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*I believe I can fly!*

**From Shelter to Developmental  
Programme**

Changing interventions in a residential setting for street youth  
in Cape Town, South Africa between 1991 and 1999.

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## Abstract

Despite adolescence being a window of opportunity for effective intervention, street youth are frequently unnoticed by service providers, policy makers and the general public, and therefore their specific needs are unacknowledged. The writer has undertaken an exploratory study, using document analysis and participant observation as key methods, to contribute to identifying effective intervention techniques for work with street youth.

This study bears witness to an extraordinary practice experience in a hostel for male youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four, who have lived on the streets of Cape Town. Over three years the hostel developed from a "Home" offering shelter, care and support, to a "School of Life" which offered a focused developmental programme. Through documenting the philosophies, operating principles and the youth's responses to the two interventions, the study explores five suppositions concerning residential intervention practice with street youth.

This study indicates that simply providing shelter, food and care is not usually sufficient to facilitate a street youth's move into the mainstream community. It suggests that providing for basic needs without demanding responsibility may encourage dependency, learned helplessness and institutionalisation. In turn the use of a time limited intervention, social skills workshops and involving the youth in the everyday running of the hostel may mitigate against this. The research proposes that assisting the youth to attain the developmental tasks of adolescence may prepare them for independence. The study notes that the use of group dynamics within the hostel community of youth and staff is a powerful tool of intervention and finally, suggests that the youth move through a process as they leave the streets, move into the hostel, settle and then prepare to leave. If the hostel is unable to support the youth through these phases, they will return to the streets. Street youth are only a "lost cause" if service providers continue to ignore the specific needs and issues of this client group.

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Please note: any references made to the concepts of race or ethnicity are made for clarification and do not imply an acceptance of discriminatory practices.

At the end of 1998 the youth used to hike up the volume whenever this song was on the radio -- or sing it at top volume. They loved it and it seemed to reflect their feelings at that time.

**I BELIEVE I CAN FLY**

**R Kelly**

I used to think that I could not go on  
And life was nothing but an awful song  
But now I know the meaning of true love  
I'm leaning on the everlasting arms

If I can see it, then I can do it  
If I just believe it, there's nothing to it

I believe I can fly  
I believe I can touch the sky  
I think about it every night and day  
Spread my wings and fly away  
I believe I can soar  
I see me running through that open door  
I believe I can fly  
I believe I can fly  
(Oh) I believe I can fly

See I was on the verge of breaking down  
Sometimes the silence can seem so loud  
There are miracles in life I must achieve  
But first I know it starts inside of me  
Could I believe in it?  
I believe I can fly

If I just spread my wings -- I can fly

## Introduction

Youth living on the streets of South African cities are largely unnoticed by members of the public, service providers, policy makers and researchers. Depending on their physical size and level of pathos, youth are grouped with the street children and seen as in need of care and protection. Alternatively, the youth are associated with the adults living on the street, in the belief that they are now of age to take on the responsibilities of adulthood. It is only when there is talk of crime in the city that street youth are specifically identified or recognised.

Street youth share the hardship and difficulties of life on the streets with the children and adults who live there with them. Yet due to their age and developmental stage, the youth are affected by the lifestyle very differently to the other two groups. With the closing of adolescence and the developmental challenges around identity, youth begin to question their ascribed identity of a street person and their chosen identity as a *stroller* (someone who subsists on the streets of the city). Young adulthood brings forth issues around employment, intimacy, relationships and consequent responsibilities. Many are confronted with parenthood. At eighteen, youth are suddenly faced with the full consequences of the law and prosecution – and lose access to children's services. Not only does the violence and harshness of the lifestyle begin to erode the childish romantic feelings of freedom – but the forces that they were running from as children (parents, institutions and schooling) are no longer restricting. Street youth as a group can be characterised as ambivalent, confused and searching. Hence they have specific issues which both policy and intervention strategies need to recognise.

The crisis of entering young adulthood on the streets is a window of opportunity in terms of intervention. As youth start to work through issues of identity, sexuality and are asked to undertake age appropriate tasks, many look for opportunities to move from the street lifestyle. Street youth need to gain access into age appropriate roles and tasks, to support the transition into young

adulthood. Yet they struggle to achieve this alone, due to the enormous obstacles. The majority, who may have lived on the streets for five to twenty years, have trauma and pain to resolve. There are a few agencies working with street youth in Cape Town. This study focuses on one such residential programme – Don Bosco Hostel, and the changes it has implemented in its intervention programme.

### **The focus of study**

The writer worked for two-and-a-half years as the co-ordinator and social worker at Don Bosco Hostel. The hostel works with young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four, who have been living on the streets of the Cape Town city centre. It is run on the budget principle of minimal expenditure, with a passionate staff that has more enthusiasm and dedication than experience or training.

