



REPPER

Réseau d'Echange de Projets et de Programmes en faveur des Enfants de la Rue

N°5

September 1997

We have received **only one reply** to the questions in REPPER N°4 on volunteers and relations with the media. Of course, as "fillers", we could have used the minutes of the two working committees that, during the session on 28 September 1996 (in which 27 associations were represented) pondered for two hours on the problems raised by one and all... **One of the aims of the bulletin, however, is to echo solely those who, at the grass roots, wish to share with others their experiences, their failures and their successes;** as can be seen from their reports and letters to us.

Hence this reminder of some information which seems to us important:

- The association CONSTRUIRE subsidizes fully (thanks to the contributions from its adherents and gifts from sympathetic friends) publication and delivery of the bulletin. Construire receives no financial aid from any member of the network. We consider this to be a guarantee of its total autonomy, its independence from any pressure that might one day be put on it. (That has never arisen so far, but one never knows ...).

- Worldwide, **42 countries** receive (some in English and Spanish) the bulletin, in one of which, 13 issues are sent to various associations. These associations, at the outset, indicated their agreement to the Rufisque charter and the principles of the network being set up. Since 1995 (issue N°.1), however, they have sent neither report nor letter showing any interest whatsoever in our "rag". They will of course receive N°.5, a last reminder before we submit the matter to our drafting group, at Construire's board of directors' meeting, and also at Repper's meeting on 4 October But, personally, I remain puzzled!

- When we are far gone in "old age", we humans and also our bulletin, if it is still of the slightest interest to its readers (at present things are going at a cracking pace in the communications world), we shall pass it on to another association, one only, and one as independent and concerned as is ours.

Pens to paper, therefore.... ! Thank you.

Françoise Bompard. Publication manager.

We are getting a little encouraging feedback on hooking into the Internet. We may well do so, if you will let us know your P.O. Box number and whether several of you have one.

Address all correspondence to: Construire, 16 rue de la Glacière, 75013 Paris. Telephone & Fax:: 01 47 07 87 14.

PHILIPPINES: BREAKING NEW GROUND IN VIRLANIE (220 A Yague Street corner Sunrise Avenue - La Paz Village - Makata - MetroManila)

THERAPY AND CREATIVITY CENTRE: The Centre caters to the childrens' vital needs: expressing their feelings, their traumas, their past experiences (neglect, ill-treatment, life on the streets ...) They receive individual or group therapy, and are given the opportunity to express themselves artistically. (Exhibitions of their work should provide funds for the purchase of equipment.)

Why do we need this Centre? For Tenten, for example: a pretty, petite, eleven year-old sent to Virilanie by the Social Services. She was abused by her step-father, bodyguard to an influential politician. Very young, she was obliged to leave school to do the housework. When the work did not meet with his approval, her "tormentor" burned her hands and legs. When drunk, he beat her violently if she refused to satisfy him.

HAIRDRESSING SALON: A dream come true thanks to a donation from the Scelles Foundation and equipment sent by Belgian friends. Young girls will be rescued from prostitution and trained for a better future and a stable income.

MOTHER/CHILD PROGRAMME: Given the number of young mothers on the streets of Manila, a home has been set up to shelter them. In the first month, the centre has taken in 9 mothers and 15 children, 6 of whom are less than one month old. Among these, four were abandoned. A full team (1 social worker, 1 nurse and 3 "parents") is responsible for this programme. A new programme, a new challenge to give these children the chance of being loved as others are.

MALI: ACTION EVERYONE'S CHILDREN (E. Traoré and E Samaké - Caritas Bamako - BP. 1726)

About a year after the departure of Jean-Jacques and Annick Combier (which gave the children and carers the opportunity to thank the two founders by means of extremely touching songs, dances and sketches) our activities continue, while others are under way.

STREET ROUNDS: These are the means of channelling the greatest number of children in the shortest time possible, for the longer they stay on the streets, the less chance there is of reclaiming them. They are directed to the drop-in centre or to families: of 64 new children, 17 were able to return to their families. To ensure that their return is permanent and thus considered successful, the team puts particular stress on follow-up.

THE VARIOUS CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENTS, set up in Bamako and other towns, welcome the delegates of children in straitened circumstances.

