



REPPER

International Exchange Network for Programs and Projects for Street Children

Bulletin No. 2

JUNE 1996

Based on reports of activities and messages received by REPPER, three themes for reflection have surfaced:

1. PUNISHMENT

What should be done about pilfering, violence, running away, taking drugs in or outside the family-style home?

Corporal punishment? Exclusion? Isolation? Additional tasks for the benefit of the community?

Can the reference points that the children need be acquired from merely hearing, understanding and dialogue?

Who decides what punitive action should be taken? The case workers? The children? Using what criteria?

2. POCKET MONEY

Should it be given to the children who are coming to the "listening centers" or family-style homes? It's so easy to earn it in the street!

3. TELEVISION

Some want to have one in the "listening centers" and use it for teaching purposes. Guy Aïmawa, in Benin, writes, "The children believe absolutely in the television messages. For example, they would wash their hands before meals if that message were shown on the screen." Others, like some in St. Louis (Senegal), prefer that the child be invited by families which have TV's, since that would foster closer relationships with the neighbors and allow the children to gradually integrate into "normal" settings.

It seems to us that it would be most interesting if each project leader and center director would share his/her experiences with the members of the REPPER network and explain how he/she arrived at his/her own answers to these dilemmas.

Depending on the number of replies we receive from all of you, we will devote space in the next bulletin or two to relay to you the various points of view. **SOME LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!**

NOTE: If you do take a moment to write us in this regard but do not wish your name to be mentioned in the REPPER bulletin, just let us know in your letter, and your name will be withheld.

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Telephone and FAX: (33.1) 47 07 87 14

.....NEWS.....NEWS.....NEWS.....

AFRICA

IVORY COAST

"LA CASE DES ENFANTS"

04 BP 456
ABIDJAN 04

President: Mrs. ETTE
Tel: 22 32 36 or 22 03 72 FAX: 22 33 58
Established: November 24, 1994

At the outset, this association was intended as a place street children could come to wash, rest and be treated. In the first three months, 200 children were able to talk with a young psychologist and "register". Very soon, it became apparent that some of these street children wanted to leave the street, whereas others wanted to stay, since a few were earning "good money" by various odd jobs (car park attendants can earn 10 French francs a day). **With the help of other associations, we want to start literacy and remedial classes to help them prepare their futures, as well as to help them learn to work in "cooperative" groups.**

Other children take drugs and can't give up their freedom. They represent a danger for others who risk getting contaminated and for the public at large who risk being mugged. **For these children, we want to set up centers for treating drug addicts with competent staffs.**

Thus, after opening LA CASE in the hope of helping all children and then finding ourselves subjected to violence by some of the children, we decided to limit our efforts for the time being to those who show they want some stability in their lives. At present 15 or 20 children, as well as a few older children whom we have placed in apprenticeships with artisans, are living permanently at our children's home. **About ten volunteers are conducting our literacy classes and care for these children; two people are in charge of them 24 hours a day.**

The daily schedule has been carefully planned, as follows: Each morning the volunteer teachers run literacy classes on 3 levels. Each afternoon various activities are offered, such as vegetable gardening, do-it-yourself workshops, singing, theater workshops, games, and soccer. In the evening everyone meets together for quiet games, readings or talking; once a week, the children can watch a television program or video, either in a local youth center or at the President's home.

SOME RESULTS

1. Six children have **readapted** to a normal lifestyle: they returned home.
2. We found places for 6 older, literate youths in the ABEL agricultural **training center**.
3. We helped 3 teenagers find woodworking **apprenticeships** with the Amiguiens Brothers.
4. We subsidized **remedial classes** for two nineteen year olds, who were accepted at a technical school.

OUR RESOURCES

We have created a large funding network of donators and contributing members.

Our staff includes volunteers who contribute their professional expertise in management, as well as a personal emotional investment in caring for the children. We have professional and volunteer case workers and teachers. Both specialists and general practitioners have responded to our appeals for medical treatment. The religious community has provided moral and spiritual support. In addition, a team of young people, who receive some remuneration, are in charge of running the home.

OUR DIFFICULTIES

Financial support is beginning to come in on a more regular basis, but it is insufficient to retain a permanent administrator and two organizers.

