



Ons Plek Projects

providing hope instead of street life

P O Box 3506 Cape Town 8000

Tel 021 465-4829 · Fax 021 461-0530

email onsplek@new.co.za · website www.onsplek.org.za

NPO No. 009-578 · PBO No. 930-001-457

Affiliated to Cape Town Child Welfare Society

We extend a warm invitation
to everyone in the area to attend our

Annual General Meeting and Book Launch

on Thursday 23 October 2008

at the

Rondebosch United Church Hall

Cnr Belmont and Fir Roads

The Hall is at the rear of the Church

(see Insert for detailed directions)

from 17h00 for 17h30 until 19h30

Vehicle security will be arranged



Ons Plek girls and staff will entertain you
and the refreshments will entice you!

Please help us cater for everybody by bringing a plate of eats

RSVP: Tel 021 465-4829/72 or Fax 021 461-0530

Do join us for ...

our very first
❖ BOOK LAUNCH ❖
and our
Annual General Meeting



LESLIE WITZ
Chairperson

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting. Our chairperson, Leslie Witz, will be there to welcome you.

Come prepared to celebrate!

Our AGM this year again promises to be an AGM with a difference. The launch of our first book! The book, long asked for by many, is on our work — see the accompanying flyer. The book contents include a full range of life experiences of our children. Theory and methodology are integrated with case studies based on 18 years of experience at Ons Plek Projects. It's also an easy read with stories that will warm our hearts.

As always, the highlight of the evening, our girls, will eagerly present dance items that they have been enthusiastically practicing for you all.

We have had to face many challenges this past year, and so we deeply appreciate your constant support and prayers, which are a great source of encouragement for our work.

... from Committee Members and Staff of Ons Plek Projects

NOMINATIONS for the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
of ONS PLEK PROJECTS

Nominations for election to the Management Committee must be received at our office by Monday 20 October 2008 at 17h00. These nominations must be in writing and must have been seconded. Your nomination form is included (*see back page*).

If you need more nomination forms, they are available from Sharon or Odette at our office.

Only members of Ons Plek Projects are entitled to nominate and second persons for election (*member's list appears on page 10*).

The following current Committee Members are willing to stand for re-election:

Valerie Julies	Sandra Prosalendis	Tsiliso Tamasane	Leslie Witz
Ruth Andrews	Buyiswa Ketshabile	Christiana Nel	Fiona Ross
Martie Odendaal	Roland Hudson-Bennett		

Ntombezizi Baduza will not be available as a committee member,
but will remain as a friend and supporter of Ons Plek Projects.

Ons Plek * Siviwe * Ukondla

Ons Plek Projects consist of:

- * Ons Plek intake shelter doing comprehensive assessment and development care with reunification as a priority.
- * Siviwe second-phase shelter focusing on therapeutic and developmental children's home with reunification as a priority.
- * Ukondla – Philippi Community Project with prevention as a priority.

Mission Statement

**Ons Plek Projects has a simple and passionate mission:
to make a substantive improvement in the lives of female street children.**

Ons Plek is a place where girls find an opportunity to re-build their lives and their self-esteem. A place where a sense of belonging helps them to take responsibility for themselves and for others.

The preparation for life of each child takes into account the innate potential of the individual within the realities of her life circumstances.

These realities are mirrored in all aspects of our project which enables us to model coping mechanisms; girls participate fully in decisions about their lives; residential staff members share the lives of the girls and office staff members make do in cramped quarters with only the essentials for the job.

Ons Plek is not an escape — it is a real home in a rough life

~ Ons Plek's Vision ~

That female street children will be successfully re-united with their families and that failing that, they will be sufficiently empowered at Ons Plek Projects to grow into healthy, independent functioning members of society.

Key Information with regard to the Work, and the Context of the Work, of Ons Plek Projects

- Ons Plek is the only comprehensive program for girls on the streets in the Unicity of Cape Town.
- Our intake shelter is situated in the CBD of Cape Town, because it is central and is where children and youth run to for relative safety if city security systems allow them.
- The sources of the children's problems are not easily solved – deepening poverty, abuse, lack of affordable safe housing, unemployment, crime, family instability, alcohol abuse, family violence, etc.
- Girls come or are referred to us from different areas. Some girls roam around their home community with inappropriate friends, often hanging around cheap local liquor and entertainment centres, before seeking help further afield.
- Girls who seek help are often teenagers, but also younger girls, sometimes girls with babies.
- Children tend to cope with an inordinate amount of trauma before leaving their home environments. These psychological scars may take a long time to heal for many of the girls.
- Those girls who find it the most difficult to reintegrate with mainstream society are often also living with learning difficulties and even severe mental health problems.
- Unaccompanied foreign minors are very vulnerable, and are ending up in the 'street children' sector.
- Ons Plek works with an average – 100 to 150 girls per year.
- The work of our three main facilities is all interlinked. The three programs integrate to form a whole.



Our Director's Annual Report

Pam Jackson

Ons Plek is a warm presence in the lives of many. Our aims, activities and facilities are purposefully thought through in order to have a long lasting impact in the lives of the children. The decisions taken are based on sound social work methods and ethics. Achievements and difficulties are constantly, and I mean, constantly evaluated.

In order to show how programs are actually interfaced in the lives of the children, our Annual Reports traditionally go deeper than a presentation of our aims, objectives, methods and achievements. We hope some of the flavour of our working with real people in a real world is conveyed. We hope some of our passion, the joys, the sorrows, the commitment, and the laughter, which the work engenders in staff members, is conveyed.

