



**NEWSLETTER ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF CARE IN INDIA (AND CAMBODIA)
CORDAID AND STICHTING KINDERPOSTZEGELS NEDERLAND**

NOVEMBER 2007

In November 2006 Cordaid and Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland organised a seminar in Bangalore, India. The workshop focused on Alternative forms of care for children without parental care, an issue of growing concern for many in India, be it because of natural disasters, migration, HIV/Aids or other causes.

As promised we are sending you a newsletter in the aftermath of the seminar. With this newsletter we want to inspire you and keep you informed about what other non-gouvernemental organisations have done after the seminar. Maybe their experiences and efforts can again inspire you to experiment or set up a form of alternative care!

For every example and news item, we list the e-mail address and website if available of the NGO in India or abroad. To keep it short, we do not mention the postal address but of course we can send it to you. For more information you can contact the NGO or the donor agencies who have facilitated the seminar (Cordaid or Kinderpostzegels). We would be happy to share all information and tools available with you!

PARTNERS OF KINDERPOSTZEGELS AND CORDAID

CLAAP/YCDA

The Child Labour Advocacy and Action Programme (CLAAP) is a coalition of NGO's, supported by Kinderpostzegels for many years for a comprehensive child labour programme in Orissa. Youth Council for Development Alternatives (YCDA) in Boudh, Orissa is the coordinator of the coalition. This coalition mainly works on children's rights, community health and livelihood issues. They have never been involved with institutional support or shelters. The coalition has received support for a pilot initiative on foster care for one year duration which already started from January 2007.

At the moment they have identified 25 orphans in their area, out of which 14 have completed the selection process and are already receiving support from them. Nine of the children are currently staying with a foster family and the others in kinship arrangements, all with some small financial help with regard to food, clothing and school. For the follow-up and monitoring at village level they have formed local committees. In the entire process the Self Help Groups are playing a mayor role. As a result of these efforts the coalition convenor was selected in the Juvenile Justice Board in the district and two other network members in the Child Welfare Committees, where they expect to be able to have some impact on the interventions for these children. They have also formally taken membership of the International Foster Care Organisation and Better Care Network, and are trying to develop their networking with other similar organisations. They are exploring the possibilities for training on alternative forms of care and have already visited one other pilot organisation (Aina Trust) to exchange information.

If you want to know more about their experiences or exchange information, do contact YCDA, mister Rajendra Meher - ycdaboudh@yahoo.co.in or visit the websites of CLAAP and YCDA: www.ycdaindia.org and www.claapboudh.net.

ECHO

ECHO runs a big programme for street children in Bangalore, supported by Cordaid for many years. In this work it has met many children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law. ECHO is currently discussing with children who are housed in institutions and children who have passed out of those institutions to



get their feedback about the effectiveness and success of their rehabilitation. They see a lot of differences from Government run institutions to NGO run institutions and again among NGO-run institutions. Especially among the girl children the responses are very different, it seems.

ECHO also has initiated a community based rehabilitation for the children who need care and protection in one of the biggest slums in Bangalore (Lingarajpuram slum). Director Antony Sebastian in the meanwhile is invited to deliver a talk on 'Evolving and strengthening Non-Institutional Services for Children in Conflict with the Laws and Children who need Care and Protection' for the National Human Rights Commission.

ECHO can be reached through Antony Sebastian at the e-mail address akoottu@eth.net.

AINA TRUST

Aina Trust in Bangalore runs a child labour project in the silk industry in Siddlaghatta, Karnataka, with support from Kinderpostzegels for the past years. The project is focused on education, empowerment, child rights and actively engages the parents, community leaders and factory owners. In the course of its work Aina Trust has come across approximately 30 children who have no parents or can not stay with them for a shorter or longer term. Though initially planning a shelter, after the November workshop Aina Trust has now designed a pilot project on kinship care in Siddlaghatta. Aina Trust has volunteered to coordinate the exposure visit of 5 Indian organisations to Norfil, an experienced foster care organisation in the Philippines (see later on in the newsletter).

