

## **A review of the year April 2007 – March 2008**

This has been a really important year in terms of growth, consolidation with our partners in South Africa and developing new projects.

### **Policies and objectives**

You may remember that our philosophy and way of working is NOT to simply be an aid agency giving grants but to work with partners at a very local level, to source and develop community projects, helping them to heal themselves through identification of the problems, training, seed corn money, helping to gain a belief in themselves and empowerment to action.

Adhering to our decision to focus on four main areas of work we have managed to spotlight our attention on projects in the following way:

1. Training in all aspects of child abuse: the causes of abuse, how to identify it, how to deal with it, where to go and counselling. This year we:
  - Completed the training of 72 community workers in both urban and rural communities
  - Developed [from scratch] a whole new training programme, through Childline, for those people working in and running crèches – this was tried and tested and adapted through a pilot programme with 24 trainees. The programme started to be rolled out much further in 2008.
  
2. Supporting and assisting the development of safe places for small children – crèches, nurseries, early child development centres, crisis centres. This year we:
  - Fully or part funded monthly stipends for 26 volunteers working with children and/or traumatised families
  - A further 16 volunteers working with vulnerable children have been funded, by us, through training and have now gained full or part-time employment in the social sector working with vulnerable families.
  
- NB. We only agree to fund volunteer stipends and their training on a 12 or 18 month basis so this does not come to be seen as paid employment – this means there is a regular turnover of volunteers who come to work, become trained, and move on.
  
3. Research and awareness raising. This year we:
  - Tied up our agreement with the Open University to co-fund a PhD programme researching causal issues of the sexual abuse of small children in South Africa, and we appointed our post-graduate student. She started in October 2007 and is expected to complete in the summer of 2010.
  
4. Ad hoc grants. This year we:
  - Awarded a grant to a specialist centre, attached to the hospital in Johannesburg, where small children go for treatment and court preparation following serious abuse. The grant was given to assist the travel of 25 children and families to the centre.

- A small grant was given to Ekupholeni Mental Health Centre for a specialist drama therapist to work with groups of abused children

All our programmes and projects are expected to agree to a contract with regular reports on activity and usage of funds. Whilst this is rather a novelty for many of our partners, they have willingly signed and [in the main] adhere to the spirit and the letter of the contract

Three projects have not been completed due to local personnel issues, because we keep a very close eye on all projects, and visit frequently, this has meant we are able to quickly divert funds to other partners.

These are just some of the comments we have received from our partners and some of the individuals we support through stipends and training:

***From various programme managers***

- The volunteers are doing such great work and showing such sustained enthusiasm with identifying and helping vulnerable children that we can't thank **the infant trust** enough for their continued help and support and encouragement
- The impact of the training is very positive and we feel we need more so that we can extend our services to more vulnerable children. We also feel that although it was just basics we are now equipped to help, we are hoping that after the next level of training we will do more.
- Overall, we feel the training was very successful and have received many requests from other crèches to be included in the next training

***From individuals ... on being asked which part of a session on child abuse was useful to them***

- Children must be treated fairly and we must be aware of what children are vulnerable
- The crèche's register is so important for abused children to be protected
- Child abuse. I did not understand the abuse exactly, now I do.
- I heard about children being abused from other people. Today I am going to teach my children and other people how to protect themselves and other children.
- Understanding children's rights is so important in helping families.
- There are many children who are abused but they are afraid to tell you what has happened with them. I am going to find the abused children and their Mother and tell them to go and tell the social worker.

**Funding and accounts**

We were able to carry forward £24,396 unrestricted funds from last year which gave us a good start; we were very successful in our fundraising and raised £67,555 in year, [THANK YOU EVERYBODY!] including Gift Aid, and we spent £53,413 - £49,157 directly on projects, £2,392 on fundraising and publicity and £1,864 on administration ..... that means over 93% of our funds are spent directly on projects.

As with previous years, due to the speed of programmes getting going, we spent slightly less on projects than expected, this is becoming a pattern and although it plays havoc with our budgeting we are learning to live with this!

## **Travel to South Africa**

I continue to visit South Africa three times each year basing myself in Johannesburg. My travel continues to be funded exclusively by a single donor who ring fences the money only for this travel. I spend my visits listening and working with community people in townships and rural areas - so crucial to our understanding of local situations, local issues, and how we can best support initiatives to protect children

## **Organisational Development**

The operating Board now consists of 3 trustees and Chief Executive and in 2008 – 2009 we will aim to recruit two new trustees with knowledge of South Africa and specific skills in Child Protection. We have been very fortunate to secure a new Patron - Cllr Shireen Ritchie, Deputy Mayor and Lead Councillor for women and children at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

All in all it has been a very good year and we grow and continue to develop our work – but so much more to be done.

Lesley Rudd  
Chief Executive  
the infant trust