CONTENTS of the REPORT

- § We share the stories of three of our children.
- § We look at some external threats and opportunities having a serious impact on our work.
- § Our programs are presented (pages 14 and 15).

STORIES ... Our Social Worker Reports

All the identifying details in the stories have been changed in the interests of confidentiality.

Case Summary 1

Olga was placed on detention orders at Ons Plek Projects on 24 June 2005, after she was abandoned by the man who brought her to South Africa.

Initially, Olga was very reluctant to provide background information and details of how she came to South Africa. Ons Plek sent a referral to International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to investigate whether Olga was trafficked into the country. IOM concluded that although

she entered the country illegally, there was no indication of human trafficking.

Olga was hosted by prospective foster care parents during the December 2005 school holidays. By January 2006 the placement was reviewed and Olga was placed in foster care with Mrs T. Ons Plek undertook to supervise the placement and offered ongoing support to the child and family. In addition, Olga participated daily in our homework support project, Ukondla, as well as in weekly counselling sessions. During her stay in Philippi, she demonstrated that she is able to adjust and cope with new situations and challenges.

It was during this time, that Olga's older sister made contact with Ons Plek staff members. The sisters had an emotional reunion and committed to rebuild their relationship.

Olga is Congolese and does not have South African documentation, thus Mrs T was un-successful in her application for a foster care grant. The social worker made several enquiries as the placement was endorsed by the Department of Social Development, but to no avail because the All Pay System of payment requires a South African identity number, which Olga does not have.

Ons Plek offered financial support, but Mrs T felt that it did not suffice. Olga witnessed the family's financial struggles and she felt that she was adding to their stress. Olga openly expressed her feelings to the foster family, thanked them for their hospitality and explained her decision to return to us. Olga returned to Ons Plek on 5 December 2006.

Throughout 2007, Olga maintained regular contact with her sister (who has married and has a baby). Olga spent most of the December/January school holidays with her sister.

Olga moved to her sister on 1 May 2008. She attends our daily homework sessions and meets her counsellor weekly.

Despite her circumstances, Olga has shown that she is resilient and has coped very well in new situations. She has proved that she wants to belong and has made efforts to integrate in the house and community. Olga has learnt Xhosa and English and has many friends at Siviwe, school and church youth.

*Written by Carmen De Vos
Case Manager: Yumna Van Der Schyff*



Case Summary 2

Nondumiso was admitted to Ons Plek Projects on 22 January 2002, after Homestead staff members established that she and her brother had spent time on the streets while the mother worked long hours away from home.

Nondumiso is the youngest of five children. The mother was a farm labourer who spent long hours away from home and thus left the children unsupervised in the afternoon.

Upon Nondumiso's admission to Ons Plek, the mother also reported that she struggles to cope with containing her children.

A childcare worker took Nondumiso to visit her mother at times. The reason for this is that Siviwe staff members on many occasions had to retrieve the child by fetching her after the mother had failed to return the child after a weekend. This caused Nondumiso to miss out on school.

In home-visits conducted by Siviwe staff members, and also as reported by the child concerned, it was established that her mother drinks and that there are fights happening amongst people who drink in the community. Due to the mother's lifestyle, she has not had regular contact with Nondumiso and kept promising to visit her, but quite often does not honour her promises.

The mother has always been very reluctant to disclose any information regarding the family background or her biological father. When staff members questioned her about relatives, she would become very emotional and refused to discuss it further.

Nondumiso made contact with her eldest brother, V residing in Hermanus. He was eager to maintain contact and invited her to spend the September 2004 holidays with his family. When the mother found out she was furious. The mother shouted at Nondumiso and made it clear that she did not approve. The mother was of the

*... there are fights
happening amongst
people who drink in
the community.*

opinion that V should first take care of her, before caring for Nondumiso. V gradually lost contact.

Throughout 2005 and 2006, the mother was sporadically employed. She worked as a domestic worker and farm labourer. The mother is currently employed on a farm in V.

Ons Plek/Siviwe staff members identified Nondumiso as a child that could benefit from a foster care placement. The possibility of foster care was addressed during her counselling sessions and she spent weekends and the June holidays with the prospective foster mother.

Foster care was discussed with the mother, who agreed on condition that she could further her education.

Nondumiso has decided that she is willing to be fostered. She moved to the prospective foster mother, Ms J.B. on 13 July 2006. She still comes to Siviwe for counselling.

Mrs S Hasewinkel, consultant social worker assessed Ms J.B as a suitable foster parent. Ms Vuyokazi Nombewu, social worker at PAWC Khayelitsha will be responsible for the foster care supervision services.

Emotional well-being

Nondumiso is a girl that remains positive no matter what her circumstances. She has longed to find someone to go to, as her mother is unstable and does not visit regularly. Like any child, she avoids discussing painful issues. In counselling she communicates freely as she is empowered to express herself, even with painful issues.

*Written by Carmen De Vos
Case Manager: Yumna Van Der Schyff*



Case Summary 3

Pretty was initially admitted to Ons Plek on 29 February 2000. Pretty alleged that her caregiver was verbally abusive towards her and neglected to send her to school.

After some investigations Ons Plek made contact with extended paternal relatives in the Eastern Cape. In April 2000 Pretty returned to the Eastern Cape and she was then cared for by another elder aunt to her father.