Contact Aina Trust and director Mrs Mary Chelladurai through e-mail at ainatrust@yahoo.co.in or via their website www.ainatrustindia.org.



READ

A Cordaid partner in Dindigul, READ, has published a paper titled Alternative Forms of care for the Children without Parental Care. The paper focuses on alternative care for street children and disabled children, their rights and the alternative forms available in the Indian setup. A very interesting read. For all who are interested: contact READ through their e-mail address: readngo@sify.com or check the [Kinderpostzegels website \(xx\)](#).

KOMAR RIKREAY (CAMBODIA)

Komar Rikreay is the Cambodian partner organisation of Kinderpostzegels, that was present at the meeting in November. Unfortunately we were not able to schedule a formal presentation, but their poster (and Power point) presentation was very well received. Komar Rikreay started as an organisation focused on shelter and reintegration for former streetchildren and victims of trafficking. With support of Kinderpostzegels it has managed to successfully place 7 children in foster care and 7 boys in a group home, with a father and mother and living in a regular house in Battambang. In 2007 they have expanded with 10 more foster care children and a group home for girls.

With assistance of an Australian social worker, Rob Madsen, Komar Rikreay has drafted a policy and guidelines on alternative forms of care within their organisation. For those who are interested, the document is available at Komar Rikreay or at the website of Kinderpostzegels ([www.skn.nl/what our partners do/special reports/Children without parental care](http://www.skn.nl/what-our-partners-do/special-reports/Children-without-parental-care)). If you want to contact them about their experiences with placement of children with this



kind of background in foster care or group homes or learn about the policy documents that have been developed in Cambodia, you are always welcome to send them an e-mail.

Komar Rikreay and director Mrs. Prom KimChheng can be reached through e-mail at kmrcambodia@yahoo.com.

Komar Rikreay has also presented its experiences in workshops organised by UNICEF and IOM in Cambodia on alternative forms of care. The issue of financial compensation for foster parents is a hot topic in Cambodia at the moment. Different organisations have different approaches to it, ranging from paying parents very high salaries to giving no compensation at all. This can cause problems if organisations are working in the same area. UNICEF's subcommittee on foster care is facilitating a discussion on these and similar issues.

For more information, check their country report on Cambodia at http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Cambodia_at_a_glance.pdf or contact them via e-mail at phnompenh@unicef.org.

HOME LINK

HHoHoH

This intervention was presented by Fr. George Kollashany at the seminar last November. It is expected to contribute considerably in enabling the tracing of missing children, and by assisting family reunification will thus also help to reduce the time children spend in institutional care.

The Don Bosco Youth at Risk Forum, YAR is piloting the home link system with support initially from Unicef and now also from Cordaid. HHoHoH In this intervention, 40 centres from the existing Child Line service will be able to link the information on missing and unaccompanied children they have to each other as well as centrally. The scheme will moreover help to track children within shelters and other services. It is hoped that the Indian government will adopt this system for the police. Apart from helping to resolve cases involving missing children, the software offers interesting opportunities for research and policy influencing since the centres between them have extensive data on more than 100,000 children.

Contact: Fr. George Kollashany, gfk@rediffmail.com

NAVAJEEVAN BALA BHAVAN

Navajeevan Bala Bhavan is an organisation of Don Bosco Salesians in Vijayawada, that reaches out to large numbers of streetchildren and working children in that city, supported by both Cordaid and Kinderpostzegels. Father Koshy wrote a very nice story for the Christmas newsletter of Friends of Navajeevan, which we would like to share with you (in an abbreviated form).

'Raju had been with Navajeevan for three years. He has no one in this world that he can call as his own, being a total orphan. He is very gentle by nature and has been showing interest in going to school. We put him through our bridge school 'Mettu' and mainstreamed him after his first year with us. He joined 4th grade at school with other children who were being mainstreamed and all were placed in a Government run hostel.

