

REPPER

RESEAU D'ECHANGE DE PROJETS ET DE PROGRAMMES EN FAVEUR DES ENFANTS DE LA RUE

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Some associations working in the field would like to welcome trainees to help them in their task. Some have already done so most successfully. Others have had difficulty, indeed, problems. To help you to avoid these, we have tried to establish some kind of <<directions for use>>, based on actual experience gained from place to place. The following is not a legal guide, but merely, based on French legislation, general information on certain points to bear in mind as regards both your responsibility and the security of those you are going to welcome among you.

Martine Berge-Simenel.

BENEVOLENT AND VOLUNTARY AID

Preamble: On the presence of trainees.

Trainees are both a treasure for everyone (awaking personal awareness, budding vocations, support for associations once they return, *etc.*) and a responsibility, especially if the experience is a bad one! These two aspects should be borne in mind when seeking the best compromises, *i.e.*, weigh the consequences and take into account the number of trainees, the duration of their stay and the rotation resulting from these last two factors.

Short-term stays (2 to 5 weeks) are not long enough for trainees to get involved in a project. At the most, they provide the opportunity to observe, discover a different culture, take bearings by integrating into a local team, decide to come back for a longer stay, think out a "real project" to implement during the second stay, provide information on their return to France and then take an active part in the work of the support association.

Longer stays (6 weeks to 6 months, with the corresponding statute) make it possible to carry out a real project or (6 months to 2 years) to take responsibility within the association by fulfilling a specific function.

High rotation complicates the administration of manpower and may lead to emotional problems for the children who thus see a succession of different faces. A high proportion of trainees (more than 20% of the local complement), even momentarily, may be a burden on the organization and create problems with the permanent staff.

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Benevolent or volunteer? Definition:

The trainees situation depends on whether they are benevolent or voluntary:

- BENEVOLENTS PAY THEIR OWN TRAVEL EXPENSES AND THE COST OF THEIR STAY. THEY DO NOT RECEIVE A SALARY.

THEY MUST THEMSELVES COVER THE COST OF INSURANCE FOR RISK: HEALTH, ACCIDENT, REPATRIATION, THEFT, ETC. THEY DO NOT STAY LONGER THAN A FEW MONTHS.

- VOLUNTEERS ARE, AT LEAST PARTIALLY, PROVIDED FOR BY THE ASSOCIATION (OR A "COVERING" ASSOCIATION) AND ARE PAID. THEY MAY REMAIN SEVERAL YEARS (MAXIMUM 6 YEARS).

Nevertheless, some benevolents prepare for their voyage by collecting funds beforehand (business sponsorship, public or private subsidy, various donations). These funds may be provided by a French support association (in a special subsidiary bank account for that purpose). The benevolents may use this subsidiary account to finance their voyage as well as for a project for the children in the field.

- **Length of stay and risk insurance:**

THE LENGTH OF STAY - SHORT OR LONG TERM - AFFECTS THE RISK COVERAGE:

- For a stay of less than two months abroad, French people are covered by their social security system as tourists (if they have worked and contributed for at least a year beforehand). If this "tourist" works officially, the social security authorities must be informed and the person must take out complementary insurance for civil responsibility, repatriation, etc.

- For a stay exceeding two months, the "tourist" must have health insurance, and must meet the cost of subscription for repatriation and civil responsibility. If the association for which the "tourist" works assumes the cost of social security coverage and other insurances, the status is no longer that of a benevolent but becomes that of a volunteer.

- For a stay of one year, the employing organisation must provide the volunteer with lodgings, food, social insurance coverage and, in addition, retirement contributions and financial indemnities (pocket money).

- For a stay of two years, in addition to the obligations outlined above, there is a further obligation to pay the volunteer, on expiry of the contract, a capital sum for reinsertion on return. This capital is at least 1,000 FF per month, i.e., 24,000 FF for two years.

- **Formalities to be completed by an association wishing to employ a volunteer:**

To employ a person as a volunteer, the employing organization is advised to seek the approval of the French Government. Failing that, the employing organization may address its request to a "covering" organization in possession of such approval, which will submit the request. If this is accepted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, the latter may offer to ensure social security coverage and also the retirement contributions for the volunteer. The cost is about 8,000 FF per annum.

The "covering" organization will be guarantor for the volunteer who must follow a training course, from a week to 3 months, depending on the "covering" organization and/or the country of destination, the aim being to test the volunteer's knowledge and motivations.