On 24 January 2005 Pretty was again admitted to Ons Plek, since her caregiver in the Eastern Cape had passed away and she had no family who were willing and able to provide for her.

The biological mother abandoned Pretty when she was a few months old and has never made any contact with her. It is not clear whether her parents were married.

Pretty was reared by various elderly paternal relatives in the Eastern Cape and never knew her father, who was a migrant worker in Johannesburg. Her father was killed in 1995.

Pretty remembers being told that she was born in Baragwanath Hospital, Johannesburg. Ons Plek has tried on several occasions to liaise with administrators dealing with records at the hospital but without success since we have no information regarding the biological mother. Pretty's family never knew her mother and has no further information regarding the maternal family.

In May 2005 Ons Plek Projects also communicated with the primary school in the Eastern Cape, where Pretty attended, and requested their records concerning her application and date of birth on the application. To date there has been no response.

In September 2005 Ons Plek did a radio advert appealing for information regarding her biological mother. No significant information was received through this radio advert.

Pretty completed matric. Throughout the year she was encouraged to study and put in her best effort.

The matric ball was in September, and we realised how demanding and fashion conscious adolescents can be. Staff members and volunteers brought beautiful evening wear and shoes, but not to her taste. We were able to provide a small budget for her and our volunteers took her shopping. She hired a dress, did her hair and Monica was chauffeur.

She was not too happy that she could not attend the "after party" but enjoyed the matric ball.

Written by Carmen De Vos
Case Manager: Yumna Van Der Schyff



EXTERNAL THREATS and OPPORTUNITIES

The world is facing a critical shortage of skilled labour. This year our major threat has been the shortage of capable people to do childcare work. In this report the dangers and solutions which are relevant in some respects to all labour are focused on.

Xenophobia

None of us are exempt from prejudice whether it's directed across racial lines, nationalities or religions. As a number of our girls are foreigners it was crucial to hold urgent discussions before the intensified wave of xenophobia sweeping through South Africa returned to Cape Town after a quiet period in the last year or so. The discussions are documented in our Winter Newsletter 2008 and on our Website www.onsplek.org.za. No acts of xenophobia within the project have taken place. We took other precautions which kept the children safe from external attacks.

Skills Shortage/Change of attitudes/Ethics in the workplace

What is Happening?

In years gone by, Ons Plek would have 100 or more responses to our advertisements for childcare workers. Many of these were unable to meet our literacy and numeracy requirements. However we would always find suitable people who showed potential for growth. They would do theoretical courses at National Association of Child Care Worker (NACCW), practical training on the job and become competent and loyal staff members.

The last 8 months we have actively recruited staff members to fill two posts. Having placed

advertises several times in this time period and interviewed 80 people, we have appointed three. During this time three other staff members who had been employed for a year left for better paid contracts, and one left because she could not meet even the minimum requirements in the work despite months of training. Today eight months later, R5 000 in advertisement costs later, and several 'person-hours' labour we are still looking to fill three posts. And we are not the only ones! Other organisations report high staff member turnover and difficulty attracting staff members in childcare posts.

The strain of looking for staff members, training staff members and coping with the commitments left if staff members do not honour their monthly notice periods, is telling on the core whose dedication keeps Ons Plek what it is.

What IS happening in the world of Human Resources?

The threat to our project is enormous as we cannot even re-open our intake shelter. Siviwe is operating as per normal. The opportunities are difficult to see but we are finding some value in our predicament.

*It's time ...
to raise some hard
questions!*

*It's time ...
to share some thoughts!*

*It's time ...
to dialogue with others in
the same circumstances!*

*It's time ...
to be brave, honest and
think deeply!*

OUR QUESTIONS?

Are we paying too little?

Every 2-3 years we do a survey of salaries paid by NPOs and share the results with participating NPOs. Our working conditions: hours; leave; standby pay; overtime pay are strictly in line with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. The last survey done by secretary Odette Engelbrecht in October 2007 showed us to be one of very few NPOs who do meet these criteria! It also showed us to be one of few NPOs who offer medical aid and pension! However it also showed us that we had fallen behind in childcare worker salaries.

Salaries were immediately adjusted by the committee, so that take home pay became slightly above average. This was done before the annual evaluation of staff members' performances and subsequent annual increases for most staff members. Staff members were also reminded about the extra money in the packages which staff members tend to forget about i.e. the 50% contribution to Medical Aid and to Pension. We hoped that raising the total package to be above that of the average would help us retain and attract staff members.

Out of the three resignations one got work in nursing, which has always been her first love; one was offered a higher salary in a contract post which is riskier than being in a permanent post; one was offered a much higher 'take home pay' salary (higher than any NPOs surveyed) but without benefits of medical aid and pension and on condition she works illegally long hours.

Should Ons Plek offer even higher salaries to childcare workers?

The factors one has to take into account are:

Can we pay an increased amount on a sustainable basis? i.e. not only this year but the next and the next. It does not help staff members if the organisation has to close down because it could not meet its expenses.

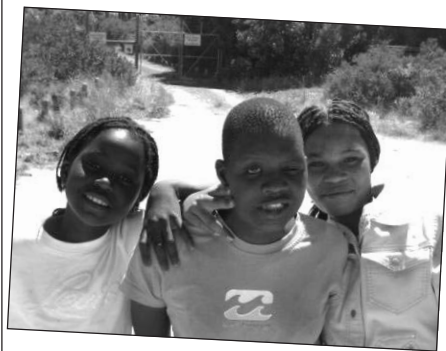
How will salaries of other staff members be affected?

