

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

AFRICA

- **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

OSEPER, Kinshasa, will start in the coming fortnight a new agricultural training programme, lasting two years for some 20 pupils. This programme is the outcome of the successful experiments made over the past 3 years in favour of youth from the street who want to become farmers and return to rural

country. This programme joins some 10 others developed by OSEPER, each with their particular subject matter (The work in the streets, First aid centres, Hostels, Professional development, etc.).

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- **RWANDA**

INTIGANDA, Butare, "In our hostel we take care of some 50 children and we follow-up on the progress, by family visits and by help in schooling, of some 50 others who have returned to their families. This year one of them won a State scholarship for a place in the university to study veterinary disciplines related to farming. Such an achievement is beyond the capacity of most of our youngsters but it is a great source of encouragement to them, even those in Primary school! The climate is all important, if the weather is bad, famine ensues and the children return to town in search of food, sometimes they don't stay for very long. When food supplies again

permit, they must be re-integrated with their families (...). Professional training has its problems as there are few structures which can deal with youngsters who can hardly read or write. Courses with craftsmen and tradesmen are hazardous as they depend too much on the owner's work-load. The manager is often a self-made man, unqualified to supply a proper valid training. In such conditions the youngster will learn to copy but not to innovate or to develop his own talents and prepare himself for the unknown."

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ABATERAMBERE, Ruhengeri, opened a new centre in 2005, this time for girls. Making contact with girls on the streets is more difficult than with the boys. All the children, girls and boys, join in the activities whilst awaiting a return to their families or a foster family. According to their choice and ability they either go to school or are apprenticed. To day 35 children are receiving training in trades (sewing,

soldering, woodwork, mechanics) and 95 others have completed the course and received a kit of tools for their trade. 6 have married. Since foundation in 1997 Abaterambere has taken in 386 children, of who 326 have been re-integrate with their family. It's getting more difficult every day to find foster parents and to find the finance needed to pay for.

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- **SENEGAL**

DOMMI NÉEP, Thiés, Thiés has, since 1995 offered board to all who want to leave the life on the streets. A child who can't rejoin his family can receive training in the trade of his choice. Dommi Néep also takes care of youth who working on the streets and tries to improve their way of life. Activities include, the combat against exploitation of children and sexual abuse, the struggle in favour of children's

rights and opportunities for schooling and professional training and apprenticeships. Dommi Néep remarks that "children find their own ways of dealing with their difficulties" and to improve the help offered "all the parties must be in close collaboration".

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CALAO EXPRESS 18, Dakar, is amongst those taking part in the 7th African congress for Child and Young Workers. More than 150 participants from 20

countries have joined in this work and celebrate 12 years of activity.

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LATIN AMERICA

- **BRAZIL**

CASA DO MENOR celebrates its 20th anniversary and this year won the Baixada prize 2006, a distinction reserved for institutions having contributed to improving the social and cultural values of the

country. In this new school year there is an offer of training in a large selection of trades for children aged from 14 to 24.

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- **PEROU**

LA CANOA, Iquitos, in it's fourth year since start-up has developed a wide range of activities and a sense of institutional responsibility. Open to children in extreme situations of poverty, new classes for artistic expression (drawing, music, dance, clowns theatre,) have been developed with support from the French association "Constellation". Each of these classes has a common theme – knowledge of and respect for

Children's rights. Several links with the local authorities puts La Canoa in a strong position for advice on the fight against sexual exploitation of children, the co-ordination of the work of a group of similar institutions and the protection of women and children.

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We draw your attention to an extremely interesting article written by a Swiss student of psychology concerning the work amongst street children (and in particular shoe-shine boys) in Cusco, Peru. "Ils pensent que nous sommes des enfants de la rue"- a brief summary of this text of some 90 pages will soon appear on our web-site.

ASIA

- INDIA

ASHALAYAM, Calcutta, has opened a new shop in the city centre to sell artisanal work made by the children of Ashalayam. The decision to open this centre, as with many decisions made by Ashalayam's management, was in response to a request from the children.

