the Ministerial Committee.

## For our Readers

Readers of *The Child Care Worker* are invited to submit their own views on this process to:

**The Manager  
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk,  
Department of Welfare  
Private Bag X901  
Pretoria 0001**

If you would like a copy of the full report *Programme of Action: The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk*, please request this from any NACCW Office.

From *Who Cares?* the UK magazine for young people in care **Diana Reich** talks to youth about

# Living with Loss



Loss and separation are very painful human experiences. Each one of us has to cope with a range of natural losses throughout our lives. When we are young this can include losing a favourite toy, the death of a pet, friendships breaking up, changing schools, moving home, parents parting and elderly relatives dying. However, loss is particularly hard to bear if it is unexpected, sudden or unusual. This is one of the reasons why coming into care is so upsetting.

Most young people imagine that they will stay with their parents, or with a parent, until they are ready to leave home and live independently. Even if children realise that things are going wrong at home, they are not usually prepared for going into care and all its consequences.

## Going into care

It is a serious loss to be separated from your family before you are ready to stand on your own feet, and it is particularly hard if other children do not have to go through the same experience. Whether you go into care for a long or short time, there are several losses you have to deal with all together - possessions, friends, pets, school and neighbourhood, as well as family. Even the different look and smell of a foster home or children's home can make you feel strange - and lonely.

## How does loss make us feel?

Feelings about loss can include sadness, anger, bewilderment, shock, fear and panic, as well as perhaps some opposite feelings like relief, triumph and excitement. These powerful, mixed feel-

ings sometimes cause confusion, guilt and exhaustion. If you don't understand them - or can't deal with them - these feelings might lead to depression and anger.

## How can I help myself?

Firstly, by accepting that it is perfectly normal to have strong feelings about being separated from family, friends and home - and about possibly having to face several changes before being able to settle down again. It is very natural for anyone to want to cry out loud about the loss. You don't need to feel embarrassed about this. If we try to pretend we're not upset, and even feel ashamed about it, there is a danger that we will express these feelings in ways which harm ourselves and others.

## Are there practical things I can do?

Yes. Some of the ideas written below may appeal to you, or they may help you to think of something even better. Remember that they are just a start. Think about doing them with someone you trust, or talking to that person about how you feel.

- If you find it difficult to work out your feelings, it might be because you are feeling frightened or 'taken over' by them. Sometimes, a film, book or TV programme helps you to make sense of how you are feeling. Crying about something or someone else can also make us feel better about ourselves.
- You might like to list some of the feelings you have had since coming into care, for example, 'strange', 'lonely', 'angry', 'hurt', 'frightened'. This may be a first step towards accepting them and, perhaps, going on to sharing them with others.
- Writing can help us release our feelings all the best poets and novelists would agree. You might like to keep a private diary, or tell your own story (or part of it) in a poem or article. Reading other rooms or stories may help to get you going. The result could be that you understand your own feelings and experi-

"I spent most of my life in care, from the age of three to 18. My father committed suicide when I was 3 and my mother died in a house fire when I was 9. For me, 1994 was a particularly bad year. I had five deaths, including the loss of my natural brother and two sisters. It left me with a whole range of mixed emotions, both good and bad. It made me wonder whether I had told the person how much I cared, and I thought of times when I should have been there, but wasn't. That can make you feel guilty — or even worse. I also remembered the good in the person, and realised that it is more than likely that they knew how I felt about them. I was lucky to have people around me who cared, so I could share what I was really going through. It was a hard and upsetting time, though it did make me see that life is short and precious."

— Michael

ences better. By arranging your thoughts on paper, you may get some control over them.

- The same can be true for drawing or painting. These are enjoyable and creative things to do, but they are also ways of getting in touch with painful feelings.
- Creating a 'memory box' can be a way of not forgetting important parts of your life, even if you are facing a new future. Into a box, you can put photos, precious objects, your notes of important events, and maybe even a tape of a funny or happy event.

Finally, remember that you are not alone even if it feels like it sometimes. Loss touches everyone at certain times in their lives. You are entitled to help from carer workers, social workers and teachers. There are also many organisations which can give you independent advice. Asking for support from others is not a sign of failure. It is something good which you have achieved for yourself. □