If a higher salary is paid to an as yet unqualified person (there are relatively very few trained accredited childcare workers) can the NPO afford to also increase the salary of social workers, who come with a 4 year degree, and are also in short supply, teachers, community workers and administrative staff members many of whom have sacrificed to obtain their qualifications. My approach is that all staff members must be valued because all are necessary to the functioning of the team. Childcare workers should on completion of their qualification receive an increment. All other staff members must be paid fairly in accordance with their qualifications and performance levels. Raising the salaries of childcare workers therefore means reviewing the salaries of all staff members — which we have recently done and are satisfied with our decisions. If salaries are raised will staff members stay?

Will raising the salary change productivity?

A look at the many teachers we have been in touch with over the years through 100's of children indicates productivity is not just a function of salary. Just as many children report their teacher is still not in the classroom despite recent increases as previously. Protecting employees who want to work at minimum standards levels from any meaningful disciplinary measures will continue to hamper a rise in levels of productivity.

Page 8



Signal Hill Outing

As can be seen by these photographs, the girls had a great time going up Signal Hill! Many thanks to our committed Educator, Linda ...



Most childcare workers are appointed without a qualification. Childcare workers attend an accredited course run by NACCW for the academic side of their training, which is time consuming and often paid for by the employer. They train on the job and are therefore carried by other experienced staff members while they learn. The task and responsibility of doing so is heavy because they are training on fragile, heavily emotionally traumatized children, not inanimate objects.

Productivity therefore can be a year or two down the line. It's always been my contention that the long process of training staff members properly is worth it. It's worth it if staff members stay and build the project. It's worth it if staff members leave and carry their skills to enrich society elsewhere.

But if the greater proportion of childcare workers leave after a year's service the NPO may not be able to sustain such training. The costs become too high for the return on the investment to be made. This is already forcing employers to question paying for the training since there is no guarantee that the SETA's will refund the cost.

What has changed?

In the first 14 years of Ons Plek's existence our childcare workers had record commitment to the project. They loved the children and grew in their own capabilities. A number of staff members gave 10-15 years of service.

Much pondering, questioning and praying has focused on what has changed. The answers point to a bigger picture. The attitude of the world we live in seems to be more rights based without a similar emphasis on responsibilities. Interest is self-centered and not child centered.

Something in the fabric of a large section of the world population has changed. Given this attitude I

do not think productivity will change with higher salaries.

Ons Plek still boasts a number of highly dedicated and moral employees whose salaries are nevertheless NPO salaries. Social workers have been declared a critical shortage profession. Were our social workers to leave we would have a problem. But it is the field where applicants do not have to be qualified on appointment, the field where one would think the thousands of unemployed have a chance to gain employment, a professional qualification and a meaningful way of empowering their communities that could be our downfall.

Should we drop the arduous procedures and standards by which staff members are selected?

Most NPOs advertise, set up interviews and appoint. At Ons Plek all job applicants are first screened for their ability to perform in tests we have devised to assess capability of doing the work. A slide show on our work is shown to orientate the applicants to the setting for which they are applying. Applicants then have the chance to further test, whether this is their 'cup of tea', by completing tasks which they will do in the job. Literacy, numeracy, report writing and letter writing are tested. In the case of childcare workers, social workers and teachers, their attitudes and approach to problem solving, counselling, discipline and child rearing, among other matters are also tested. Their comments are asked for on three case scenarios. Secretaries are tested for their ability to communicate clearly, tactfully, politely and firmly. They have the unenviable task of drafting a letter about a difficult situation which calls for the exercising of all these qualities. The pressure under which the tests are done gives an idea of how the applicant will function under

Ukondla Program in Philippi

An afternoon homework support system helps groups of children stay in school.

Enrichment programs and weekly counselling sessions are also run regularly for the children and their families from the Philippi community.



Are YOU a MEMBER of Ons Plek Projects?

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP REGISTER:

In order for our membership to be accessible to everyone, we consider any donations in cash or kind from INDIVIDUALS in the course of the year as sufficient to cover our annual membership subscription. You may also become a member by paying a specific subscription of R5 per annum. If you have donated and your name is not listed below, please contact Sharon at Ons Plek immediately in connection with your membership before the AGM. You will also have the opportunity to sign up as a member at the AGM on Thursday, 23 October 2008.

MEMBERS ON RECORD:

