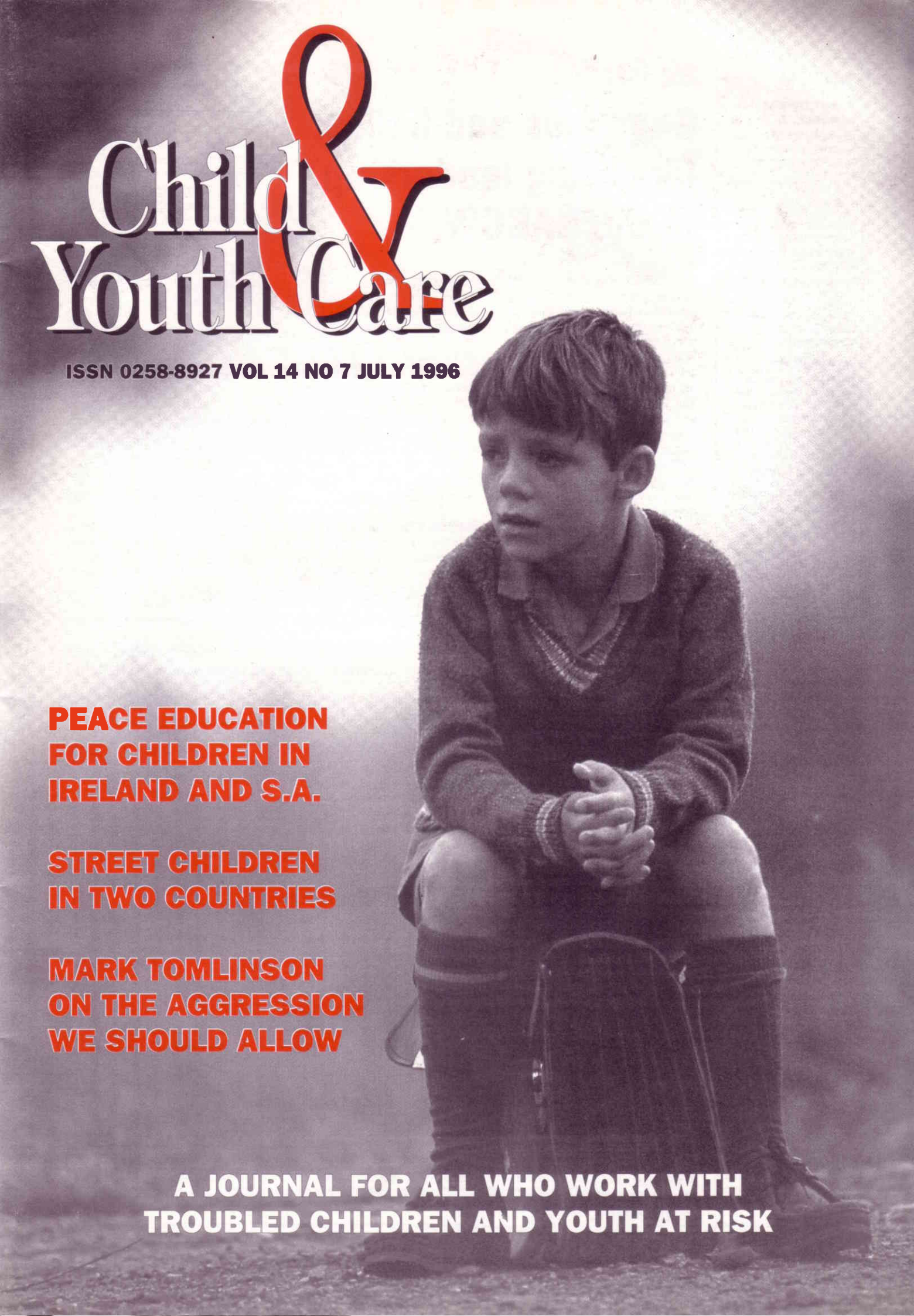


Child & Youth Care



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**PEACE EDUCATION
FOR CHILDREN IN
IRELAND AND S.A.**

**STREET CHILDREN
IN TWO COUNTRIES**

**MARK TOMLINSON
ON THE AGGRESSION
WE SHOULD ALLOW**

**A JOURNAL FOR ALL WHO WORK WITH
TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK**

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Goodbyes and hellos: Changing leadership in the NACCW

As at the end of July, Lesley du Toit ends six years as Director of the NACCW. On pages 4 and 5 we publish a short interview with her in which she looks back at these six years, reflecting on what has been achieved by the Association during her term of office.

The NACCW is really very much smaller than generally realised — at present there are three full-time and three part-time professional staff with six (mostly part-time) secretarial and office staff — so it is never easy for the staff team to decide where we should place our energies and what we cannot get around to.

So we hear from Lesley those concerns to which she addressed herself, we realise in retrospect the not inconsiderable achievements in our profession since 1990 and, in particular, how many of those we owe to Lesley's work.

Read the interview, and join us in thanking Lesley as we wish her well in her future work — work which, even if not in the NACCW, will still very probably be related to the field of child and youth care.

