

THE AGM

**3RD JANUARY 2008
CHRISTIAN AID OFFICES
WATERLOO**

The AGM gave those involved with SSSK the opportunity to reflect upon 12 months of hard work. It has been an incredible year for the charity and we have been able to award an amazing £25,000 in grants to NGOs around the world.

Although not every SSSK branch was represented, school branches, university branches and trustees were able to share experiences and raise questions which we hope

will strengthen our ability to speak out on behalf of street children here and abroad in the future.

Sincere thanks goes to our branches and supporters who are the people who make SSSK what it is. We hope that our existing branches will continue to flourish and provide the inspiration for new branches to develop and add volume to our voice.

SSSK Trustees, 2008



AN INTRODUCTION. . .

Trustee Charlie Malston opened proceedings with a brief review of the year:

- There has been a structural change in the way SSSK operates with the introduction of Branch Liaison Members (BLMs) who live near branches and can offer support to the branch members
- SSSK's new logo is now being used to give a more cohesive image
- We hope that new branches will be established over the course of the next year or two
- Financially this year was SSSK's best year yet with £25,000 being awarded in grants
- Branches were thanked for their efforts both in raising money and raising awareness
- The importance of raising awareness was stressed and the trustees will be looking at ways to help branches do this over the next 12 months
- Our vision is to continue to grow but at a realistic and natural rate to ensure the sustainability of existing branches which are the foundations upon which we must develop
- SSSK is ten years old this year and thanks go to all those who have been, and continue to be, involved



MAIN SPEAKER:
AMY HATTON
DIRECTOR
STREET CHILD AFRICA



We were privileged to hear an outstanding address from the Director of Street Child Africa, Amy Hatton.

Street Child Africa was set up ten years ago is the only UK charity entirely devoted to helping street children across Africa and currently operates in 7 African countries. They work in partnership with African organizations who adopt a street based approach to seek out and befriend street children, offering them guidance from trustworthy adults, education, medical care,

baby care, skills training, vocational sponsorship, a place in the community, and a chance to choose a different path in life.

The organizations vision is realistic: they are not attempting to get all the children off the street as this is an unrealistic aim but rather they want street children to be recognized, respected, supported and secure.

Street Child Africa's vision is of an Africa where street children can survive, grow and make informed choices. In order to achieve that vision they aim to:

- Fundraise and raise awareness in support of small African-run agencies working with and for street children across Africa.
- Generate fresh approaches to working with and for street children across Africa.
- Provide a forum for, and share information with, agencies working with and for street children across Africa.
- Facilitate advocacy for any street child and/or street child agency in Africa who needs and requests it.

- Encourage any volunteers in the UK who wish to give up some of their skills and time for the benefit of street children across Africa.

Street Child Africa has a fantastic website which has more information about their work and about issues which street children face in Africa and other parts of the world. If you are interested visit:

www.streetchildafrica.org.uk

WHERE STREET CHILD AFRICA WORKS:



During her talk Amy referred to specific case studies: 16 year old Mimi from Zambia and Miguel, a young boy living on the streets in Mozambique. Before she told their stories Amy pointed out that these examples were used *with the permission of the young people*. It might not seem like an important detail but this respect for the individual and their rights is at the centre of Street Child Africa's work.

Mimi and Miguel are not just case studies to be used to make a point: they are real children faced with the real dangers of street life. More information and case studies can be found on the SCA website.

A SUMMARY OF AMY'S TALK:

- Street Child Africa (SCA) raises funds and awareness and works in partnership with African agencies
- Why focus on Africa?
 - ⇒ Africa is the poorest continent in the world; and
 - ⇒ 80% of the world's poorest countries are in Africa; and
 - ⇒ Over 50% of population in Africa is aged under 16 and 50% live in towns and cities.
- These factors result in vulnerable street kids
- SCA believe that by adopting a street based approach to seek out and befriend street children they can help in ways which empower the young people and result in sustainable improvements
- A particularly pertinent issue is the number of child headed families (CHFs) where the family head may be no more than about 10 years old themselves. The younger 'second generation' babies have never experienced any different and do not know what it is like to have a trustworthy adult in their lives. SCA is researching and evaluating how growing up in a CHF influences the lives of these children.
- Street Children are largely invisible to rest of world: they have no birth registration documents, no health cards and no identity within their community.
- Millennium Goals of DFID and UN are of course important but aren't going to help these children unless the street kids and their rights are recognised.
- Life is a daily challenge for these children. For example, an acute worry for street kids who have been resourceful enough to build a shelter is that if they go out to work they don't know whether 'home' will be there when they return.
- SCA's Vision: African Street Children are to be recognised, respected, supported and secure. SCA aim to be a global voice for Africa's street children. In partnership with African organisations they want to offer friendship and practical help.
- SCA's partners in Africa have outreach workers who offer love guidance and protection and are the safe adult in street kid's lives. They are there to develop relationships and trust and help street kids choose a different path if they wish to. They provide services, which in turn provide opportunities. SCA is not about providing buildings and equipment; the money raised goes into people.
- Street children are not a problem, there is plenty of potential in these kids; they are tenacious, brave, resourceful and intelligent.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force on 2nd September 1990 states that all children

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| ◆ The right to life | ◆ The right to respect |
| ◆ The right to survival | ◆ The right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life |
| ◆ The right to development & education | |

Street children are at particular risk of being deprived of these rights because they are 'invisible' to the governments of the countries in which they live but: STREET CHILDREN DESERVE THE SAME RIGHTS AS ANY OTHER CHILDREN.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY, SUDAN

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is an international voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing practical assistance to anyone in need.