- A:** Abbott R, Abrahams N, Adams A, Adams C, Adams F, Adams I, Adams Y, Africa M, Ally S, Ameah J, Amien, Andrews R, Antaley N, Anthony I, Appelt Mr & Mrs M, Arendze Mr & Mrs M, Armien, Auntie Cubrah, Auntie Jess.
- B:** Baduza N, Bandawe C, Barfield S (UK), Barkley P, Barrath S, Bassier S, Bax D Rev, Beja F, Beret, Berghouse A, Bettesworth S, Biggs G, Bowen C, Bowen H, Bowry S, Brache J, Brain Mr & Mrs, Broekmann T, Broumels M, Brown P, Brown S, Brown T, Browry S, Bruce, Buckley J (UK), Buys W Ms.
- C:** Carelse S, Carew M, Carrim A, Carter David & Sally, Castle Mr & Mrs, Ceccarini Ms L (USA), Chase Mr & Mrs P (USA), Chilcott A, Chorley Mrs P (UK), Chothia M, Christie S, Classen C, Cloete L, Collins M, Collins S, Connelly Mr & Mrs, Cornish L, Court R, Cupido D.
- D:** Damons S, David J, Davids A, Davids F, Davids N, De Haan C, de Hond S, De Jong M, De Klerk S, De Villiers P, De Vos M, De Vos T, Diedericks W, Dolan C, Dolby N, Dose A, Dowling S, Dreyer L, Driesens M, Du Plessis Mrs, Duncan C.
- E:** Emdin Dr. L, Emore P F, Engel V, Erdozain C, Esau S, Evans H.
- F:** Farrell Mr & Mrs, Fells R, Felton S, Fernandes N, Filippi M, Fischer M (Switzerland), Fisher F, Fletcher Miss, Foskett M, Fouche G, Fountain Mr & Mrs R (UK), Frater S, Fredericks M, Fredericks R, Freedman R, Friedman G.
- G:** Gamielden M, Gasant A, Gayle & Caly, George N, Gierdien F, Gotlieb A, Grahame Mr & Mrs T (UK), Gram C (Norway), Grieve V, Grobbelaar K, Grobler A, Guthrie T, Guy A.
- H:** Habib D, Haffey, Hamel R, Hamilton E, Hare E, Harris-Schenz Mr & Mrs M (USA), Hart Y, Harvey M, Hasewinkel A & Gran, Hassenstein U, Hearon D, Heldsinger J, Helleman S, Hendricks L, Henkes S, Henwood D, Hermans A, Herselman M, Hey B, Hicks M, Hill P, Hodgetts Y, Hoffman D, Holditch Mr & Mrs C (UK), Hostetler Mr & Mrs P (USA), Hudson-Bennett R, Hylton A (USA).
- I:** Ioannou M, Ions M, Iriate C, Iwata Nana.
- J:** Jacobs B, Jacobs Bronia, Jacobs Family, Jacobs R, Jacobs Roxanne, Jacobs S, Jacobs Z, Jakoet F, Jochheim C, Johaar N, Jones M, Joseph C, Joshua B, Joubert N, Joubert N, Julies V.
- K:** Kalinga O, Katz A, Keel J, Keiser, Ketshabile B, Khan F, Khan S, King B, King J, Kingsley O, Kirk B, Klose L, Krige S, Kruger N, K-Young Khan.
- L:** Labia Count & Countess, Laburn B, Lambrechts B, Lambrechts R, Latimer Mrs N, Laughton K, Lawrence J, Lawrence M & N, Le Roux A, Le Roux Mr & Mrs L, LeClair T & Nireille, Lindhard N, Liverpool Dr. & Mrs (USA), Loaring N, Loffell D, Lopes De Sarria I, Lownie K (Australia), Loy R, Lucas B, Luyindula P.
- M:** Magnus S (UK), Malan G, Manghan Brown B, Manuel J, Marais H, Marks Mr & Mrs, Masoed Mrs, Mateka M, Matthews F, Mbaya A, McEwan P, McLean J, Meehan L, Meehan S, Meilis R (Holland), Mensah M, Mess D (Germany), Meyer L, Meys Dr. U, Mgbojikwe H, Mias E, Mike, Miller Dr., Mitchell L, Mokgalong M, Moodliar D, Moreira R, Munro J, Murray C, Murray L, Murray S, Myoga M.
- N:** Nacerodien M, Naicker N, Naidoo Miss, Nakamura Family (USA), Nel C, Nickel C, Nijenhuis M, Nkoachuchu J, Nobel J & T, Ntaba B.
- O:** Odendaal M, Ohalate M, Ohalet J, Okoligwe C, Okowkwo A, Okowkwo S, Olanrewaju A.
- P:** Parenti A, Pellissippi, Peters D, Pike M, Plasberg M, N, J (Germany), Pollock K, Powel C, Prescott Mrs E (UK), Prince M, Pritchard, Prosalendis S, Puttick B.
- R:** Rabinowitz Mr & Mrs B, Raeburn C & S, Ravens K, Rayburn C, Raymond L, Read C, Renton D, Rich P, Richards S, Robertson G, Robertson Mr (the Late) & Mrs R, Robins E, Robinson S, Roefs K, Rolls C, Ronquest L, Ronquest P, Roodbol A, Roos A & E, Rosenmann Mr & Mrs J, Ross F, Ross K, Ross L, Rossouw L, Rothschild P, Rowston D, Rozendaal N, Rubin A, Rumsey S.
- S:** Sadan Z, Salie S, Sanders L, Sass R, Saunders J, Sawyer Z, Schive Viken A, Schlosz L, Schmidt A, Schmitt C, Scholsz L, Sculteyus C, Shanaaz, Shapiro I, Shapiro Y, Shaw L, Shillito H, Sieblis P (Germany), Simons N, Solomons N, Soule M, Spencer F, Stacey L, Stanford M, Stekhoven Mr & Mrs, Strong G, Swartz A.
- T:** Tamara, Tamasane T, Taylor B, Theron L, Travers P, Tumba N.
- U:** Uncle Jumat.
- V:** Van Breda Z, Van Der Schyff L, Van Der Schyff M, Van Der Schyff W, Van Der Schyff Y, Van Der Spuy A, Van Jaarsveld M, Van Meurs B (Holland), Vosen A, Vroom G, Vroom-Hoogerwerf R (Holland), Vucurevic M.
- W:** Warren H, Wasiem, Weeder Mrs, Weiss Dr. M (Paris), Wepener J, Wertheimer K & T (Australia), Wheeler D, Wheeler F, Williams L (UK), Witz L, W ood K, Worthmann U, Wright Mr & Mrs G (UK).
- Z:** Zaid.

pressure which is our daily environment?

