

SSSK.org.uk

# STUDENTS SUPPORTING STREET KIDS

Registered charity number:  
1070646



**NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER  
2007**

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to another Academic Year and the latest edition of our Newsletter. Last year our Branches once again worked inspirationally, raising awareness and funds through a range of events and activities. Some of the highlights are mentioned in this edition, however it has got to that stage where there is simply not space to mention everything that the Branches have done. It feels nice to know that there are so many people volunteering their time and effort in the face of those issues that SSSK seeks to change.

In this edition of the Newsletter we flag up the continuing expansion of SSSK and highlight some changes to our structure that have been implemented to accommodate this. The growth of SSSK is organic, thanks mainly to those people around the country who offer their energies to SSSK because they feel so strongly about issues surrounding street children. We know there are many more people out there who also want to work to alleviate the problems faced by street children. We hope that SSSK offers people some way in which they can do this.

I thought it apt, therefore, to outline my own involvement with SSSK over the years. This is not an egotistical exercise! It is in order to point out how easy it is to get involved with SSSK, how much difference the efforts of a few can make, and the possibilities of remaining involved with SSSK after University. **This final point is important. Our expansion means that we need more volunteers to help administrate SSSK.**

In 1997 I was approached by Johnnie Glennie whilst at Oxford University. He outlined his plans to create a charity that would help to support the street children he had encountered whilst on his gap year. SSSK was born. We were both new to Oxford and University life, as well as being totally out of our depth when it came to setting up a charity and making it work. With a little help from our friends and a lot of floundering about in the dark we were able to register the charity and begin 'Branch Work', raising a few hundred pounds which we sent out to OFFER and LCL. After leaving Oxford I remained involved as a Trustee of SSSK. At this stage there were four of us, and we worked through our friends and contacts, asking them to help the existing Branches or set up new ones. Ten years on and there are seven Branches, with more in the pipeline (we hope). My work at University had interested me in the issues surrounding street children, and when I left I secured a post at the Consortium for Street Children, a job that offered me further insight into the lives of street children as well as giving me an idea of the direction we might push SSSK in. After several years with the Consortium I passed my teaching exams and am now a Primary School teacher: after all, charity begins at home and education is vital for all our children. I still act as a Trustee for SSSK and continue to be astounded by the growth of the organisation and the commitment of those people who give up their time to run Branches and events. Thanks to them we have been able to offer sustainable support to several NGO's as well as giving one-off grants for specific projects. The goals of Johnnie and Ben (our founders) remain, and SSSK continues to work towards those goals. With your help this work will continue. Our work remains a drop in the ocean, but that drop is growing, and what we, and the NGO's we support, are achieving is becoming more and more tangible.

*Hermione Ruck-Keene (Trustee)*

# The changing face of SSSK

2007: The New Logo



You may have noticed that recently there has been more than one logo in use. We had been looking for a more immediately recognisable image to replace our original logo. Out of the blue we were approached by BrandingStrategy.org, a not-for-profit agency which offers free services to humanitarian and socially conscious organisations. They produced what we believe to be an excellent new logo for us.

In the interest of promoting the “brand” of SSSK we would encourage Branches to use the new logo when creating resource materials as we feel it will be more easily recognised. You should all have a high resolution electronic version of this logo; if not please contact us. If you have any older resources bearing the original logo then obviously it is fine to continue using them. The new logo is available to download from the website.

1997: The Old Logo



# Proposed Restructuring

We have mentioned several times already (because we are so proud of the fact) that SSSK is growing from strength to strength. We are run completely by volunteers, so this growth is testament to the commitment of the Trustees and Branch members. There has had to be a rethink in the way SSSK is structured in order to incorporate this growth.

As it is now, we have a group of Trustees who, on top of their other trustee responsibilities, liaise regularly with the Branches where the important work of fund-raising and awareness-raising takes place. Ideally the Trustees want to offer as much support as possible to the Branches, including visiting regularly. In reality, as the number of our Branches increases, the amount of support we can offer each Branch is diminished. The proposed restructure aims to solve this problem by increasing the number of people working for us who can offer support to each of our Branches.