Calcutta's police authorities have asked Ashalayam to open a school in the railway station, where a million people pass each day indifferent to hundreds of children who have elected domicile in the station. Some 30 children have lessons from mid-day to 3.30 pm. A new first-aid infirmary has opened thanks to help from "Ateliers sans frontières" who came from France especially for this purpose.

GALOPINS DE CALCUTTA writes "The number of street-children continues to grow. We currently have 28 boys and plan to open our doors to some adults. 8 boys have gone to boarding school, they are well supervised and receive a valuable education, it's a new world for them, so different to the streets. They are less tempted to run away than when they were with the children from the station. We keep in touch

NANBAN, Madurai, rejoices in the success of it's camp, from the start and to the finish the children took responsibility for it – 150 children partook. A training session lasting 3 days was organised for the "Captains". Various programmes (dance, music etc) and numerous debates were organised by the

SNEHASADAN, Bombay, "There are more and more children on the streets because people come from the country to the town in search of work. Last month we welcomed to our hostels another 25

An educational game along the lines of "Trivial Pursuit" has been developed with help from "Groupe Développement" (France). By answering questions on a variety of subjects adapted to the local situation (Aids, Hygeine, Children's rights, etc) children acquire valuable knowledge whilst in play. Answers are on the back of the cards. (You will soon be able to consult a detailed description of this game on the REPPER web-site, and if you so wish adapt it for use in your own country).

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with them and they return here when on holiday. Our new arrivals receive schooling according to the levels they have and we help them catch up when they have fallen behind. All studies are conducted in English. One student has just passed 3 subjects out of 5 at level grade 10, this is an encouragement for us to persevere."

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children themselves on subjects such as Child rights, Alcoholism, Divisions caused by the Cast system. Our teachers salute these youngsters who so magnificently conducted, and assumed on their own responsibility for this camp.

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children." writes Father Placido Fonesca, who took over the management of this association in 2005 and has responsibility for some 300 children.

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EUROPE

- FRANCE

COSAME is making a review of its activity "Artisans sans Frontières" to re-determine its objectives and training methods. Don't hesitate to contact them if

you need a welfare worker "ready-to-leave" or simply to make known your other requirements.

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TROIS QUARTS DU MONDE sends news of Solo para mujeres in Guatemala city. Violence dominates in the area of the bus station where there is a centre for the care of young girl prostitutes. The protection they receive is much needed and equally appreciated. 7 young women and their children are currently in care in the hostel. Drugs are strictly forbidden, detoxification is underway. They receive

lessons in literacy and computers; activities are regularly revised and changed with no dead time so that the girls are distracted and forget their craving for drugs, hard drugs. A second hostel for 16 girls of Indian origin provides a good level of schooling and helps them get useful work.

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- SWITZERLAND

VOIX LIBRES, Geneva, repeats the operation "Les Trousses de l'Espoir" principally in favour of school children of Bolivia. Since the beginning of the year 65,000 children have received a kit of school

materials and a supplementary project aims to supply a further 10,000 pupils to help in their schooling and prepare them for a job or a trade.

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DOCUMENT

Extracts from the report of the mission to Khatmandou, Nepal.

The author of this report was recruited by Cosame to help the institution Pomme Canelle create a carpentry shop for a group of street children seeking work. To start with Pomme Canelle had to study the market to determine the future needs, outlets and labour requirements. Two trades stood out from the others – Automobile mechanics and Carpentry. In the absence of local talent Pomme Canelle asked Cosame to find a suitable instructor.

"Right from the start of my first visit I was surprised to find how polite and gentle the children were. However, I was also surprised by the concept of the "hostel for street children" so noisy, so full of life, not all-together aseptic, which didn't exactly match my idea of the best way to manage and educate children . (...) It's a common reaction that voluntary workers have. If you really want to succeed in serving others one must learn to compromise, to accept different opinions and attitudes and above all forget preconceived ideas in order to reply to the real needs. It's important to understand that these

children have been used to total freedom for many years and need an environment which respects this need. They do not accept too strict a supervision, nor being locked in at nights. The Pomme Canelle staff is composed largely of ex-street children who are there when required and know just how to manage with diplomacy. (...)