Selected childcare workers are then called to observe and work for two day duties and one night duty, which is a good reality test for those who imagine they can cope with shift work. During this time their ability, or potential, to perform the duties, interact with the children and exercise their authority with firm kindness is assessed. Those who have now tested their interest in the work and been tested to our satisfaction are then short-listed for interviews.

So should we still continue with this long procedure?

Our answer so far is yes. There are no studies done to show if our staff members' drop-out rate is lower than those of NPOs who move straight to interviewing and appointing. Our experience shows applicants' true colours come out by the third day of observation. That's when people lose their tempers and hit the children, or announce that the hours are too long, the children too rude, etc.

This work is not for everyone, it is a calling, as well as a profession, and not everyone can adapt. It does well to have a taste of the work before signing a contract.

Solutions

Solutions we have a few and none of them are a quick fix!

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Should we convert the benefits to cash?

Many in our society today live above their means not only because basic living expenses are high. It is common to buy on credit to keep up one's status. Expensive cell phones for example, are the norm. The need

for immediately available money begins to take higher precedence than long term investments. The need for pensions seems so far away until the date looms near. Hence the jumping for contract posts with short term prospects, the jumping for higher salaries without pension and medical aid.

*We call urgently
for other NPOs
and employers
everywhere,
to honour your
employees'
contracts ...*

Should we headhunt?

A solution employed by some is to headhunt, offering staff members, trained at great cost both financial and in human hours, of one organisation, higher salaries to join another. This may solve the problem for one organisation until another NPO offers an even higher salary. It does not solve the problem in the sector or help the children of the organisation left without staff members.

NPOs by their nature and purpose are not cut throat business entities. They are constructive builders of society and often are expected to work together for mutual benefit. NPOs cannot use cut throat business practices. This negates their very purpose of building, healing and enabling society. Headhunting remains a controversial practice.

What solutions do we have to cope with staff members who do not honour the notice period?

Closely related to the shortage of staff members is the above practice.

A solution recently used by a residential project a few streets away from Siviwe went further than headhunting. As we have experienced one becomes desperate when you have a house full of children and no one to look after them on a 24-hour basis. Having selected the childcare workers in our employ without getting references, they resolved their desperation by then insisting that they begin work immediately i.e. dishonour the one month notice period with us.

While every one of us has the right to contract our labour to whomsoever we wish to, we do not have the right to set unprofessionally. The practice of not giving a job applicant a job unless they break their existing contract has dangerous, long term implications for the sector. Firstly, because the children often have already been abandoned, professional ethics and practice advise a termination process. A professional NPO helping children must uphold the needs of all children, not only those in those in their own care. Secondly, because an NPO charged with raising children must have high moral standards, and must model ethics to children and staff members. Thirdly, because a staff member is prepared to dishonour a contract cannot be relied upon not to repeat the unprofessional conduct.

Our solution is not to do this and to work with others to change this bad practice which is becoming endemic. The law offers no protection for the employer and is therefore encouraging of a dangerous practice and ethics developing unchecked.

Our other solution tried has been to ask staff members to

please warn us that they are looking for work. The fact that those who have given notice are not treated unpleasantly has not helped. Every employee who has not given notice has done so under pressure to start the new job immediately, they feel bad and so just disappear.

*We call
for some rights
for the
employer*

Status Quo in Human Resources in the Sector of Residential Care

This stage is set for deterioration in staffing NPOs. The temptation to find work in the better paid business or government work sector is higher with increasing living costs world wide. The same factors threaten to diminish donations. The shortage of skilled staff members worldwide means that there is a shortage of anyone with any kind of people skills as

employers dip further and further down into the pot. NPOs are already saying they will not pay to train childcare workers through NACCW because the employee is no sooner trained than they leave. Current employment legislation allows employees to breach any contracts with impunity.

This facilitates the practice of desperate NPOs encouraging employees breaking contracts with other employers. Money, when available, will be thrown at the problem increasing a value system amongst employees of money succeeding all other factors. The net result is an increasing dearth of real commitment to children, to work, to ethics in our sector.

LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Training

Long term solutions obviously involve training many more childcare workers. We have always offered short term training through job shadowing at Ons Plek for new projects and grassroot community members. We are now trying to capacitate ourselves to do this on a more consistent basis. To do so, we are strengthening our management capacity which will free some of us for more training time.

Call to moral re-armament ... blow the clarions bugles

I never thought I would be using these old fashioned words. At Ons Plek where we confront issues at a deep level and on a consistent basis, we are nevertheless seeing the fabric of the sector eroded. The next year will see us raising this issue with a broader forum of NPOs, publishing our concerns, to promote awareness, exploring solutions such as standardising minimum wages and trying to raise productivity in the sector through expanding our current training programs.

Ancient wisdom knows what happens when ethics die. There are sound reasons for solid and honourable ways of working and the consequences of not doing so are too ghastly to contemplate.

We call urgently for other NPOs and employers everywhere, to honour the contracts your prospective staff members have with their current employers, respect the one-month notice period. This ethic is necessary so that your contracts continue to be respected.