With this in mind we are thinking about creating several roles for Branch Liaison Members (BLMs). Where possible, BLMs will be ex-Branch members. This has the added bonus of creating a way for people to remain involved with SSSK once they have left University (something we are asked fairly frequently about). The use of ex-Branch members as BLMs has several potential advantages:

- the BLMs are more likely to know key features and people within their respective Universities which the Branches will need to know in order to function as effectively as possible
- BLMs will know people still involved with the Branch and be able to offer them more personalised support
- BLMs will be spread more evenly around the country and not necessarily based in London

The Trustees would, of course, continue to advise and support the Branches, but would do so in conjunction with the BLMs. We hope that this proposed move will enable us to function more effectively.

This planned restructuring will have to take place gradually. For the immediate future, it is likely that the Trustees will continue to double up as BLMs. With the increasing expansion of SSSK, we are very keen for Branch members to remain involved post-University, whether to fill the role of BLM or to serve as a London trustee (the majority of current Trustees are people who were formally involved with University Branches).

**If you might be interested in remaining involved with SSSK in some capacity after leaving University please contact us through our website ([www.sssk.org.uk](http://www.sssk.org.uk)).**

On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2007 we held our Annual General Meeting....

....All our Branches were represented in what turned out to be our largest AGM yet, an illustration of the increasing professionalism, drive and commitment of SSSK members.

# THE AGM

The event began with a speech from one of our founders, Johnnie Glennie. About to head off to Colombia as Country Representative with Christian Aid, he stressed the importance of Global Citizenship. We then heard accounts from Branch members about recent experiences with charities we support, highlighting some of the issues we seek to address. A summary of one of these reports can be seen on the next page. These personal experiences, and their reactions to them, underlined the importance of awareness raising as a key feature of our work. This point was reinforced through a DVD created for us by students at Harris City Technology College, who tackled the question of how we could make the voices of street children more clearly heard. Discussions based on these, and other, key issues followed. **Answers to the questions raised can be found on our website ([www.sssk.org.uk](http://www.sssk.org.uk)).**

We also heard about the impressive fund-raising of our Branches which has resulted in more than £10,000 being raised in each of the past two years. Compared to the sum of around £100 per year which was raised in the formative years of SSSK, this really does underline the huge amount of work done by our Branches around the country.

**We can't thank our members enough for their efforts.**



The AGM was the perfect opportunity for the Branches and Trustees to get together. The next one will be on **Thursday 3rd January 2008** in London.

# SUMMARY OF KOSOVO VISIT REPORT FROM AGM

I went to Kosovo in 2006, initially to take part in the Summer University Programme at Prishtina University. One evening my friends and I were sitting in a bar, relaxing after the day's studies, when two little eyes peeked over the edge of the table asking whether we wanted to buy any nuts from her. To me this was heartbreaking and all I could think was to buy all her nuts so she could go home and play, or sleep, and go to school the next day.

This example illustrates quite clearly the problem for children in Kosovo who work on the streets, returning to their homes after a full day's work. These children undertake jobs such as selling small goods (nuts, cigarettes, chewing gum etc) and offering their labour in other ways. This exposes the children to the serious dangers of trafficking or child prostitution, as well as general health and well-being risks. Most significantly though, it prevents children from going to school and claiming their education, which is available to all children in Kosovo under the law and therefore rightfully theirs. Such a life denies them their fundamental rights in accordance with international human rights law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Both of these laws are applicable in Kosovo.

The reasons for this grave situation for children in Kosovo arise from the disaster left behind by the war. Economic factors such as high unemployment, slow progress in privatisation and scarce foreign

investment have led to a society that accepts children working on the street.

The issue of education needs to be addressed. These street children have a right to receive an education; however further education of their families is also needed, informing them of the rights of these children. Furthermore, these rights must be ensured and secured by the country's laws, the government, judiciary and police force.