Initially the hostel followed the wisdom of most services working with street children or street adults -- a homeless person needs a home. They provided shelter and basic care, along with a sense of belonging. The philosophy behind the provision of basic needs and acceptance is that with stability, the youth will have time to develop the skills, attachment and self-esteem needed to return to the mainstream community.

In 1997 this precept was challenged by the staff team, who came to understand street life as a complex emotional and psychological reaction to violence, abuse or a deprived/ neglected childhood which has resulted in trauma, poor self-esteem and inadequate social skill. The staff questioned the focus on the provision of accommodation and stability only, experiencing this as insufficient to move a young man or woman from the streets into the mainstream community. Instead the staff adopted a philosophy which believed that the youth need an opportunity to facilitate their development of social skills, personal skills and skills for independent living, thereby enabling them to take on the responsibilities of young adulthood within the mainstream community. This approach uses the theoretical

frame developed by Blos (1962), Erikson (1950) and Piaget (1977) which describes the developmental tasks of late adolescents to achieve young adulthood.

In 1998 the staff team symbolically closed the "old hostel" in order to implement the consequent changes in operating principles. These new principles include the use of a time-limited intervention, a focus on employment preparation, the development of social, personal and life skills within a residential community, and increased participation/responsibility in daily community life. In this process, Don Bosco Hostel became a residential developmental programme for male youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four that have lived on the streets of the Cape Town central business district. The programme offers youth who have made the choice to leave the streets, experiences to assist them to develop into young men, who are able to cope in their roles as husband, father, employee and neighbour in their communities of origin.

It is the youth's response to the shift in philosophy and operating principle that forms the subject of this study. The writer aims to inform intervention with street youth in Cape Town by exploring five suppositions regarding intervention with this age group. This is done through documenting the two intervention strategies, the patterns of behaviour amongst the youth experiencing the intervention strategies, and their achievement of the developmental tasks of late adolescence.

#### **The five suppositions considered by this research**

This study explores five suppositions with regard to intervention with street youth. These are:

- 1) The provision of shelter, food, clothing and support as the primary intervention with street youth is not usually sufficient to facilitate youth developing enough personal and social skill to be able to sustain independent living within the mainstream community.

In fact, meeting the youth's need for accommodation and food may confuse

the admission criteria and the intervention process as it allows the staff and youth to assume that the youth has adopted street life due to a lack of accommodation, rather than to meet personal and social needs.

- 2) Intervention needs to assist the youth to attain the developmental tasks of adolescence, which then allow them to move into young adulthood, thereby preparing the youth for independence. These include:
  - a) the achievement of ego-identity as opposed to role confusion (Erikson 1950),
  - b) the recapitulation of the separation-individuation process,
  - c) the achievement of ego continuity through the development of a personal view of past, present and future,
  - d) the mastery of residual trauma,
  - e) the formation of a sexual identity as the base for future stable relations (Blos 1962),
  - f) the engagement in the world of work (Piaget 1977).

Therefore the programme should encourage the development of links with family, but not aim to return the youth to the family as a central goal.

- 3) A programme that provides for needs without demanding the person to take up responsibility may encourage the development of dependency learned helplessness and institutionalisation. It may numb survival skills without replacing these with social and personal skills.

This process may be mitigated against by implementing time-orientated, behaviour targets for personal and social skill development, a time limit for the length of stay, social skill workshops and involving youth in the everyday running and chores of the hostel.

- 4) The use of the group dynamics within the hostel community of youth and staff

is a powerful tool of intervention. The emphasis on the group above a focus on the individual, assists the staff in decision making, guides intervention, develops the youths' social skills and supports staff in influencing the peer group. This model helps to develop a useful relationship between staff and youth in terms of authority, power and rules within the context and dynamics of adolescence, young adulthood and street culture.

- 5) The youth need to progress through a process as they: leave the streets, move into the hostel, become used to hostel life and work on personal and social skills, and finally prepare for independence. Within this process the youth need to cope with the "pull of the streets" (i.e. the attraction and temptation of returning to the street lifestyle), regression in a space of security and then a testing of maturity before leaving. As such the hostel needs to prepare the youth for entry, assist in breaking the pull of the streets, hold the limits and expectations despite regression and the testing of independence. If the hostel is not able to hold these processes, many of the youth will leave. The hostel also needs to develop systems of maintenance to assist the youth in holding the changes.