My mission was to set up a carpentry shop and get it running as a profitable business, able to be self-financing and provide a small remuneration for the pupils, within 8 months! The hostel manager kindly

translated all my lessons. (...) In my first lesson I took time to introduce myself and explain why I was there and what I wanted for us to achieve. There were five students aged 16 and 17 yrs., who six-months previously were still living on the streets. I asked them to fix themselves the rules for the workshop. I knew that my teaching had to be of a very practical nature and my priority to be to keep them motivated, giving them confidence in themselves and hope for the future. The activities were presented in short modules so as to maintain their attention and to continue to be of interest. One must remember that they can return to the streets at any moment simply because of a minor vexation or conflict. I am astonished that they don't know what is a square, a rectangle or a triangle – so essential to carpentry full of geometry. (...) Progress is slow, having to translate everything complicates the task. Each student makes a stool with mortice and tenon joints, it's their first piece of individual work. Progress improves and I am encouraged; there is little absenteeism and very few disciplinary problems. Before going any further I decide to confirm what has already been acquired. A second set of stools is made. The students are now 8 in number. I interrupt my lesson frequently to resume what has been said or to make addition explanatory comment or to introduce a newcomer to his classmates. We assemble together the "curting machine" and I explain how it is used and the measures of security which are required, the pupils are amazed and somewhat apprehensive. (...)

At this point I realise that we will not achieve the goal of becoming a profitable business with orders, customers and production, because we work too slowly and can't maintain a constant quality of work, making it difficult to sell the product. The real need is to learn all aspects of the trade, which is not the purpose of a profit-earning enterprise. In fact this workshop will be neither just a training centre, nor a springboard, nor a specialisation course, but a little of each of these all in one. Our visits to other businesses in the locality prepare the children for the conditions of a working life and open up opportunities for future courses. I frequently send them to the nearby carpentry shop to ask questions so as to break down their sense of inferiority, their inbred timidity in front of adults in the outside world. In fact

what has to be achieved is to build-up their psycho-social identity.

I teach them the basics of first aid – bandaging a sore, how to react when confronted with a serious wound or amputation. Their progress in the workshop is good, they are interested in the work, assiduity too is correct, I become increasingly demanding on quality and they keep pace with this. We make a cupboard and a bed for the hostel. I teach the theory through the production of useful items of furniture for the hostel. I emphasise the theory rather than the practical and insure that each student gets the best attention and training according to his capacities

In spite of my efforts my teaching is much influenced by western culture. Moreover, one aspect of my work is to prepare them for a working life in their local environment, this is facilitated by courses in local businesses which we find through the relationships we have managed to create. The pupils are frightened, they must be encouraged, pushed forward. The welcome they receive on their course is warm and they return here pleased. We have also decided to increase their pocket money whilst on the course. Only those who are ready to go on the course, ready both technically and psychologically, are selected. The length of the course is short, 6 days and for 3 hours per day. When the course is finished, I start them on the difficult task of making a bedside table, requiring several techniques. What a pleasure it is to see them concentrating on their work, taking the measures, using the machines with confidence and competence, with the professional gestures.

During my last month my major task was to hand over to my successor, a Nepalese carpenter with experience in teaching. This assignment has been a real success, the fact that we were unable to commercialise our production was not really a failure because we succeeded in supplying what the children needed: a complete individualised training. The confidence found by each pupil will help them face the future and persevere in their work. They have matured, they have open minds and look forward with optimism. By the end of 2006 they will be ready for a working life."

The plans and documents behind this project are available on request: soridavi@yahoo.fr.

The blog developed during the 8 months of this project is available on a Pomme Cannelle site: <http://apcbiya.blogspot.com>

Web site for Pomme Cannelle: www.pommecannelle.org

We intend to renew the REPPER website and would appreciate your ideas and advice: what new subject matter do include? Which parts to exclude or revise? Write to us by email: martineberge@club-internet.fr

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