New times, new face

During July we learned that the National Executive Committee had appointed as Lesley's replacement Merle Allsopp, until now the Association's Training Manager.



Merle Allsopp

Merle reaches this senior position in the field having risen literally through the ranks of child care work. While completing her BA degree and her Higher Diploma in Education (HDE), she began working as a volunteer in child care before becoming an assistant child

care worker. During this time she completed her National Higher Certificate in Residential Child Care through the Cape Technikon.

In 1984, then a senior child care worker, she spent a year in the USA working at a residential treatment centre, Edgefield Lodge, in Portland, Oregon. On her return she was appointed as unit manager at St Michael's Children's Home, then Vice-Principal, and in 1989 she began a five-year term as Principal of St Michael's. Merle joined the staff of the NACCW in 1994.

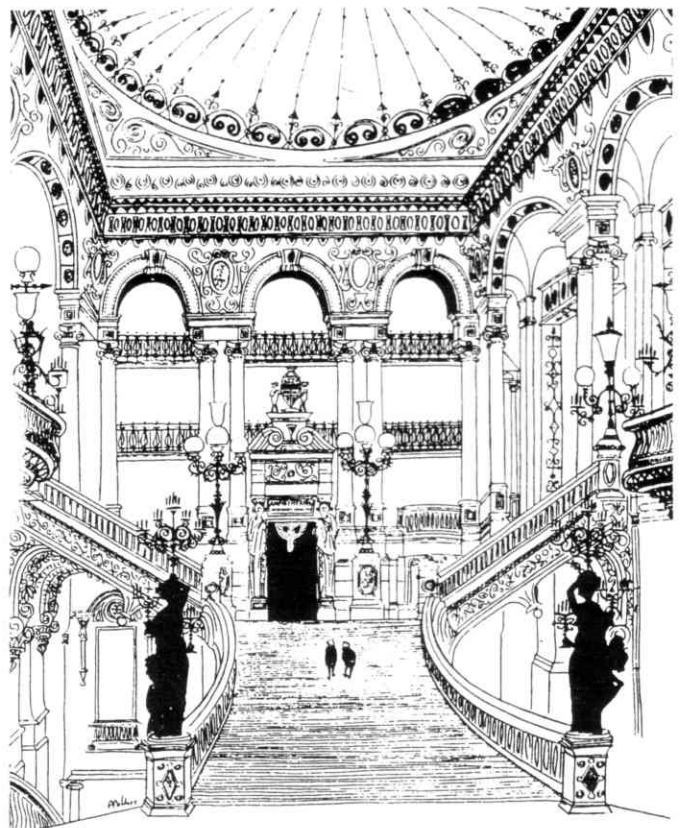
Support a two-way thing

As Merle takes up this appointment we can reflect on one aspect of the job she will have. Child care has never been a well supported service in South Africa, and anyone in Merle's position will find

herself working in a field characterised by need and neediness — on the part of children and youth as well as the organisations working with them. Many will be looking to Merle for encouragement, information and resources. More than this, the structures of the NACCW (the Regional and National Executive Committees) are themselves composed of child care people, people whose full-time jobs are in child care organisations, and many of whom are preoccupied by similar demands and challenges in their own work.

It is too easy for the energy in such a system to run down if we are not, all of us, conscious all the time of each others' need for support and feedback. We know from systems theory that energy is transferred and enhanced by communication. We know that systems themselves are kept alive and adaptable by communication.

We will heighten the value of our Association — for ourselves and for the children, families and communities we work with — if we commit ourselves to the idea of welcoming Merle to her new position not as a lofty giver of good gifts nor as a lowly servant to our needs, but as an active and enthusiastic partner and facilitator in this amazing profession of ours.

THE CLOSING DOWN OF THE LARGE INSTITUTIONS

"In its day it was probably considered quite grand."

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Cover Picture: Andrzej Sawa



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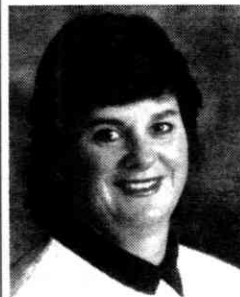
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People



Irene Cowley

Irene is Chairperson of the NACCW's Natal Regional Executive. She finished her Social Science degree at Natal University in 1974, and bravely did Social Work honours nearly twenty years later in 1993. Her career in child care really started in 1986 when she worked at a pre-primary school and an after-care centre. In 1987 she joined the Mary Cook Children's Home in Maritzburg as social worker. There were 30 children and a staff team of 6, and it was here that her association with NACCW began, and where she first worked with child and youth care workers. During this time she, along with three staff colleagues, completed the PPA course through the NACCW. In 1991 she took up the position of Child Care Manager at the newly created Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes (PCH) while serving as one of the two social workers. This proved to be a real journey for her which gave her enormous opportunity for personal growth. Irene joined the NACCW social workers' group in 1989 and was elected to the Regional Executive in 1990. Her portfolio was co-ordinating the social workers' group. In 1993 she registered as a child and youth care practitioner. In November 1995, Irene was elected as Chairperson of the Regional Executive, and sadly had to relinquish the portfolio of co-ordi-

nating the Principals' Forum when she left PCH to join NICRO. Irene's task was made easier while in the chair by the continued commitment of previous Chairperson Zeni Thumbadoo — to whom she pays high tribute for her outstanding leadership role in the Region. The Natal Executive Committee is fortunate to have its leadership distributed between the state and NGO's, and there is strong commitment among members of NACCW, many of whom travel three to four hours to attend meetings. Irene feels that the Natal region takes particular cognisance of the various cultures and languages of its members and there is always an interpreter at meetings for those who need one.