One day Sarojini, Usha and Asha, three of the bright but poor girl students we are supporting for their studies came to say 'hi' to me. While chatting with them I just very casually asked them if they would like to have a brother in their family, they are just three sisters. To my great surprise all three of them in one voice said a very firm 'yes'. I had Raju in my mind when I put this question to them. Their 'yes' gave me goose pimples, I said to myself, "what a new turn of life it is going to be for Raju"! I told them that if they are serious about what they said, they should talk to their mother and come along with her at the earliest.

The three sisters with their mother were at my door by dusk the same day; all four of them quite excited about the prospect of having a new member added to their family. I explained to them about the idea of fostering a son/brother in their family. I also told them that the kid could continue to be in Navajeevan but belong to their

family. He could come home on weekends and holidays and slowly build up this tie and once the bond grows strong, he could even be moving into their home. The process began the very same day. The four met Raju, spent time with him and invited him home for the weekend. The sisters came to me promptly that weekend and asked for Raju to be taken home. Being the first time Raju was a bit shy but very willing to go.

My greatest joy was when the next weekend came along. This time Raju himself came to me and asked me: "Father, may I go home this weekend?" I said, this is one of the most wonderful things that could happen in so many years. We have repatriated home nearly 10,000 children by now, educated, trained and rehabilitated several hundreds but this is the first time that we have been able to give a family to an orphan street kid. Raju is a different person now, a foster mother and three sisters having entered his life. He has a place he can call his 'home', he has a mother and three sisters!! This is the beginning of a new turn that Navajeevan is taking. To find real homes and families for kids who otherwise have nothing except the 'institution called Navajeevan'.
Father Koshy

The Don Bosco organisations have also planned to organise a workshop on the subject of alternative forms of care for the heads of all the Don Bosco Homes in Andra Pradesh sometime in January 2008. Cordaid and Kinderpostzegels sincerely hope stories like that of Raju will convince other Don Bosco organisations to look into alternative forms of care!

At Navajeevan Bala Bhavan you can contact Fr. Thomas Koshy - navajeevanvja@sancharnet.in or visit their website <http://www.njbb.org>.

MARIALAYA Coimbatore

In 1998 the Salesian sisters of Don Bosco started a shelter home as part of their programme for street and working girls. At first Marialaya was active in six slum areas, but by now their working area has doubled.

The sisters recently decided to decentralise their shelter home. They are taking steps to prevent children having to leave home and to reduce the numbers of girls in the shelter home. The sisters have chosen to improve the quality of counselling offered to parents of vulnerable children through the partner NGOs and CBOs. They will also train small teams of 4-5 volunteers per area to support the counselor. In addition to counseling and home visits, support grants of RS. 200 per child per month will be provided to the family until the child completes the 12th class. The utilisation of the fund to be formed for this purpose will be decided by the slum committee. Women's organisations will also organise weekend visits to their homes for children from the shelter home. The women's groups plan to start small cottages for 5-10 children with a mother. In this way, the sisters believe that within a few years, it should be possible to achieve a big increase in the number of girls receiving family-based rather than institutional care.

At Marialaya, you can contact: Sr. Arul Mary



APSA

After our conference APSA has started two group care foster homes. They house 10 girls, 1 foster mother, 1 cook and 1 helper. All children in these group homes go to formal schools, not the APSA Dream School. They are sponsored by individuals and families. They are running very well and the standard of care is perceived to be higher than at APSA itself, because of the higher staff ratio and the closer care of the mother. Many of the children in the shelter now wish to live in a group home as well. APSA feels they also need to improve the institutional care within the shelter at the same time.



APSA also has contacted Vatsalaya for foster care for 2 siblings. The girls are thriving in the foster family and APSA sees a real change in them. It seems the government is also coming out with schemes to support alternative forms of care.

For more information: contact Sheila Devaraj at APSA through projects@apsaindia.org or visit www.apsaindia.org.

Anbu Illam Chennai

Fr. Alphonse from Anbu Illam Chennai has shared some of the alternative forms of care they practice for children who need care and protection.

In Tamil Nadu, foster care is not officially recognized. However some of the NGOs practice the House Mother System. This means a mother will take care of 10 to 15 children in a separate home within the institutional campus. It is a mid way between institutional care and family based care.

