

# REPPER

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

No 15

September 2002

*Following the detailed description in our previous bulletin of the agricultural experiences of Ashalayam in Calcutta, here is some further evidence, in particular, from Africa. There isn't room to quote them all, but what emerges is that, although all the attempts are not yet completely successful, far from it, they all note the benefits of this training on the children:*

*The approach or the return to nature provides a "normal" rhythm of life. The proximity of animals and caring for them gives the children a sense of responsibility and helps them express their affection. Hence, those who wish to, learn the rudiments of a job which will provide stability for their future. Finally, the produce contributes towards feeding the children and can sometimes be a source of profit.*

*This issue brings to a close our series of bulletins devoted to agriculture. We are thinking of addressing, in our future issues, the theme of "Childrens' work" (little jobs, legal or otherwise, training, professional insertion, finding an employer, starting up an activity, etc.). Let us have your thoughts, for sharing experiences is the strength of a network. They allow one and all to waste less time, perhaps even to gain time, thus economizing money and effort that can be invested in other projects. Thank you for joining in our efforts at reflection. Martine Berge Simenel.*

## **Statement from Lumpungu Mwembo, CUT, Lubumbashi 1 RDC**

1. *Why did you take up this experience?*

Agriculture here is the easiest and most accessible job for everyone. We ourselves, while still young students, overcame our financial problems by working on the land. With the help of a catholic missionary who bought our agricultural produce, we decided to share our experience with the street youth.

2. *What are the essentials required?*

At the outset, given the meagre resources, all that is needed are a few hoes, two or three hoses and seed. Even if the children must take turns to work, the main thing is to get the project up and working.

There must also be enough sustenance to feed the children regularly, since they go on the streets to find food. Moreover, for them, any job must be fruitful immediately (...).

It is only with time that they learn that, to live better, they must work hard, be patient and wait until what has been sown grows.

Finally, courage and determination are needed to understand that, in agriculture, problems arise and courage is needed to begin again when something doesn't work the first time.

3. *How many children did you start off with?*

For reasons of discipline, a decent framework, and, above all, because of our resources, we started with 20 children, and it was only later that we got to 50 and even more today.

Anyone wishing to engage in this activity should begin with a very small number of young people who can be sufficiently initiated into the job and who, in turn, will help the others to do better. In this way the enterprise has more chance of being successful.

4. *How long has the project been operating?*

We began in 1992 and became more effective in 1993. The project has made good progress, for we began with a very small plot of land and today we cultivate 1 to 2 hectares. We began with 20 children and now have 50, sometimes many more.

5. *To what do you attribute the success of the project?*

We think that the greatest secret for success is courage, love, concern, the will to see others learn this job and live from it, by their personal efforts, instead of vegetating in the streets. Again, you must start off with merely a few children who you can look after properly. In addition, you must know how to cultivate produce that will be easy to sell.

On the other hand, beginning with too many children you can't look after properly is a recipe for failure, for we must not forget that these children have lived in an environment without law and discipline. That is why each one must be followed up individually.

Another reason for failure is beginning with too large a plot of land when resources are few. Another reason may be lack of knowledge on how to work the land which ends in complete failure. In addition, however, and to tell the truth, the children may not come back if the enterprise does not make enough for them to live on. In which case the project grinds to a halt.

6. *Do you think that these agricultural activities are really beneficial for the children?*

They do benefit the children in so far as farming is a job which makes them useful for themselves and above all for society. By and large, agriculture helps children discover that they are not subhuman and that, like all men, they can live happily thanks to their own ability and their own efforts.

7. *What can be done to prevent them wanting to return to the towns?*

Our field produce is sold by the children themselves supervised by those in charge of our centre. In this way, they earn money themselves and, little by little, they discover that what they had hoped to find on the street can be acquired by their own work on the land. Thus they learn gradually that they need no longer be on the streets where they live and eat with difficulty, whereas our centre provides them with a measure of nutritional security. Lumpungu-Mwebo (c/o R.P. de Meester, BP 13 34 LUBUMBASHI, RDC. Fax: 37 79 79 90 235)

**Athanase Rwamo of OPDE in Bujumbura, BURUNDI, writes to us that:**

"A lengthy process of analysis and accompaniment has led us to note that a street child is a worker capable of making himself or herself useful and be responsible for his or her future. We thus began with simple things such as breeding poultry in the centres where the children live (...)