"When I look back over my years in child care," Irene says, "the word *transformation* stares me in the face. This is not only in the profession itself, but something I've experienced on a personal level as well. For much of that I pay tribute to my child care colleagues, to the NACCW, and also the training courses and the interaction with other professionals in the field. It has been wonderful over the years to meet and work with new people, and at every meeting there are always new faces, far more representative of the field nowadays than ever before." She is excited by the work of the IMC. Due to this transformation process her horizontal move to NICRO in Pietermaritzburg as Programme Co-ordinator was made possible — a move which takes her from a very established child care organisation to a position serving, amongst others, young people in the youth justice field. Irene lives in Maritzburg with her two sons. She values highly being part of a caring, supportive family. ■



Leslie du Toit stands down at the end of July after six years as Director of the NACCW

Talking to Lesley du Toit

When you became Director of the NACCW in March 1990, what were some of the tasks you saw ahead of you?

Very definitely a drive towards professionalism, towards a code of ethics, registration, and a better status for child and youth care workers — whether official or not. It doesn't matter that initially we achieved these things *internally*, that is, within the Association itself. I think we all gained some self-respect about our work with children when we satisfied certain expectations about training and practice. We were also trying to resolve the issue of whether we were an association for workers or for children, and this either-or split was uncomfortable. A stronger focus on *what children needed from us* defined us as workers more clearly.

In 1990, the political log-jam of the preceding decades was starting to loosen up, and we had to work at moving from the political preoccupations back to practice considerations.

There was a lot of new thinking around concerning training, and we had to work at moving our main courses towards a more practical and a less academic focus. We were to develop less material "about child care" and

more "how to do child care". I think we must continue to be challenged by the complexities of the population entering our field.

What achievements stand out for you over these six years?

For me the admission of South Africa into the International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE), and the consequent status of the NACCW as FICE South Africa, were very significant. Like many South African organisations and professions, we had been through the years of relative isolation from the rest of the world. It was good to be able to re-establish those links, and, of course, a great affirmation of our work in the NACCW that we should be chosen for this role by a UNESCO organisation.

This was to lead to other very important links for us, for example, with the International Child and Youth Care Education Consortium.

Another achievement was the initiation of the UNISA Certificate in Child and Youth Care in 1994. We knew that there was always a proportion of children in care who required more than material care, and for whom a deeper understanding of treatment possibilities was necessary. Coupled with that, child and youth care workers themselves represented many academic levels, from those without high school certificates to graduates. The potentials of all of these workers needed to be developed for the benefit of the children.

Of course there were other achievements ...

Many, but I would like to emphasise that these are not my achievements, but rather those of the staff team and the Association as a whole during my six years.

CHAMPS, the AIDS programme which ran for five years, funded by USAID and Family Health International, was a unique project. Through this we were privileged to learn a lot about children affected by AIDS.

The training of trainers (for which, credit to Jacqui Michael) has also been a great success, which leaves us in the position of having a unique corps of available trainers, involved in daily practice, around the country. This greatly increases the capacity of the Association.

We introduced much valuable coursework during this period, including two very successful and relevant courses: Introduc-

tion to the Managing Sexual Abuse and HIV/AIDS Education, Care and Policy in Child and Youth Care.

Another achievement has been our strong advocacy, certainly for the position of child and youth care workers, but more importantly for children, specifically children in prison.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk has been closely watched by all of us in the field. Where do the private institutions fit into all of this?

I have to answer this wearing two hats: that of Manager of the IMC and that of Director of the NACCW! The IMC was initiated by the state. It was born out of the difficulties experienced when two thousand children were released from prison in May 1995. The immediate problems were experienced in state institutions working with children in trouble with the law. However the focus of the IMC is the whole child and youth care system. Training is but a part of the transformation process, but nevertheless the training courses developed for state institutions over the past year are shortly to be offered also to private institutions, and also at the expense of the IMC. But, now putting on my NACCW hat, I must say that I am very disappointed at the unwillingness of the IMC and the Department to pay enough attention to the financial implications of the transformation process. It will be a tragedy if the IMC ends with a written document — which it will do if there is no realistic financial follow-through.

The state must continue to be challenged on the greater competency of the private sector institutions — achieved with far fewer resources and far greater effort. Transformation will only work when we can find a balance between the private sector with its competence and the state with its resources.

The old subsidy system has crippled the system. We now know that from 1 April 1997, finally, funding will be approved on the basis of programmes, and this process must go hand in hand with adequate standards, competent staffing and differentiation of programmes.

In spite of the difficult period we are experiencing as regards funding, existing institutions must examine their programmes and decide what it is they will be offering — in terms of the new