We call for some rights for the employer. Some consequence is necessary when an employee breaks a contract. In the end, it is also to the employees' benefit because employers can only employ if their businesses can continue to operate. *



The girls were taken on an outing to Camps Bay Beach and had a wonderful time playing in the sea sand!



Ons Plek Projects

Director:
PAM JACKSON

Unit Manager:
YUMNA VAN DER SCHYFF

Our assessment centre intake shelter ONS PLEK and our OFFICES are situated at 4 Albertus Street, Cape Town
Tel: 021 465-4829 · Fax: 021 461-0530
email: onsplek@new.co.za
website: www.onsplek.org.za

Our second-stage shelter SIVIWE is situated at 7 York Road, Woodstock
Tel: 021 448-6529

Our Community Development Program is situated at City Council Community Hall, Browns Farm, Philippi.



We invite you to visit the Projects and meet the housemothers and the young girls



Marlise was one of Ons Plek's girls for many years. She loved fashion and all things beautiful! This photograph of her was taken at a Fashion Show (Jamboree 2003). Sadly Marlise died at the beginning of August this year. Her funeral was conducted at the Sea Point Methodist Church on 16 August. Uxolo Marlise ...

A prayer from a child who was 'adopted' by Ons Plek a few years ago:

Thank you God to show me Ons Plek.

I also thank Ons Plek for things it has done and still doing for me, like to give me a shelter, clothes, food and education. I thank God for the house parents.

I wish Ons Plek will continue to give a hand to the helpless children. I never understood that God cares for me before because of the hardship I suffered. But now I have realised His mercy ever since I have arrived at Ons Plek that He cares. I hope He will also look after my family. I ask for His strength to keep me on the right path until I complete my studies. I ask God to help me not to grudge my parents even if we will reunite one day. Thank you, Lord. Lungelwa.

Keeping track of your donation

If you are depositing money straight into Ons Plek Project's bank account, please enter your surname AND initials, or your company's name, or Anonymous (if you prefer), in the REFERENCE BLOCKS on the DEPOSIT SLIP. This information then appears on the bank statement and identifies who we need to receipt and thank for the donation.

OUR BANKING DETAILS:

Bank:	FIRST NATIONAL BANK	Account No:	620-529-16908
Branch:	ADDERLEY STREET	Branch Code:	201-409
In name of:	ONS PLEK PROJECTS	Swift Code:	FIRNZAJJ 461

Monies being deposited from overseas (telegraphic transfer) must please make a note of the swift code

* * * * *

Please advise us of your change of address, if you have moved house or office ... it's such a pity when the girls' 'thank you' letters or our newsletters/AGM Reports are returned to us! Many thanks.

Ons Plek Programs

... a brief description

A summary of the programs is presented for those not familiar with our work. More detailed information on these programs can be found in previous Annual Reports or on our website.

Family Reunification Program

Family reunification is one of the core functions of the work at Ons Plek. In some cases it requires months or even years of painstaking work to make a home placement possible.

- **24-hour Accessible Early Intervention Intake Program**

The first stage of reunification begins with the process of weaning the child off the street. Girls are referred to Ons Plek Intake Shelter within hours or a few days of arriving in the Cape Town CBD. Usually they are running away from abuse or neglect at home. The girls' circumstances are assessed immediately on arrival. The girl is then referred to our family preservation or family reunification programs. Statutory services are provided by our social work staff members. Since Ons Plek burnt down in June 2006 this program has accepted very few children due to lack of space. We have been forced to turn up to 2 children away most weeks. This will continue to be the case until Ons Plek re-opens.

- **Reunification and Preservation Program**

In both programs, family interviews are held as soon as possible to resolve the breakdown in the family if possible.

While the girls adjust to a structured environment, our Social Worker and Childcare staff members contact and interview families and investigate home circumstances.

Children who have only been away from the family for a day or two weeks, would fall under the preservation program. If the family bonds are still sufficiently intact for the child to return home while the problems are worked on, it is called family preservation. Staff members hold family meetings and family building sessions with families. Ukondla's community program also achieves this aim — see Ukondla.

- **Home Visits — local and rural**

Home visits are important in making family reunification possible.

- **Intervention Programs, Life Skills and Skills Training as related to Reunification**

A healthy self image and feeling of belonging and mastery is crucial to the girls' willingness to engage in problem solving with their families and their communities. *If re-unification fails, the same process enables them to engage constructively in society.*

A range of skills training and development programs are provided while the reunification process proceeds, however long that may take. Every activity we offer has a goal and purpose in the children's lives.

- **Social and Practical Skills — Household Duties**

On a daily basis the girls do individual cleaning duties as decided by the Childcare Worker. The girls are responsible for making their beds, cleaning the rooms and the house in general, school uniforms are washed, and ironed in the afternoon. The girls prepare a weekly shopping list and actively do the shopping as well as cooking the meals for the household.

Counselling Program

- **Trauma counselling**
- **Life Story sessions to root child in her history**
- **Family Therapy sessions**



Lifestory with the house mother

Social Skills Program

▪ House Meetings

House meetings take place at least once a month and/or as determined by household needs. During meetings the girls have to practice and learn listening skills, respect each other's opinion and share ideas in an accepting and non-judgmental way.

▪ Church/Mosque/Youth Attendance

The girls attend the local Methodist Church on Sundays where they interact with the community and experience a sense of inclusion and acceptance.