THE BALL MAKING WORKSHOP has keen followers: two teenagers have, moreover, requested training in management so that they may go back to work in their home quarters. Bògolan dying and design are very popular among the youngest.

LITTLE HOMES: The rainy season is the time when children run away least, hence the idea of making the most of it to intensify activities. Pedagogical canteens set up by the Ledoux Institute for children of the Sahel and managed, in Mali, by Madame Touré, make the children aware of their culture, through water, the body and health, the earth and vegetation. The effect on them has been positive in all areas, especially hygiene and health.

THE GIRLS' HOME opened in July 1996 with 5 children: 3 thirteen year-olds, and 2 ten year-olds. They were completely uneducated and, for the moment, are avid to learn: schoolwork, cooking, dressmaking and soapmaking.

EXTRA TUITION: We have been able to sign up 6 children in 2 local state schools: a very strong encouragement for the others.

THE REGIONAL MANAGEMENT of the Social Action services is to set up an open-air activities centre: the perfect place for meeting children and, above all, for exchanges between carers in various actions taking place at grass roots level.

ZAIRE: THE BAKANJA HOME (Joseph Khondé, Salésien de Don Bosco, B,P, 372 - Lubumbashi)

"Charity makes itself heard wherever the State does nothing". The best way to destroy a country is to neglect its youth and, wherever the Salésiens of Don Bosco are, they struggle against it. Bakanja is a welcome home: the children come to eat, play, study, wash themselves and their clothing. They wait, naked, while their shorts are drying, after having washed them! Our principal obstacles are the refusal of, or lack of collaboration from, the parents (when parents there are), or from the competent civil authorities, as well as the lack of financial means for basic rights: food, schooling, training.

HAITI: Extracts from the Report by Michel Debarge, from a 1991 UNICEF inquiry and his trip in 1996. (Association TIMOUN D'HAITI - 18 rue Mirabeau - 59800 Lille - Tel: 03 20 04 43 98)

"To put pressure on tyrannical or violent regimes, the International community tends more and more to apply economic sanctions: the embargo can be beneficial in the long term, but it also costs lives, above all, those of the poor and vulnerable. A team from Harvard noted, in 1993 (before J.B. Aristide's return in October 1994), a 64% increase in infant mortality, malnutrition, deterioration of education and health services ... (the rich, who can open bank accounts abroad, can avoid these obstacles). The Harvard team recommended, therefore, that the International community polish its approach to sanctions which should:

- Be aimed more specifically at real targets: the military and the elites who support them (by freezing foreign bank accounts, suspending international air traffic, refusing to issue visas);
- Take specific measures to protect the poor (guaranteeing the free movement of basic necessities, access to water, and strict surveillance to ensure that humanitarian aid is not diverted).

In Haïti, in addition to those known as "street" children, there is a second category - children completely abandoned, having to fend for themselves, physically and psychologically, different from the "others", for they do not congregate in gangs. There are around 2,000 of them in Port-au-Prince, a hundred or so in Cap and the Cayes. They may be 5 years old, sometimes younger, the majority are ten year-olds. 18% are girls, often badly treated servants who have fled their place of "work", indeed slavery. They are described as dirty, suffering from various illnesses (migraines, tiredness, insomnia, anxiety, anæmia, tuberculosis, venereal diseases ...). Of 90 children questioned in the town centre, 48 admitted to taking drugs (glue or solvent sniffing). They offer their services for a few centimes, supplementing their earnings by begging, stealing, prostitution. These children are described as distrustful, superstitious, hostile, violent with their peers and, above all, unwilling to accept the slightest restraint. Calculations based on the inquiry indicate that **the population of homeless children doubles approximately every two years: by the year 2000, therefore, they will number 40 to 50,000.**

What is being done?

- The State Youth and Sport Services run district committees, socio-educational activities, sports events... They try to alert the public which does seem aware of the problem and reacts by a whole range of attitudes, from compassion to rejection.
- In the private sector, in the view of several professionals, the NGOs financed by the International community are most evidently active in the homeless children area, but they deplore the lack of coordination of the various programmes. The children are not interested in the large welcome centres, like Carrefour, where they are bundled together regardless of age and background (tiny tots, teenagers, mentally handicapped, are all mixed up together). The children respond better to an "alternative" approach, based on their needs, and seeking, with their assistance, solutions."