Anbu Illam Chennai uses the practice of the *Artificial Family*. These are families with one child or two children that have expressed willingness to have one more child in their family. They are approached by a social worker who makes enquiry of the family members and the way they handle their children. If the family atmosphere is conducive the child is placed within the family and will grow up with the other children. These families have strong family values but often are economically poor. Therefore each family is provided Rs.500 (Euro 9) for a child. The family knows the child's ordinary expenses are met by the organization. Any special expenses will also be met by the organization. As a result the child will not be perceived as an economical burden but as a child that adds joy in the family.

Anbu Illam Chennai makes use of the *gradual induction method* of care for orphan children. It has four stages before a child gets into a family:

Stage I: An interested family approaches the organization and presents its credentials. Generally this family is associated with the organization for some time in the past. Once this family expresses its willingness to bring up the child on their own the professional social worker makes a visit to find out the background of the family members. Once this report is positive the next stage is initiated.

Stage II Periodical Visits: Once the child is identified by the willing parent(s), they make a periodical visit on fortnight or on month ends. They pay special attention to the child's educational needs and medical needs. This process goes on for 3 to 6 months.

Stage III Home Visits on Weekends: Once the previous stage of initial contact is mutually enjoyed and becomes regular, the parents are allowed to take the child on weekends to their family. This process helps the child to know and to learn the other family members. The visits will take place for 3 to 6 months.

Stage IV Home Visits for Longer Duration: Once the home visits prove to be mutually agreeable and fully accepted by the child this stage is initiated. When the child is free for long holidays from the school or festivals the child goes to the family.

Stage V: Once the preceding stages of contact have went well the child will stay at the family for a longer period.

OTHER INITIATIVES

WORKING ON UPDATE OF MODELS

With the support of IFCO, Cordaid and Kinderpostzegels are currently working on an update of the booklet with case studies from India, distributed at the seminar. If you want to link us to initiatives on alternative forms of care or you want your project to be included in the booklet or the newsletter, do send us an e-mail!

k.matthijsse@kinderpostzegels.nl or julie.love@cordaid.nl



UDAYACAN CARE – NEW DELHI

Through IGSSS (Kinderpostzegels' advisory organisation, www.igsss.org) we have learned about Udayan Care, an organisation in New Delhi that has developed a group foster care model. They work on a strategy called Life: living in Family Environment. It focuses on long term residential care for orphaned and abandoned children above 6 years of age. The family like environment promotes family bonding, physical and mental health and social integration. Though the families seem relatively large (the five groups vary from 11 to 32 children) it seems to be an interesting initiative.

For more information check out their website www.udayancare.org or contact them via udayancare@gmail.com.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

BETTER CARE NETWORK – THE DUTCH CHAPTER

On November 8, 2007 the first national chapter of the Better Care Network was launched in the Netherlands. BCN Netherlands was formed by International NGO's and donors in the Netherlands with the aim of raising awareness about appropriate forms of alternative care among the many Dutch groups and organisations working on these issues. Founding members have designated small amounts of funding to hire a part-time coordinator. Working groups will be formed around areas of common interest, and clear linkages with the international BCN are being established. The BCN Global Steering Committee encourages the formation of national BCN chapters and regional initiatives, especially in the developing world, that are in keeping with the principles and mission of the Network. As demonstrated by the Netherlands, collaborative action and support at national level is possible. But it takes joint commitment of time, energy, and a small amount of funding to make it work.

(from the Better Care Network listserv. If you want to register, check the website of the Better Care Network: <http://www.crin.org/bcn>)

IFCO AND NORFIL

The International Foster Care Organisation has recently elected a Board member from India, ms Andal Damodaran. Together with her fellow board members they have been working hard at plans for IFCO's future. For more information on IFCO and ms Damodaran, check IFCO's website www.ifco.info.

Mrs Angela Maria Pangan is the president of Norfil, an organisation from the Philippines with over 20 years of experience in foster care. She is also a Board member of IFCO and is currently trying to launch an Asian network on foster care and alternative forms of care. Organisations from Korea, China and XX have already expressed their interest.