Human resources are in constant flux largely because of our volunteers' mobility, since they are often called upon to fulfil other responsibilities sooner or later. Consequently, all our staff must keep one another informed and, in addition, endeavor to improve and adapt their interpersonal skills.

RUANDA

During the war which plunged this country into mourning (let us hope that we are right in using the past tense), millions of children, in addition to all the surviving adults, were subjected to both physical and psychological traumas.

In an effort to respond to this tragedy, the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration, together with other ministries and UNICEF, created "THE NATIONAL TRAUMA CENTER " in Kigali. It has the following objectives:

TRAINING: To teach case workers and other social workers about traumas and their long-term consequences, as well as to invent with them methods for helping the victims.

THERAPEUTIC CARE: To be dispensed by specialists in outpatient clinics for cases deemed severe by schools, local agencies, NGO's, etc.

RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF WAR TRAUMAS: To be carried out in the field, with the results subsequently published both nationally and internationally.

DOCUMENTATION CENTER/ LIBRARY: To be open to all those dealing with children, this collection will include publications on maltreated children, the mechanisms of bereavement and of loss, etc.

A N INFORMATION CAMPAIGN: Through the media, to reach rural children and adults.

Mr. Gendat (who is fluent in the local languages and an expert in their culture) was sent to Kigali by the French Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs last December. His first task is to determine which of the activities of the National Trauma Center are the most urgent and then define how the Secretariat can best contribute. He returned there in March. If you would like to get a copy of his report, he can be reached at 8, avenue de Ségur, 75007 - Paris, FRANCE (Tel: 40 56 78 73 and FAX: 40 56 49 99). He appeals to all those individuals and organizations who can help him in his combat against the aftereffects of this tragedy to contact him.

SOUTH AMERICA

A Critical Analysis of the Thinking of François Lefort:

Excerpts of a letter to Father Lefort from Isabelle Baufumé, Apartado 440, Cusco, PERU

"One of the main lessons from my humanitarian experience is that you reap what you sow, and you sow in many different ways: through speeches, of course, but particularly through the unspoken messages underlying your words, through attitudes and decisions you take or not, etc. When I read your books, I am struck by a double dimension: on one hand, by conveying what the children feel, you show that you know how to listen; on the other hand, the solutions which you recommend seem simplistic. For example, to assert that with 50 F a month the child's problems can be resolved is not only false but dangerous. You say, "Give 50 F," but the message I receive is: (a) with a little donation, I can avoid a guilty conscience; (b) the street is bad; (c) these children are problems for us who are the "society"; (d) the street child has been forced there, so we adults must help because alone, the child is incapable of getting out of there.

But in my opinion, the appropriate attitude would be:

- . some of these children choose to live in the street,
- . they must have good reasons for their choice,
- . let's get organized so they can have a maximum number of activities compatible with their lifestyle.

That's the difference that I see between the usual and the strategic point of view of a situation.

According to the usual point of view, a child has qualities and faults. In this case the adult involved tries to encourage the former and eliminate the latter. But from the strategic point of view, the child has good and bad characteristics and the objective for the adult is to furnish means for the child to learn to identify how to combine them in the most efficient way. Instead of insisting that the street is dangerous and inhibits "normal" development, I say that children invent all sorts of behavior to cope optimally, and adults should again limit their help to providing the tools/techniques which will best serve the children and respect their decisions.

EUROPE

L'ASSOCIATION SOLIDARITE ET DEVELOPPEMENT

21 bis, rue Claude Bernard, 35000- Rennes, FRANCE (Tel. and FAX: 99 30 92 12)

President: Mr. Jean Prost

This association does not normally contribute to humanitarian organizations' operating expenses but takes full or partial responsibility for expenses related to building, equipment, installation and furniture. In the past, it has undertaken the funding of projects in India, Burundi, Uganda and Peru, in addition to well-drilling in Mali.