These then are the two main areas that the Centre for Children's Rights targets:

- They conduct workshops to educate children specifically, and the general public, on the Rights of the Child, and the Centre regularly publishes leaflets or organises large-scale activities promoting the awareness of the Rights of Children.
- They lobby governmental institutions to spend more money and effort in reducing the problem of child labour in Kosovo

These aims exist in order to enable street children to claim their right to education, as well as increasing formal protection for them. This pressure has already resulted in some government guidelines on how to deal with the problem.

*Vanessa Hughes, Durham SSSK*





SSSK members have, in the past, entered the marathon via ballot and raised significant funds through sponsorship. We value these efforts hugely. Some members have failed to gain a place via the ballot however, and for their benefit we have secured a place in the marathon for 2008.

If you would like to claim this place then please contact us either via the website [www.sssk.org.uk](http://www.sssk.org.uk) or on [sssk@sssk.org.uk](mailto:sssk@sssk.org.uk). Of course if you have already gained a place and would like to raise money for a worthy cause, please consider us as well!

## RECOMMENDED READ...



### LOST FUTURES: OUR FORGOTTEN CHILDREN

Stan Grossfield  
Aperture, 1997

Grossfield's collection of photographs documents the struggle of the world's most desperate children. In a series of fifteen 'photographic essays' Grossfield details the hardships faced by children living in the harsh realities of poverty and abuse. Although not all the children documented in the book are living on the street, the images and accompanying notes nonetheless highlight issues which are a daily reality for street children.

It is easy to forget that the statistics about street children, child prostitutes and young people who have been abused or neglected only touch the surface of the stories behind them. Every statistic is generated by real and individual lives and Grossfield's work brings a human touch to these numbers. The pictures are moving to the point of tears and force the reader to look at images which are, at times, difficult to acknowledge.

One of the most powerful aspects of Grossfield's work is that it does not simply document the lives of these children: it calls the reader to action and to account. The book contains information about a number of organisations working to address the issues highlighted in the book.

## RECOMMENDED WEBSITE...

[www.peacechildindia.org](http://www.peacechildindia.org)

Peace Child India believes in the energy and talent of socially and economically underprivileged people. Their office was set up in 2001 to encourage youth community leadership in poor and oppressed communities. Since then they have introduced a range of successful projects dealing with issues such as substance abuse, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. They continue to promote a more equitable and caste free Indian society.