Five partner organisations of Kinderpostzegels who have started with different pilots on alternative forms of care, are currently joining for an exposure visit to Norfil. They hope to gain a lot of knowledge and insights on alternative forms of care from Norfil as well as exchange experiences among themselves. The visit will be coordinated by Aina Trust from India.

For more information you can contact mrs Maria Teresa Norqui at Norfil (norfil@philonline.com.ph) or their website <http://www.norfil.com.ph>) or mrs Mary Chelladurai (ainatrust@yahoo.co.in) or via their website www.ainatrustindia.org).

SHAI AND GAC INTERESTED IN ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF CARE



Representatives from two U.S.-based advocacy organizations have travelled India in September 2006 for meetings with civil society groups, National Commissions, policymakers, and other stakeholders to learn more about the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in India. Vineeta Gupta, Executive Director of the Stop HIV/AIDS in India Initiative (SHAI), and Jennifer Delaney, Executive Director of Global Action for Children (GAC), hope to find effective ways to catalyze international advocacy and efforts of non-resident Indians in the United States in support of in-country efforts to advance the well-being of these children. Their visit has covered the HIV/AIDS high prevalence states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Manipur; the highly vulnerable states of Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal; and the vulnerable state Chandigarh.

"India is home to 35 million orphans, and countless more vulnerable children, who desperately need help and attention," noted Gupta. "However, to launch aggressive action to support them, we need to better understand local challenges and build effective partnerships between local groups, Indian Diaspora in the United States, and international advocacy groups."

In gathering information, Gupta and Delaney have also visited programs currently designed to protect and care for OVC. They also seek to identify partners to collaborate on developing and implementing goals.

"Our goal is to learn from those working at the grassroots level about how the international community can further support India's orphans and vulnerable children," said Delaney. "Using that knowledge, we hope to foster strong, comprehensive coalitions, and fuel an international advocacy tailored to India's needs, to influence international policies and support in-country efforts."

After their return to the United States, the two will work with their organizations on developing materials to increase visibility of OVC issues in India and abroad, garner international political commitment, and reach out to stakeholders in the Indian and U.S. governments, as well as among international institutions and with others in civil society.

To learn more, please visit <http://www.shaii.org>.

November 19: Public Event and signature campaign in Andhra Pradesh on prevention of child Abuse **Ankuram Women and Child Development Society**, an organisation supported by Cordaid for a number of years, and its partner **Waves Foundation**, a Hyderabad-based NGO recently launched a 'Stay Safe' Campaign to Stop Child Sexual Abuse in Andhra Pradesh. As part of the ongoing campaign it will hold a public event on to help spread awareness about Child Sexual Abuse. The event will take place on Necklace Road, adjacent to the Kafe Kushi kiosk near Eat Street, from 3:00-5:00pm. There will be free brochures and information on Child Sexual Abuse prevention and education. The event is open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend to sign the signature campaign at the venue

The 'Stay Safe' Campaign, is dedicated to spreading public awareness on the prevalence of the issue of Child Sexual Abuse in Andhra Pradesh. The aim to educate and empower children, parents, professionals and lawmakers on how to prevent its occurrence and respond effectively to the problem when it comes to their attention. Waves Foundation are advocating among lawmakers for improving laws that will protect children as well as prosecute sexual offenders with stricter punishment. Currently, Waves Foundation is actively working with children who have been sexually abused by providing them with counseling, medical and legal assistance, along with care and protection in their safe house, Sankalpam Home, which is situated near Keesara. Waves Foundation can be reached by calling their Hotline at 27006574. Ankuram@yahoo.com

We hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter and were inspired about the initiatives that have come up over the past year. Please send us your feedback and other developments or initiatives you want to inform others about. You are also welcome to forward the newsletter to people or organisations you think might be interested.

Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland - www.skn.nl
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Cordaid – www.cordaid.nl
Mrs Julie Love – Julie.Love@cordaid.nl

NEWSFLASH 29TH NOVEMBER

Karin Matthijse has given birth to a daughter, Naomi. Congratulations to the proud parents and a long life, good health and happiness to Naomi!