In 1996, the Chairman of the Association "Timoun", noted that: "in general, the situation of the children has worsened drastically. Two private associations, Le Centre d'Education Populaire (Centre for Public Education) and Cohan La Kay, are especially active in the field of homeless children, but the State has withdrawn from all areas of childhood: health, education, prevention ...

BURUNDI: L'O.P.D.E. (Athanase Rwamo - B.P. 5777 or 4260 - Bujumbura - Tel: (257) 22 789 - Fax: (257) 21 33 54)

"We who find ourselves in a war zone experience great difficulty. The movement of homeless children advances at an alarming pace... Refugees from massacres, orphans whose families have been almost wiped out by war and by AIDS (thus making their re-insertion impossible) can be counted in thousands.

At present we in OPDE have taken into care **201** street children. We have 7 welcome homes, each in the care of a foster-mother. **132** of our children are being educated in the formal sector, of whom 122 are in primary school and 10 in secondary school. 32 are receiving extra-tuition in an establishment that takes children past school age and teaches in 3 years the 6 year official primary school programme. **35** of our children are undergoing professional training: dressmaking in our own workshops, mechanics in a local garage.

In 3 homes, **we have installed laying hens** (200 per home), to generate revenue and improve food self-sufficiency. Once we have assessed the results, we intend to install this system in the other 4 homes.

Unfortunately, the embargo imposed on our country since August 1996, which cuts us off from the rest of the world, and the crisis which has shaken our country, have dispersed all those who had undertaken to support our plans: construction of the professional training centre, training in wealth-creating jobs, instructors ... Security is improving slowly (our programmes work well, our children are well), but the economic situation worsens day by day and the soaring prices locally weigh heavily on our budget.

(Extracts from a personal letter. We admire the courage, the inventiveness and the optimism emanating from this text.)

BENIN:

On the initiative of Construire, and thanks to the efficient organization of Guy Aimawa (Ass. Aide et partage - B.P. 08-1038, Contonou), 14 associations working in various regions of Benin and several administrative services concerned with the problem of the Street Children, met in the presence of Christian Bompard in Contonou on 21 and 22 March, the aim being to endeavour to coordinate our efforts, to encourage the associations and those taking part at grass roots level to draw up a plan at national level, which, after receiving Government approval, might find, in France, the support needed to obtain financial backing for it from Europe. Each Association will of course retain its originality and specificity.

A project like this should cover the various phases of support required by the Street Children: listening to them, re-inserting them in families, or at least a period in a home, the time needed to teach them to read and write, to give them professional training and, finally, to help set them up in an active life.

Guy Aimawa's opening statement summarized clearly the situation today: "The problem of the child in difficulty in general and the Child on the Street in particular is become more and more complicated over the past few years. Although we may take pleasure in noting that several new structures for helping and supporting these children have been created, we must nevertheless deplore that these structures, which pursue the same aim, move along in parallel, sometimes without noticing what the others are doing, or even being aware of each other's existence.

This situation warrants our attention, for the effectiveness of our actions and the good of our children."

The results of this encounter? Continued, perhaps, in our future issues!

BENOIT CAMBAU (35 Rue Clemence Royer - 44 100 Nantes - Tel: 02 40 73 10 59)

42 - single - professor of philosophy, wishing to work with children in distress in Mali, in Burkina Faso, Benoît contacted a good many associations dealing with homeless children. He noted that "the associations do not lack willingness but need to communicate among themselves. In the institutions on the spot, there is no cooperation but often rivalry and misunderstandings that have a negative effect on the children should the latter frequent several Centres.

While each association has its own particular reason for existing, help is needed to ensure that each recognizes its positive contribution but, at the same time, similar actions of which it is not always aware." Benoît has set himself the goal of becoming a neutral "communicator-mediator", promoting exchanges among the various activities, through meetings between those responsible, visits, a joint publication, all this will help each benefit from the contributions of the others. It is not a matter of coordination but of putting people in touch with one another.

The forty or so groups he met were aware of this proposal and often enthusiastic. His contacts with Ministries, Embassies, Religious Personalities, Politicians, Intellectuals, or private folk, convinced him of the worth of his project. He is seeking by what means he may fill such a position. He favours that of French Cooperation, but is ready to consider any other possibility as long as his independence is guaranteed.