There are about fifty approved organizations dealing with these requests for voluntary work. Some have affinities with a given country, or a given speciality (medicine, social work, development, education,

agriculture, etc.) or are religion-based (DCC, CCFD, Friends of Sister Emmanuelle, CEFODE, the addresses of which are annexed).

AN ASSOCIATION MAY, HOWEVER, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY ALONE FOR A VOLUNTEER, BUT IT THEN ASSUMES ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY, INCLUDING DAMAGES AND INTEREST TO BE PAID IN THE EVENT OF ACCIDENT OR NEGLIGENCE BY THE THE VOLUNTEER.

- **Selection, information:**

Unprepared departures should be avoided to prevent disillusionment for both parties. How to monitor the requests to preclude incompetent people or those with serious psychological problems?

Before a contract is signed, it is advisable to organize a meeting between the candidate and a psychologist who will provide insight into the candidate's maturity, balance, autonomy, ability to adapt, accept differences, respect others, and who will detect "parasitic" motivations (escape, onerous personal problems not dealt with, health).

The candidate must be apprised in detail (if possible with someone working in the field) of the conditions of life, work, climate, diet, awaiting them. Some countries are extremely destabilizing for a Westerner who discovers the depth of his ignorance as he discovers the local culture.

He must be asked to respect strictly the customs of the country. The child must live there and it would be dangerous for the volunteer to try to turn that child into a little French or American child. The trainee-to-be must also be warned against the temptation to establish a privileged relationship with a specific child, which might provoke, on the one hand, great distress through the child's being forsaken once again on the volunteer's departure, and, on the other, the jealousy of the other children. Children always show pleasure on meeting foreigners, having their photo taken, receiving little gifts, but a condescending attitude, or impulsiveness, impatience or anger provoke great upset or hurt both children and adults.

The trainee may be provided with a benevolent or volunteer "guide" as is done already by several associations, such as Ashalayam, Caméléon or Virlianie.

- **The contract:**

A clear contract, written and signed, must be drawn up, specifying the rights and duties of all parties and accompanied by the benevolent or volunteer "guide".

It is advisable, in so far as possible, to specify, in any contract for longer than six weeks, a project that the trainee will prepare before departure, then carry out during his stay in accordance with his abilities, aptitudes and motivations. It is a good idea to indicate which permanent person on site will be responsible for welcoming and keeping an eye on the trainee during his stay.

- **Financial indemnities:**

Indemnities paid to volunteers are at least 1,000 FF per month but rarely exceed the French minimum wage (about 5,000 FF). It is usual to pay at least the equivalent of one and a half times the monthly local salary (of the project).

Official French texts:

Decree No. 95-94 of 30 January 1995 concerning volunteers and voluntary organizations for international solidarity.

Law No. 95-116 of 4 February 1995 addressing various social matters, published in the Journal Officiel de la République Française dated 5 February 1995. Article 85 instituting an international solidarity leave.

Decree No. 86-469 of 15 March 1986 concerning voluntary organizations and volunteers for development.

Edict of 15 March 1986 concerning a reinsertion bonus for volunteers in development.

Edict of 15 July 1986 specifying the list of international solidarity associations eligible for the provisions relating to international solidarity leave in application of Article 85 of Law No. 95-116 of 4 February 1995 bearing on various measures of a social nature.

Addresses of a few associations approved for looking after volunteers:

(These addresses are taken from the list mentioned above, in the Edict of 15 July 1986.)

Friends of Sister Emmanuelle, 15 rue Chapon, 75003 Paris

Catholic Delegation for Cooperation, 9-11 rue Guyton de Morveau, 75013 Paris

Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development, 4 rue Jean Lantier,
750001 Paris

Cooperation and Training in North South Development, 17 rue Boston, 67000 Strasbourg. Email cefode@aol.com

The latter organization is on the Internet at <http://members.aol:ens67> which provides all instructions necessary for those wishing to cooperate (click on CEFODE then Coopération volontaire).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Caméléon is continuing its work with girls aged 5 to 16 at Ilo-Ilo in the Philippines. These children, victims of extremely violent traumas, often sexual, need lengthy and careful help. They can only be looked after if they are in small groups and they must be followed up long-term, including after their reinsertion in their family or with adopted parents.

At present, 15 girls are housed in a homefarm, attend public school and receive additional tutoring. They are personally responsible for one or more farm animals with which they create affectionate relations. They have legal help when (as is often the case) they have gone to law for the wrong done to them, and are protected against the threats of vengeance sometimes made against them.