In January, 1997, OPDE set up a pilot project to raise 600 egg-layers in three home centres. That experimental phase developed successfully, in spite of the embargo inflicted on Burundi: the chickens were purchased in Ruanda, and several of them died in transit; the vaccines were likewise bought in Kigali despite the rate of inflation of Burunda's money compared to that of Ruanda, and the food products were purchased on the spot at an exorbitant price. In short, that first phase left us in a quandary but the result was in the end highly positive. After that test, the project was widened to include 1,000 egg-laying hens. It contributes efficiently to improving the children's food ration. It has helped to train them in the various techniques of poultry breeding and different means of management and enterprise. Thanks to this project, we have been able to sustain other microprojects for the worst off children, such as dressmaking for girls, restoring the street childrens' refuge, the wages for the workers on and logistic support for the handicraft smithy project." (opde-burundi@opde.org)

**Heriberto CABRERA of the ND de Clairvaux-Don Bosco Centre (Antananarivo, Madagascar) has very kindly sent us an article on the husbandry activities of his centre:**

"The centre, merely a welcome centre at the outset in 1968, was taken in hand by the Don Bosco Salesians in 1984. Today, it takes in 200 children at risk who are given a general education, orientation and professional training (agriculture and husbandry, construction, metalworking and woodworking). The ND de Clairvaux Centre works in tandem with more than 36 social centres in Antananarivo."

Intent of the husbandry:

---

The intent is educative: to train professionals in husbandry given that Madagascar is principally an agricultural country (80% of the population is engaged in agriculture).

The intent is also therapeutic: the young people establish affectionate links among themselves and with the animals; they learn to respect them and show their affection. Work on the farm is a real therapy, for the young people learn to open up and to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the animals whom they learn to care for, to tame and to love. Thanks to this work they become responsible and persevere, for the animals never go on holiday, they have to be fed and cared for day after day.

The intent is also productive, for the produce of the students' work is used for the Centre's food, for example, the young people drink the milk produced on the farm.

### Husbandry:

The Centre, 15 kms from Antananarivo, consists of 14 hectares on which are bred turkeys, ducks, rabbits, sheep, zebu, cows and horses, pigs, guinea pigs, and small birds (partridges, parrots).

Problems arise of course, such as looking after illness or sterility in, or accidents with, some of the animals... In spite of these difficulties, however, husbandry is a success, for it trains the young people and provides openings with animal breeders which facilitates training courses and provides work opportunities for the young people.

### Some thoughts on our experiences:

There is no point in taking the route of industrial husbandry, for the risks are too great, it is better rather to set up family farms (within the childrens' grasp) by buying the animals little by little to see whether they can be managed successfully. The person in charge must be competent, must like the children and must be helped by capable people. Each day's work must be checked, attention paid to the dry season (lack of fodder) and precautions taken in advance. The neighbourhood must have medicines and a vet, the breeding area must be secure to avoid overnight burglaries, and the young people must eat what they produce, since this motivates them. Finally, there is no need to be frightened, it is not difficult. It should be remembered that the farm is above all a school and that, consequently, the young people will sometimes make mistakes ... Do not get annoyed, therefore, a good deal of patience is needed!" Heriberto is willing to reply to questions on any aspect of the husbandry system. Write to him at [ende.sdb@dts.mg](mailto:ende.sdb@dts.mg)

### **Catholic Action for Street Children (C.A.S. Accra, Ghana)**

(...) "Children preparing to start school but not yet ready to do so are sent to the farm at the Hopeland Training Centre where the team of social workers can get to know the children well.

This is a big step for the street children. Not only do they leave the streets, but also town life. They stay at Hopeland from 6 to 9 months. They look after hens, pigs, rabbits and ducks. They take courses in ceramics and candlemaking, and in reading and writing and hygiene.

In a few years time the farm should be autonomous, although recently we have had a number of setbacks, most of which are due to lack of rain over the past three years.