SENEGAL: Mohamed El Michry Athié - (S/C de Hohamed Erlawy Athié à Fougerolles - B.P.737 - Dakar - Tel.: 34 87 96 in the evening)

Mohamed El Michry Athié has been working for 23 years in the field of Childhood and Youth. We had the pleasure of meeting him at Claire Enfance (Caritas) in St Louis where he was coordinator from 1992 to 1996. He has since left St Louis and is now in Dakar from whence he writes to us: "I wish to support actively the Children of the Street, to act directly where they are growing up, by involving and getting together the gang leaders, dealers, children (boys or girls), who have their reasons for not wishing to frequent the existing homes and centres, and who meet chiefly in Dakar-Plateau. I should like to identify in depth the needs of these kids by being there at grass roots level. I am looking for supporters to act with them at this level and share experiences. If I can capitalize on my experience, anywhere, I am fully available, although Dakar seems to me fruitful ground to start this activity in West Africa."

He speaks French and Poular fluently, Woloff well, can converse quite well in Maura/Hassania, and understandably in Soninké. His CV is available to our readers, and to any one else interested.

Emmanuel Sarr: left, in July 1997, Guinea and the Children of the Street project he had been working on for 4 years in the framework of the St Joseph homes. He is returning to Senegal. We hope to receive a report of his activities.

ZAIRE: O.R.P.E.R. (Protection and Re-insertion of Homeless Children Project) Father Franck Roelants - B.P.88015 Kinshasa 1.

Kinshasa: Yet another capital where luxury and comfort in the town centre exist side by side with poverty and over-population in the suburbs. The "Kinois" number around 4 millions, almost half of whom are under 15. Among these children, several thousand have elected to sleep on the streets, around 2,500 of them living night and day with no contact with their families. ORPER looks after the latter category.

CAUSES OF LIFE ON THE STREETS:

Unmarried parents: - in accordance with Kinshasan custom, when a girl is pregnant, her parents take her to the boy's family. She stays there until she gives birth, when she returns to her family where the child is brought up by its grandmother up to school age. At this stage, the mother lets her family know that she can no longer look after the child and, little by little, the latter takes up life on the streets. The mother may be 14 or 15 when she gives birth after which she resumes her studies and considers her child as a younger brother for whom she is not responsible. If the mother and father are from different tribes, each claims that the other tribe is responsible for the child, which is a means of getting rid of him.

Witchcraft: In earlier times, in the villages, families stricken with misfortune looked for someone to blame; someone who might have acted out of spite or jealousy. Invariably, they blamed an old person who would then be driven off. Children and young people were rarely blamed, and little girls never. Nowadays, a child may well be considered as a cause of all woes, and be driven off. This is, indeed, the only "acceptable" practice, for, paradoxically, rejection is frowned upon in Africa. (This pretext is frequently employed in the case of children abandoned because they suffer from serious illness requiring costly treatment.)

An erroneous idea of sexual freedom. Without divorcing his wife, a man may change his partner, without any contract whatsoever. It often happens that one of these partners may refuse the children of a previous partner. These children thus find themselves on the streets.

Attendance at an autonomous church by parents who pray day and night, or make believe they are called upon for some evangelic mission in life. They disappear for months on end leaving their children to get by as best they may.

Brutality and torture of children by their families.

All these causes indicate clearly that the street children have not left their homes on impulse but because they had no other choice.

ORPER began its activities in 1983, when a dozen or so children begged refuge in the Christ the King parish. They wanted to sleep in the open air, on a basket ball pitch, and to shelter from soldiers who chased them during the night. There were soon about 20 of them, leaving at 5.30 in the morning and returning at 8 in the evening. Nothing was spent on them.

After a few weeks, problems began to arise:

- The children fought amongst themselves with knives, razors, broken jars, and, come morning, their wounds had to be dressed!
- The neighbours complained of burglaries in the night;
- The police accused the priests of harbouring youths who stole from the market or elsewhere during the day, then sought refuge in the parish, etc.

At first, a dozen volunteers offered to take turns spending the night with the children on the basket ball ground, then a rule was established: those who wished to sleep in the parish must do so every night (there was thus a roll call night and morning), they must not leave the ground between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m., but the children very quickly found these constraints difficult to combine with their vagabond daytime existence. They then asked the priests to send them to school: 10 went to a school for apprentices, 3 to primary school.