The Society here in England & Wales is twinned with its sister organisation in Sudan. The SVP in Sudan runs a

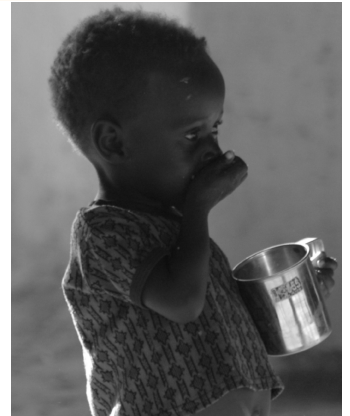
number of programmes to support local communities and works extensively with individuals who have been displaced from their homes as a result of the civil unrest in the country.

The SVP operates the following programmes within the Internally Displaced Person camps (IDPs) in and around Khartoum:

- vocational training
- foster homes for street children
- medical care for those in the IDPS
- baby feeding for children in the camps

For more information visit:

www.twinnage.org.uk



The cost of living in Sudan may be lower than it is here but the value of human life is not.

Trustee Kate Bretherton visited the St Vincent de Paul Society in Sudan in February 2007. This is a summary of her talk:

- Street children are voiceless, or at least muted, and are not heard by the international community. It is easy to forget their importance
- There are about 70,000 street kids in Khartoum, capital of Sudan
- Sudan's government believes that children live on the streets out of choice and that they are trouble makers. They offer them no shelter or protection
- There has been civil war since 1955, internal conflict still rages on, with 400,000 reported deaths in the last 3 years. Many children have been separated from their families which is the real reason for living on the street.
- St Vincent De Paul has a number of programmes which benefit street children including a feeding programme for babies (children up to the age of 5). Officially 9,000 children per day are fed through these programmes, but as many street kids live in child headed families, and there is an open door policy in the programme, the actual number of kids fed may be nearer 20,000. This food is often the only food these kids will eat.
- We would not tolerate such extreme poverty in the UK – we would speak out against it, but in Sudan these street kids, and their families if they have any, are politically impotent. The people to whom they would have to appeal for help are the very people at the centre of the conflicts which forced them onto the street in the first place.
- SSSK raising awareness is vital – these kids aren't just statistics, they have a past and will hopefully have a future. We must try to give them a voice when they can't speak for themselves.

"The loss of one man's dream, one family's home, one people's rights, one woman's life is the loss of all our freedoms: of every life, every home, every hope. Each tragedy belongs to itself and at the same time to everybody else. What diminishes any of us diminishes us all."

Salman Rushdie



LET THE CHILDREN LIVE, COLOMBIA

Let The Children Live! is a UK Registered Charity (no. 1013634) through which people can respond to the needs of the street-children in Colombia. The Charity sometimes also supports projects for street-children in other countries, but because of the appalling level of violence in Colombia it is currently concentrating

its resources there. It aims both to safeguard the lives of children from the violence and poverty of the streets, and to make their lives worth living by giving them love, education and a future.

The Charity was founded by Father Peter Walters who became involved with the street-children in 1982 when they helped him after he became

temporarily stranded in Colombia. Since then, he has gained first-hand knowledge of the problems of the Gamines and of the work that is being done to help them.

LCL works mainly in Medellin and they now have a programme for about 800 on this city's streets.



Unless we help them these kids will remain 'disposable ones': throw away kids with no future at all.

Trustee Tom Stephens recently visited LCL and had this to say:

- Occasionally branch members feel detached from the end product of what SSSK does so personal visits to projects are an important way of keeping in touch
- It now has 4 different strands / programmes:
 - Prevention:** the ideal would be to get the children off the streets and away from the associated dangers of street life. Youth outreach workers provide a friendly face on the streets who can be trusted and increasingly funds are being directed into this area. Among other things these 'street educators' try to persuade children to return to their families or go into residential care if possible.
 - Kids who are working on the street:** the definition of 'street child' is a complicated one and can include children who don't live on the street but who have to work on the streets to survive. LCL works in a number of ways to prevent these kids deteriorating into full-time street children. One important way is by liaising with their families who are reluctant to let the children go to school because they need their income to live.
 - Kids who are living on the street:** LCL try to know who is on the street to establish those who live full time on the street, how long they have been there and to be able to recognise when street children are missing in case they are in trouble. For example, LCL provides chocolate milk at 4am almost as a 'bribe' to encourage the street children to come and speak to them. This first point of contact then enables them to offer further help.
 - Home living:** 9 ex-street kids now live in a home run by LCL. Tom found this element of LCL difficult to understand, as there are so many others who need assistance like this. The justification for it comes from this being a vision for the future, and it is providing these 9 with a relatively normal existence. It is unrealistic to think that such support can be provided for every street child but that does not mean it should not be provided where possible.
- Tom was involved with SSSK as a branch member in Edinburgh and has been a Trustee for a few years. He highlighted the growth of SSSK and spoke of how impressed and delighted its founders, Ben Phillips and Johnny Glennie, are with the organisations developments and achievements.

Amy left us with an important message: there are many underprivileged and deprived children in the UK, and some people may be disappointed that we don't do more to assist these kids. As humans we make choices everyday. We have made our choice to work with and on behalf of street kids in places where, because of personal experience, we have confidence in local NGOs. It is up to us to choose who we work with and the fundamental principle is that EVERY CHILD MATTERS.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STREET CHILD AFRICA, SVP, LCL AND ALL THE NGOS WE SUPPORT CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE: www.sssk.org.uk



REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1070646

Students Supporting Street Kids (SSSK) aims to raise awareness about the issues affecting street children, and to raise money for projects that work with and for children in difficult circumstances.