Another factor, however, is inflation, for, although we have no problem in selling the farm produce, the profit margin is extremely low due to inflation. (Jos van Dinther. P.Box 709 Madina Accra Ghana)

**Brother James in Nanban (Madurai, India)** writes to tell us that: "Nanban has an agricultural and husbandry centre of more than 6 hectares with 600 coconut and 200 other palms the yield from which is highly satisfactory. Corn and vellari (a type of spinach with a high vitamin C content) are grown among the palms. The farm has at present a herd of 46 cows, the excellent milk from which is sold directly to the consumer, and three pig sties containing 32 pigs and 28 piglets fed partially from surplus food from company canteens, for example, from hospital canteens. Three pigs are sold each month. There are three buildings for administration, services and commodities needed by the staff, conference rooms, stables and granges.

The farm has the advantage of being a source of revenue, a youth training centre, an ideal place for training workshops, seminars and conferences, a holiday home for children and a residence for official guests. Last year, Nanban installed an electric generator for burning farm rubbish (animal excrement) and the residue is used as agricultural fertilizer. The children are extremely proud of this machine, which is

---

the first of its kind in the region, and maintain that it is the centre of attraction in the neighbourhood." Nanban. Maria Complex Ashok Nagar, III St., Kochadai, Madurai, India. nanban.mdu@gnmads.global.net.in

## NETWORK NEWS

### AFRICA:

CAS (Catholic Action for Street Children) (Ghana) supports six associations looking after street children: two are in Ghana, one in Senegal, one in Zambia and two in Mozambique. *Imagine* (in Maputo, Mozambique) provides a shelter for sleeping, clothes and shoes and, much appreciated by the boys, the possibility to play football and other sports. The greatest success of this association, however, is an ex-street-child who, thanks to *Imagine*, has become a famous artist whose work is to be exhibited in London next year! info@streetchildafrica.org.uk

### Foyers St Joseph (Conakry, Guinea)

Father Etienne has been able to resume his activities after a long illness. He writes to tell us that: "Children are still knocking on our door (...) We must play the dreadful game of choosing the most miserable. We help out the poorest, pay their medical bills ... (Foyers St Joseph s/c Archevêché BP 20 16 Conakry, Guinea. Foyers\_saint\_joseph@yahoo.fr)

### Centre Intwari (Kigali, Ruanda)

Established 15 years ago, the Centre is reserved for girls from 6 to 18 met on the street by careworkers. Intwari means "Courageous". We begin by trying to find the child's identity, then orient the child towards schoolwork or professional training (sewing, embroidery, knitting, cooking, health care, etc.). There are 120 girls in the centre, 40 of whom are in primary and 7 in secondary school. All school fees are paid by the Centre. A nurse comes for the childrens' health care. Educational outings and two camps are organized each year. (Marius Dion, Dominicans, BP 946 Kigali, Ruanda avsikli@imul.com)

CAJED (Committee for the Aid of Young People in Difficulty - in Togo) "76 young people off the street have become workers thanks to the programme and its donors. (...) Most of them are managing but the seriousness of the economic crisis in Togo meant that a lot of help had to be given to buy equipment or pay rent ... In our future budget estimates we must always set aside some money to strengthen existing workshops so as to prevent them from going under because of a cash shortfall at a bad time. CAJED 13 rue Léon Bloy, 92260 Fontenay aux Roses. marguerat@bondy/irdf.fr

MULEMBA (Luanda, Angola) "Every saturday and during the shorter holidays, children from age 12 are given agricultural training in the framework of our cooperation with Agrisud Angola. The oldest have been able to earn pocket money by helping to plant 200 mango trees and 3,000 pineapples". mulemba@multitel.co.ao

Solidarité enfants en détresse (SED) at Douala, Cameroun is a newcomer to REPPER. It is at present taking care of 19 children in a home operating under a great deal of difficulty. Several of the children looked after

by SED have been reintegrated into their families. SED BP 11 863 Douala, Cameroun. sedsolidarite@voila.fr