Those responsible were thus led to open several welcome centres and homes. There are now 5, one of which caters exclusively for girls. The children are mostly between 8 and 12 years of age, 28 in each home, and obliged to obey the rules. Each of those responsible as well as the group of instructors must be there permanently to listen to the children, advise them, keep on eye on their education. All the children attend the same school, the only one to have accepted them at the outset and where there is a modicum of discipline (if the teachers don't know all their pupils because of too large classes, if the children's presence isn't checked up on, the children are condemned to failure). The instructors and the teachers hold weekly meetings. On the whole, the results are good; some pupils are among the highest, most are average, and one or two are obliged to do the year over again. Finally, 10 or so need extra tuition classes, or extra work in their home.

The next stage is a professional training centre dependent on AED (Aide à l'Enfance Défavorisée - Help to Disadvantaged Children). The children must have two years at secondary school to be eligible. Training, in masonry, woodwork, gardening, electricity, lasts for two years with a six-month hands-on course at the end.

AN OPEN SPACE. ORPER is in permanent contact with the children who continue to live on the street. It helps them to organize themselves to improve their condition, it looks after their medical needs, protects them from exploitation, tackles with them subjects like sexuality, transmissible diseases, drugs. ORPER is not there to distribute donations or rewards, or organize activities.

The instructors are there to encourage and support any initiative taken or proposals made by the children themselves. This attitude requires a great deal of rigor and permanent self-questioning. They often feel useful when they have something to distribute. This, however, is the way to destroy the real meaning of their presence on the street. Far from "assistance", what is needed is a participative approach involving the children in the action which they can take over: better than anyone, they understand their problems and are thus best placed to propose effective solutions adapted to their circumstances. The children are "co-seekers" and principal actors in improving the conditions of their existence. **A small example:** a group of children sleeping out was harassed by a member of the civil guard who extorted all their money from them. One of them, chosen by his peers, made a complaint, all alone, to the commander, **brandishing**, in support of his argument, **the Convention on the Rights of Children**, signed by Zaire in 1989, wherein is enshrined the right to survival and thus to have money. The group is no longer harassed!

THE GIRLS:

In 1993, the opening of a drop-in centre ... led to the opening of a home for children aged 10, 12. Life, structures, conditions for admission, are the same as for the boys: education, housework, hours. A Zairian nun with a diploma in psychology directs the home, assisted by 3 women educators.

IN OPEN SPACE, those who, in the main, live from prostitution (and have no contact whatsoever with their families) are attended by the women educators, at their place of work in inhuman conditions: hotel rooms hardly bigger than their beds, without windows or airconditioning, hovels, slums. The pittance they earn is hardly enough to pay their rent and buy a morsel to eat.

Contacts are made on matters of illness: bungled abortions, venereal diseases, pregnancies, etc. The time spent taking them to medical centres and queuing with them is used for exchanges, dialogue, ...

The experience has led ORPER to open a dispensary specially for street walkers: the building and the staff are ready, the equipment and medical provisions have been promised by an embassy in Kinshasa, a woman **gynaecologist** will devote one day a week to the dispensary (no question of being treated by a man!)

THE INSTRUCTORS

At the outset, these were volunteers. Persuaded that the children's requirements would be temporary, they took turns to meet their needs, with no intention of setting up ORPER. In the long term, this system could not continue; the best left, for they found paid work.

At present, 30 instructors are salaried and trained, for goodwill isn't enough to educate wayward children. In 1989, the University of Amsterdam sent a specialist in child psychology for children with learning difficulties. Within 3 months she had set up an education system and an accelerated training technique. This system is still in force today.

After her departure, the work was continued by a French woman psychologist and a Spanish woman education specialist.

ORPER insists upon a secondary education diploma. If the candidates are successful, they may work in the evening, while, during the day, studying for a professional and educational degree at the Kinshasa Pedagogical Institute. In spite of their qualifications, most of them have little idea how to tackle the education of street children: either they lack what it takes to confront the difficulties, or they are too sensitive to the comments made to them, and, for various other reasons, are not accepted by the children. They cannot put theory into practice and do not know, therefore, how to resolve the problems arising each day. ORPER is thus developing permanent training based on concrete cases.