La Belle Etoile (Maroua, Cameroun) has written to inform us that (...) *"Sometimes I no longer recognize this or that child from La Belle Etoile so suddenly do they change once they discover that they are worthy of interest, when those who show concern for them do so with no strings attached. Thus, with friendship and sharing, the torn social fabric is rewoven. With the smallest children this transformation is even more swift, almost instantaneous, but more fragile. Such was the case of Aladji, our youngest, 8 years old, who quickly let himself be hugged (...). After a few days, however, he suddenly disappeared. Was the wound too great, too deep? Was it the thirst for that deceptive freedom, which has the taste of emptiness and corresponds to a kind of interior wellbeing? The extraordinary instability of the children puts us to the test and obliges us continually to question ourselves in order to seek to adapt ourselves better to unexpected events. If we were a grand institution, I don't believe we should manage to cope, but our programmes, structures,*

*infrastructure are light and easily adaptable. In the street, we suggest merely that they come to play football the next day, and, if they want to, come to school. We deal with the child as he is and where he is in an attempt to redress a few tiny steps adapted to his situation and instability. After that, we try to recreate a family life (...) in a little house with no more than six children and a monitor to safeguard the family atmosphere. (...) Often, the child asks to return to his home, much to our joy at the Belle Etoile, and this sometimes encourages the others to follow suit. This getting back to their roots is often more delicate than repotting the tomato plants they have done that very morning and is followed up by parish teams. In the afternoon there is a school, and, although regularity is not our children's strong point, they are full of enthusiasm. Many of them already speak French and have begun reading and counting. After school it's shower time, and then, at nightfall, the video. As I write to you, they are watching "Snow White". It is not the Kung Fu they are more accustomed to in the videoclubs but they appreciate it all the same." In a last minute P.S. we find that: Aladji has come back, worn out, thin and dirty, but little by little his smile is returning. **Father Yves Lescanne, Brotherhood of Father Foucauld, B.P. 1 MAROUA, Cameroun.***

The Centre Notre Dame de Clairvaux (Madagascar), created by Father Bernard, was taken over in 1984 by the Salesians of Don Bosco. In an educational climate based on the family, it welcomes 150 young people aged between 12 and 22 from Antananarivo. Reception, bringing up to scholastic standard, professional training (woodwork, metalwork, masonry, agriculture, husbandry) are provided for these young people, as well as artistic activities (choirs, music, theatre, decoration, etc.), sport (football, basketball, karate, volleyball) or leisure (video, library, conferences, newspapers). The training programme must always be a proposal that must be accepted by the youth. Personalized itineraries must therefore be created to help them grow up, with varying levels of achievement. Social insertion is effected through professional activity and follow up is guaranteed by the "after Centre", through partner associations. **H. Cabrera. B.P. 41-105 Ivato Airport, Madagascar. E-mail: cndc.sdb@dts.mg** The Centre's Internet site can be visited at **www.lk.oi.com/donbosco**

At Krousar Thmey (Cambodia) Benoît Duchateau Arminjon, after 10 years of total immersion in the association, is returning to a more ... classical life! Although remaining in place, he is to become a benevolent for the association to which he will devote 20 to 30% of his time in fund raising and administration. That will not prevent him from remaining in contact with REPPER. **Krousay Thmey, 4 rue 257 avenue Kampuchea Krom Phom Phen. Cambodia. Email: krousar_thmey@bigpond.com.kh**

THE NEXT REPPER MEETING
WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY,
24 MARCH, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.,
2 PLACE HENRI FRENAY, 75012 PARIS, FRANCE
(opposite the Gare de Lyon TVG station)
Metro: Gare de Lyon).

PLEASE ADDRESS YOUR CORRESPONDENCE TO:

REPPER, 110 Avenue du Roule, 92200 NEUILLY sur Seine, FRANCE.
Telephone & Fax: 33 1 47 22 71 73.

Email: martineberge@club-internet.fr

Do you have an Email address? If so, let us know, for this will save us postage costs.

The REPPER bulletin is edited by the CONSTRUIRE Association, 16 rue de la Glacière, 75013 Paris, Tel&Fax: 33 1 47 07 87 14. It is sent to you free. In exchange, we should like you to let us have an annual report of your activities. We have still not received a great many. Are you sure you are up to date? If we don't hear from you, we shall assume that you are no longer interested and will therefore stop sending you our bulletins.