**Agbe Yeye** at Atakpame in Togo is likewise a newcomer to REPPER. Established three years ago, this association has "inherited" children who had until then been sheltered in a reinsertion centre transformed into a school. Very much isolated and inexperienced, Agbe Yeye would like to get in touch with other associations to exchange ideas. It is caring for 30 street children (information on AIDS and MST, schooling, rudimentary management, linen distribution, organizing traditional dance festivals, etc.)  
alagbe1977@yahoo.fr

## LATIN AMERICA

**QOSQO MAKI** (Cuzco, Peru) has perfected, since 1990, its methods of education in liberty and issued half a dozen publications on its achievements. It intends to develop its links with all those involved in social activities in Cuzco to establish fruitful cooperation. In addition, it hopes to set up a street library in 2002. Isabel Baufumé, Apartado 440 Cuzco, Peru.

**ENDA BOLIVIA** is now represented in Europe at ENDA EUROPE, 5 rue des Immeubles Industriels, 75011 PARIS, telephone: 01 44 93 87 40, endabolivie-france@wanadoo.fr

## ASIA

**SNEHASADAN** in Bombay, India has celebrated its 40th anniversary. The reporter from the French newspaper La Croix (an article in which gave birth to the foundation of this association which has 400 children under its care at present) wrote on the occasion of this anniversary: "We may sometimes wonder whether our contribution is no more than a mere drop in the ocean of needs. The answer must be no. To create oases of support, of development, as has done SNEHASADAN for 40 years, is to create a chain to whose links cling hundreds of human beings and thereby rediscover a taste for life." AFEA, who supports Snehasadan: 17 rue Voltaire, 44000 Nantes. afea.snehasadan@wanadoo.fr

**Galopins de Calcutta**, Bombay, India: "All's well at the home looking after 14 'great kids', other, smaller boys will be joining them soon (...) We'll have to be thinking of moving house so as to be able to accommodate 20 boys. (...) Our team goes to the railway station twice a week to meet children turning up there for various reasons. They live there with no family support and, to feed themselves, they sell whatever they find in the trains. Whenever a long distance train arrives at the station, they swarm over it. The kids throw themselves on anything that can be resold (mostly paper and plastic bottles). Some children choose to sweep the trains and thus travel from station to station with their little brushes. Most of them are between 8 and 12.

Most of the time these children live in little groups and don't hesitate to help each other out once they get to know each other well. Our team listens to them, gives them clothes or something to eat, heals their little wounds, and establishes confidence with the child. Since the intent is to get them out of the station, stress is laid on the possibility for the children to leave this unhealthy world and go to a home where they will be able to establish a future. Few, however, show real interest. In the station, they do as they like and take orders from no one. Psychologically flawed, cut to the quick, they have very little reason to have confidence in adults, and, often, they prefer their freedom to a life which, though more comfortable, is also more restrictive. Nevertheless, listening to these runaway children who have lived sometime in the station, we sense their pain, their bitterness at not being loved by their families. To the question "what would you do if you had plenty of money?" they invariably reply: "I'd go home and perhaps they'd take me back". Our team has placed a number of children (about 60) in various homes, but more than half of them have left." Galopins de Calcutta, 23 rue Fontaine Michon, 61200 Sarveaux.

**ENFANTS DU SOURIRE KHMER** (E.S.K.) is a financing organization for NGOs working in Cambodia. Since 1996 ESK has supported principally three centres managed by Cambodians. Its resources come from the annual subscriptions of its members, monthly payments by Godmothers and Godfathers meeting the daily needs of 68 children, funds from demonstrations or the sale of craft goods, links with support

organizations at centres on the spot, twinning with schools or training colleges with childrens' centres or training schools in Cambodia.

## **THE NEXT REPPER MEETING**

**will be on Saturday, 19 October 2002  
from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
12 rue de Martignac 75007 Paris  
Metro Assemblée nationale**

**REPPER, 110 Avenue du Roule, 92200 NEUILLY sur Seine, FRANCE.  
Tele/Fax: 33 1 47 22 71 73. Email: [martineberge@club-internet.fr](mailto:martineberge@club-internet.fr)**

REPPER is edited by: CONSTRUIRE, 16 rue de la Glacière, 75013 Paris, TeleFax: 01 47 07 87 14.  
Email: [christian.bompard@club-internet.fr](mailto:christian.bompard@club-internet.fr)

---