The experience gained shows that studies are needed to acquire a scientific base and that permanent training is indispensable for learning to apply scientific knowledge on the ground.

THE FINANCES:

ORPER does not survive solely on donations from Europe. The locals participate either in cash or in kind. Some firms in Kinshasa provide basic goods. There are, however, no fixed or regular subsidies from the State, the Church or International Organizations. (To finance itself, ORPER intends to open manufacturing workshops: woodwork, bakery, dressmaking.) Donors know that their gifts are turned over in full to the recipients. At the end of each year, a balance sheet is drawn up and available to whomever may be interested.

Is this risky? Indeed so, and remains fully so! But as long as ORPER justifies the confidence of the donors it may continue to look after the children (**to the very end, for those who are near death are taken into the homes where they pass away in a climate of peace and security**) so that they may find their place in life, the place they have not found in their family, among mankind.

This 33 page report is gripping. It addresses problems relevant to us all. Ask for it directly from Father ROELANTS.

IVORY COAST: "Youth, street culture and urban violence in Africa" Seminar in Abidjan from 5 to 7 May 1997. NO WAY OUT - summary of the thoughts of Y Marguerat (Marjovia) on the future of street children.

So far, we have tried principally to understand the causes underlying the phenomenon of homeless children, children issuing essentially from the disorganization of urban families, aggravated by poverty. **We must also ask ourselves what will become of them, if no outside influence is available to help them get off the streets.**

It appears that cases of spontaneous re-integration are rare, even if some of these children find jobs as drivers, personal guards or musicians, for example. In many towns, they die on the streets, of illness, accident or by violence, murdered by another youth, by the police, or lynched by the mob. Some become professional burglars, more or less adept. Many, it seems, simply remain on the streets where they endeavour to survive. We see nowadays many 30 year olds looking after cars. Where will they be in 10 or 20 years?

One of the means of overcoming the difficulties of life on the streets is to join gangs, the forms and lifetime of which are many and varied. In some cities in South America, where the phenomenon is older than in Africa, a truly consistent and durable system operates, in which the child, as it grows, changes its activities from begging to more and more serious delinquency, organized by older children who initiate the little ones into street life and take advantage of them. Those who reach adulthood usually become hardened criminals. Misery breeds enough little ones, turned out of their homes, to renew this population, which thus forms a lasting counter-culture at the heart of the city. With the growing number of girls on the street, moreover, we now see a second generation of children born and growing up outside society. What can the future hold for them?

.....ENCOUNTERS.....ENCOUNTERS WITH.....

ALEXANDER OGORODNIKOV (107014, Popov way, dom.2. Moscow, Russia Tel: (7-095) 269-0392)

Arrested by the KGB in 1978 for militating for the Rights of Man and Religious Freedom, he spent 8 years in different camps. He was freed in 1987 following an international campaign and the support of Western personalities such as Reagan, Thatcher.... He has since devoted himself to social action in Russia where the majority of the population lives below the threshold of poverty. After a three-year campaign and negotiations, he opened a welcome home for girls aged 10 to 20, prostitutes, abandoned. He is the target of mafias who look askance at beggars, rackets, prostitutes (most lucrative activities) getting even momentarily out of their clutches. The premises given to him, once renovated, will be able to shelter 70 girls. At the moment, there are no funds for buying the construction material needed, which is exceedingly expensive! The premises have electricity but no water. In spite of everything, in one year, 64 girls have been through the system and placed in foster families.

PIERRE-GASPARD MICHELIN (73, avenue de la République 75011 Paris. Tel: 01 43 38 34 91)

Pierre-Gaspard, who taught French during his national service, and his friend Valentine Goby, spent 10 months in Vietnam. They had the **brilliant** idea of giving a camera to street children (5 boys, 2 girls, aged 13 to 17), spent 6 weeks teaching them to use it, and left them to express themselves freely through their photos, but also with written commentary. These photos provide a unique testimony on the world of children, their hopes, fears, difficulties and joys. In addition, photography has proved itself to be a real school of life: the child becomes creator, gains self-confidence, acquires, or re-acquires, a sense of responsibility. After a crash course in photography, the children were able to take photos that many adults would consider themselves incapable of. The success of 2 exhibitions organized in 6 months by the children in Hanoi, with very little cash but a lot of enthusiasm, shows that such "happenings" are a very good way of obtaining funds, of making the public aware of the plight of the children and the work of the NGOs, and of getting beyond the clichés about "street children". These children have now definitely left the streets, become part-time trainees in a photography-laboratory, and begun learning English, while, of course, continuing photography courses given by Vietnamese photographers, who have taken over from Pierre-Gaspard and Valentine. The latter hope to resume their experience once Valentine has completed her studies (Political Science).