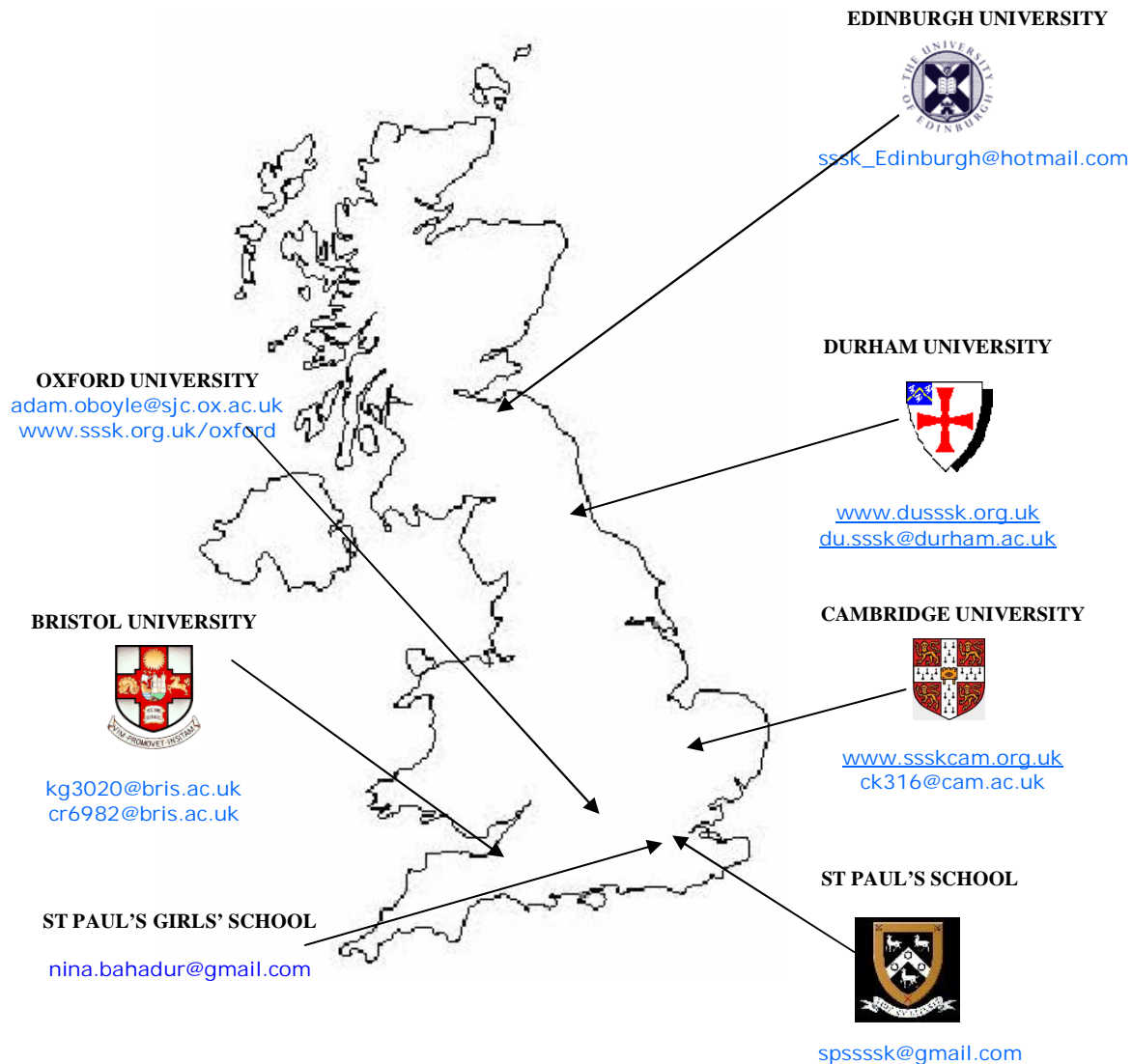
Peace Child India recently approached SSSK asking them to help promote their Meaningful Tours, a project which aims to provide volunteering opportunities with tourism. This section on their website is well worth a look. Peace Child India were particularly keen for our Branches to arrange to come out together in medium sized groups. Internships are also on offer for individuals.

If you are interested in getting a group together to work on one of the Meaningful Tours projects (for example working with drug-addicted street children) then contact us at [sssk@sssk.org.uk](mailto:sssk@sssk.org.uk) or contact Peace Child India directly through their website.





# OUR BRANCHES...



As mentioned earlier, the Branches raised a large amount of money through their efforts and spread a lot of awareness about the lives of street children. Some highlights include: Rendezvous, the Bikeathon, Beat Surrender, Halloween, Pro-Evolution Tournaments, The Photo Exhibition and much much more. Thank you to all our members for their hard work!

SSSK Branches are run by students in five universities and two schools around the country. **If you are interested in joining** any of the Branches please contact them for more information.

**If you would like to set up a new Branch**, please contact Gordon Couch at [sssk@sssk.org.uk](mailto:sssk@sssk.org.uk).

## **THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SSSK**

You might have guessed from the thoughts about the future in this newsletter that the sustainability of our branches - and the organisation as a whole - is of huge importance. The strength and success of SSSK is due to the commitment of all those involved: without the hard work of our existing branches and members none of the work reported here would have taken place. While expansion and growth is important and should be encouraged, our thanks go to those already involved. Consolidating and strengthening this base will give us a great foundation for future developments!

### ***NEXT EDITION. . .***

- More on the NGOs we support and where they are
- News about the success of the Edinburgh Fashion Show
- An update on plans for the future
- Some information about the Trustees
- And much, much more!