OPERATION CONSTELLATION

Villarbenon, 73140 - St. Michel de Maurienne, FRANCE (Tel: 79 56 56 63)

Founder: Mrs. Sylvaine Remy (mother of 7 children and a former art teacher)

Currently awaiting official recognition of its existence, this association has set the following goals:

1. Help children discover the art of their country, as found in its crafts, paintings, music and instruments.
2. Help children of all countries to express their experiences through art (drawing, painting and song). Themes taken from their everyday lives - their village, refugee camps, places where they live and work, their families, festivities - will be the sources of their artistic expression. Locally, when teacher-painters are gone, trained people will continue the work in progress.
3. Facilitate the circulation of artwork and communication channels between children in developing countries and also in Western countries. It will be sharing the wealth, not some kind of assistance.

To get started, Mrs. Remy is looking for people who would like to reflect on the project with her, others who are globetrotters, others who can serve as relays, still others who are good fundraisers or have a good business sense to buy and sell the works all over the world, others who could train painting teachers.

Her dream is the myriad of artistic expressions be like a thousand facets of the universe...and we share her dream! She would be very pleased to hear from all those wishing to participate or to learn about her trip to Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand in February .

THE RESEARCH GROUP "MARJUVIA"

A member of the REPPER network, they wrote us: "Of course, we do not operate in the field and our concerns about the professional code of ethics have little in common with the problems encountered by peoples dealing directly with street children. **But our objective is to be a place where we can reflect collectively about the questions raised by child marginalization, as much about the causes as about the remedies, and we would like the information we get to be circulated as much as possible, to all those who could use it.** So we believe we can all be mutually beneficial, each in our own realm."

REPPER is delighted about this collaboration and exchanges between researchers and "operatives."

PRESS RELEASE

The associations which have signed below know François Lefort or have worked with him for many years. Together, they fight with determination against child prostitution and against the distress of street children. They are fully aware of the many risks involved.

All these associations were astounded to learn that François Lefort was placed under investigation. These associations confirm their complete solidarity with him and his work. They are confident in the judicial system and trust that all the facts about the origin and conditions which triggered this matter will be brought to light.

Among the associations which signed this statement are: Médecins du Monde, l'Association Contre la Prostitution Infantile, Equilibre, La Cimade, AIMER, les 3/4 du Monde, Allegro, France-Liberté, Fondation pour l'Enfance, La Rue L'Enfant La Ville, Uncle, Solidev, Oser, le Sillage, CCFD de Neuilly, Programme Apprentis au Togo, Construire, etc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COME to the NEXT MEETING of the REPPER NETWORK!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1996 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Place: Offices of Médecins du Monde, 62 rue Marcadet, 75018-PARIS, FRANCE

Schedule: morning - plenary session; afternoon - workshops on themes (send us your suggestions!)

Twenty-one member associations attended the last meeting in May (and 23 members sent regrets).

MANILA: THE "MARKET" FOR CHILDREN

A French television program called "Forbidden Territory" in March 1996 covered the story of Dominique Lemay, who moved to Manila 8 years ago to try to help the thousands of children living in the streets and founded the **Virlanie Foundation**. Since then, the Foundation has taken in 1,600 street children, prostitutes and handicapped children. Several hundred of them have left the street life and yet he has to face the bitter fact that despite the numerable initiatives taken, the Philippine authorities recognize the problem, but no real changes have been made.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: L'INSTITUT HENRY DUNANT

114 rue de Lausanne, 1202 - Geneva, SWITZERLAND

This institute has published a complete listing of all the publications concerning street children in Africa, North and South America, Asia, Australia and Europe. Write to Joël Mermet for a copy.

L.A.P.S.E.E. (Association for the Protection of Children in Danger)

B.P. 311, Ouagadougou, BURKINA FASO

Created in 1994, it has opened an agro-pastoral center for street children.

"AIDE ET PARTAGE AVEC L'ENFANT" (Helping and Sharing with the Child)

opened a Listening Center in the Adjégounlé Akpapa district of Cotonou (BENIN) last November. Fifty children have already come to the center to sleep, receive treatment, and wash. Since February, reading and writing classes are being given. From February 19 to 25, Christian Bompard was there to talk with Guy Aïmawa, the Director of the Project, and help him raise local funds for the project

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE REPPER NETWORK!

Simply send your name, and address and a brief description of your work to:

CONSTRUIRE

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Or you can call or fax us at this number: 33 1 47 07 87 14