"In my studies", writes Valentine, "I felt the intellectual satisfaction in my head, but my heart was impatient and calling me elsewhere. I have never been so happy as when near the street children in Hanoi, and it is down that road that I mean to continue. I am not an expert in the science of humanitarianism, but I already have a rich experience, more than enough enthusiasm, and the conviction of being useful". They have created a legal charity (under the French Law of 1901), known as **CHILD PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE WORLD (Les Enfants Photographes du Monde)** and mean to continue their work, but in four different countries, spending 3 months in each. On each occasion, they will work in close collaboration with one or more of the NGOs on the spot interested in their approach. The different stages of what they have already achieved and how they mean to go on are set out meticulously and in detail in a document they will be only too happy to provide you with.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Consultants du Monde (Consultants of the World)

The trip to Guatemala with Anne Pascale (Assistant at 3/4 du Monde) was very interesting. We found 2 highly effective organizations, who, however, have not sung their own praises sufficiently to financial backers, for they are so honest and sure that their success on the spot will suffice to ensure their renown in Europe! We hope we convinced them to indulge at least in the minimum communication policy.

Les 3/4 du Monde (3/4 of the world) **Anne Pascale**

New address: 45 rue de Richelieu 75001 Paris. Tel: 01 40 20 44 88, Fax: 01 40 20 44 89,

HAITI

"Famine afflicts more than 350,000 people (1/20th of the population)" Le Monde newspaper, 29 March 1997.

Readers' letters - extracts

REPPERS' great merit and originality are in helping "politicians", straightening them out by tried and tested experience and testimony. (B. Siméon - France)

I support REPPER unstintingly, for one cannot stress sufficiently the need for those in the field to contact each other and exchange views on children in difficulty. (Joseph Khonde - Zaire)

I have just received, with great pleasure, Nos. 3 & 4 of your bulletin, for which I thank you wholeheartedly. Since we have been cut off from the rest of the world, I no longer get news of the other organizations around the world working with street children. Your 2 bulletins were thus a solace to me and I am very happy to have them. I was also very happy to note that REPPER is advancing by leaps and bounds in its mission to bring together people devoted to the same task, pinpointing the mutual problems cropping up as we strive towards our goals. This creates the pressure and fellowship which cannot but be beneficial in creating an effective ambience for our work. In reading your journals, I felt that the circle of participants is growing and that we all feel mutually supported. Keep up the Good Work! (Athanasie Rwamo - OPDE Bujumbura - Burundi)

SCELLES FOUNDATION (14 rue Mondétour - 75001 Paris)

The Foundation has chosen, from 50, **5 Associations** active worldwide to help victims of sexual exploitation. In addition to a grant of FF 30,000 to each of them, handed over at a reception in the presence of Mr Emmanuelli (Secretary of State for Emergency Humanitarian Aid), the Foundation has undertaken to ensure the follow up and close support for each of the beneficiaries. The Foundation hopes to develop a partnership with Enterprises to increase the number and the amount of future grants. The Foundation indicated that "all the members of the Jury were impressed and touched by the testimony of these associations who carry out day after day extraordinary work on the spot".

The 5 Associations are: Les 3/4 du Monde, Asalayam, Nepal Childhood and Light, Oser (Dare) and Virlante.

(Naturally, this has nothing to do with us, but all 5 are part of the REPPER network, so we cannot suppress a twinge of "frivolous" pride!)

A LAW TO PROTECT TEACHERS - IS THERE ONE? ANYWHERE?

This is a high risk activity in some parts of the world. No one in France has been able to apprise us whether, elsewhere, a legal act exists providing people on the spot the minimum of rights and safeguards.

Should anyone have any information on this subject, we should be most grateful to receive it as soon as possible.

DON'T FORGET: REPPER MEETING, 4 OCTOBER at 10 a.m.