▪ Cultural and Traditional Activities

▪ Groups on Relationships, Friendships, Sexual Relationships and Body Care

The purpose and content of the groups is to educate the girls on positive ways to deal with people in their lives and to gain self respect. Topics include body change and growth, good relationships/bad relationships, teen pregnancy, contraceptives and HIV/AIDS.

Education Program

▪ Formal Attendance at Formal Schools

If the children can cope at school it greatly increases their chances of fitting in and being accepted by their family and their community. Girls attend formal and informal schools after attending our own bridging program 'Morning School' while their education abilities are assessed and they learn to re-adapt to routine and structure and gain confidence in their abilities.

▪ Morning School Assessment and Bridging Program for girls not yet ready to return to school

The school runs from Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 12pm, with a baking or other creative program on Fridays from 8am to 11am.

▪ Homework Sessions

The girls at formal schools attend our homework program every afternoon from Mondays to Thursdays.

▪ Holiday Program

As with all other programs at Ons Plek, the holiday program's aim is to include preparing the girls for life in their homes and communities, and to give them opportunities for development — intellectually, socially and emotionally. The aim is never to lure them away from the streets with elaborate treats. This would be counter-productive, maintaining the pattern of alternating over-excitement and apathy which can trap children in street life.

Most vacation days at Ons Plek are spent at home — playing games, doing puzzles, playing "poppie huis", chatting, walking to the local park, and just being children.

Volunteer Program

▪ Recruitment, Orientation, Supervision

This year we continued to make intensive use of local and international volunteers and student interns who work part-time or full-time for Ons Plek for periods ranging between 3 and 10 months. They provided a range of activities, including computer skills training, reading, art, drama, education, leadership training, swimming and baking. As we had many girls in formal and informal school this year, the volunteers had to work hard at supporting the girls in these programs.



Oracle Corporation chose to spend their Global Volunteers' Day at Siviwe last year, doing a mini makeover of the house, as well as fabric painting with the girls.

Prevention Project

Ukondla Program in Philippi (Browns Farm) Community

In addition to our overall strategy for dealing with girls vulnerable enough to dwell on the streets rather than in their homes, we are running preventative programs in Philippi community. As children drop out of school before they drop out of home, a homework support program helps them stay in school.

A group of 19 children attend homework support, enrichment programs and weekly counselling sessions regularly. The program runs on Mondays to Thursdays, is similar to the in-house support program at Ons Plek, except that the children live in their own homes. Staff members regularly visit all the children's family homes and their parents are now very supportive of the program. *

Our Wish List ...

FINANCIAL DONATIONS FOR:

- Transport costs for the girls for school.
- Transport costs for the girls for educational outings/camps.
- Medical expenses for the girls eg. eye tests.



TOILETRIES:

Sanitary pads, roll-on deodorant, toilet paper, Vaseline, hair straightener (**must be mild**), toothpaste, shoe polish (black), shoe brush, Gambax lice shampoo (clinics no longer supply this and at R50 a bottle it has become rather expensive).

UNDERWEAR: BRAND NEW PLEASE!

Panties and Bras for young girls aged 5 – 18yrs
Panties for teenagers
Socks for winter.

STATIONERY:

Photocopy paper (white), A4 coloured paper, Pritt Stick (large), plastic sleeves, scissors (small for school children), Flip Files, examination pads, A4 hard cover books, calculators (scientific), Black board for Ons Plek's morning school.

SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS:

Stationery: 60 of each item at the beginning of each new year: Scissors (blunt-nosed), Pritt (40gm), space case, pens (black, blue and red), homework diaries.

Clothing: School bags/rucksacks (blue or black),

Sizes are available for the following: School socks – new (white and grey), School shoes – new (black, lace-up or buckle), Rain coats (black or navy blue), Takkies – new.

Camera film 24 exp.

Please contact us about the following items:

- Laminating machine
- PowerPoint projector

UKONDLA (Homework Program):

Magazines: Huisgenoot, You, Drum, Vukani, Bona.



Conversations?

perhaps this is part of what keeps us going!

Nolitha: "This is my Std 7 report"

Renée: "But this is a Std 6 report ..."

Nolitha: "Nooo, it is a Std 7 report."

Renée: "But look here, it says 'Std 6 passed April 1998, failed in June 1998' "

Nolitha: "But I was in Std 7!"

Renée: "In which year?"

Nolitha: "1998"

Renée (points to the name on the report): "Was this your teacher?"

Nolitha: "Yes"

Renée: "Was she the Std 6 or the Std 7 teacher?"

Nolitha: "The Std 6"

Renée: "So you were in the Std 6 class ..."

Nolitha (furious): "Will you still find me a school?!"

Renée: "Yes, but only for the right standard ..."

Nolitha: "Oh, okay. I thought you would not let me go to school when you found out ..."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Henk Blom of Zeplin Productions (092 667 1688) for our Website.

Salty Print (021 448-5620) for printing and **Wendy Wilkinson** (046 648-3190) for typesetting our Newsletters and AGM Reports.

Please cut along the dotted line and forward completed Nomination Form to Ons Plek Projects by 20 October 2008

NOMINATIONS FOR THE ONS PLEK PROJECTS' BOARD

I, hereby propose

for the Board of Ons Plek Projects for the term of office.

Seconded by

I, hereby accept the above proposal.

Signed

Date