This dissertation intends to show that interventions with street youth need to assist them to accomplish two parallel tasks – that of moving from the streets into the mainstream community and that of moving through the issues of adolescence to the independence of young adulthood.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The research problem and its setting**

Many people believe street youth to be a "lost cause". Most street youth have been in and out of children's shelters, Places of Safety, reformatories and jail. Yet a significant proportion of youth approach the outreach programmes for another opportunity to get off the streets. And it is frequently those who at twelve were seen as hardened street children, who seem to reassess their life direction at eighteen. If society is unable to reach these youth, there are significant consequences. This is not only in terms of the lives of these youth, but also in terms of the difficulty in then accessing younger children for intervention, the impact on the children of the street youth, crime and the degeneration of the city environment.

#### **A statement of the problem**

The problem lies in identifying successful intervention strategies that are appropriate, efficient and effective. The most obvious intervention with a "homeless" youth is to provide a home and possibly, emotional support. The alternative strategy would be to assist his or her family in accepting the youth back into their fold. Most South African agencies working with street youth choose one or both of these interventions. Don Bosco Hostel has a history of combining of these strategies. Both Don Bosco Hostel and Twilight Children's Shelter in Hilbrow (as discussed in the literature review) found that ongoing residential care was not sufficient to prepare the youth for independent living. Therefore, in 1998, Don Bosco Hostel attempted a third form of intervention, that of a developmental programme.

This study uses the opportunity of change within this hostel to explore the response of the youth to the two frames of intervention -- in terms of: their achieving the move from the streets into the mainstream community, and their accomplishment of the developmental tasks of adolescence to reach the independence of young adulthood.

Having stated the problem, the writer outlines the objectives and purpose of the research, research assumptions, theoretical framework, the scope of the study and the structure of the dissertation, in this chapter.

### **The objective of the study**

The first objective of this study is to explore the response of the youth to two types of intervention, that of a shelter and that of a developmental programme. In particular the study seeks to explore: the importance of taking cognisance of the developmental stage of the client group; the use of time limits, responsibility, participation and goal setting as tools for reducing dependency and institutionalisation; the use of monitoring the dynamics of the residential community as a tool for understanding and intervention; and the process of change which the youth move through as they attend the programme.

The second objective of the study is to identify the philosophy and operating principles of the intervention between 1994 and 1997, and of the subsequent intervention between 1998 and October 1999, and then to describe the responses of the youth resident during these two periods by exploring each cohort's achievement of developmental tasks of late adolescence as an indicator. The identified philosophy, principles and responses are used to consider the five suppositions of the study.

### **The value of the study**

The study aims to improve service provision to street youth by offering a broad discussion of practice experiences across two frames of intervention. It intends to a) inform the hostel staff in the ongoing development of the programme, and b) make the experiences in the hostel accessible to other practitioners working with street youth in Cape Town and in South Africa. The writer hopes that this research will stimulate further study and discussion regarding intervention with street youth.

The writer believes that it is really important to document the unique experiences of Don Bosco Hostel over a selected period. She took a broad perspective in order to place the complex lessons in context. Therefore the aim was not to prove causation or the efficacy of interventions. But rather to explore transitional themes and offer guidelines for further experimentation and research.

### **The assumptions of the study**

The change from a shelter to a developmental programme was guided by the staff's assumption that the operating principles of the shelter were reducing the youth's survival skills, whilst not supplementing these with social skills. In this way the youth were assisted to leave the street life, become stable and contained in the hostel context, but not prepared for independent living in the mainstream community. This led to long admissions, which had the potential of leading to dependency. This trend was particularly evident at the beginning of 1997, when more than half of the youth were attending school, had no plans for moving and did not have the maturity to manage independent living. The staff assumed that if the youth were assisted in achieving the developmental tasks of late adolescence, they would be able to move into the mainstream community more easily and quickly. The developmental programme was initiated to achieve this.

Additional research assumptions include:

- There is a group of youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two that are motivated and have sufficient personal resources to move from the street life into the mainstream community, if given sufficient support, guidance and opportunity. Not all street youth are able to make this transition due to their repeated experiences of trauma and the consequent damage.
- Very few children over the age of fourteen start strolling and move onto the streets. Those who do are usually "runaways" who may return to their families after conflict has been resolved, if they are not rescued by an

institution. These youth tend to have sufficient resources within the extended family so that after a few weeks on the street, they are able to return to the community. They do not adopt the culture of the streets within this time and find the lifestyle too difficult to sustain. Therefore a shelter working with street youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four is servicing a group who have been on the streets for between five and twenty years.

- Youth who have not been living in the city centre should not be drawn into the city by the offer of accommodation or support. At all costs, youth from the townships and from rural areas, must be accommodated in the townships and not in the “toxic” city where they will be drawn into the city’s street sub-culture, if accommodated in a hostel for street youth.

### **The theoretical framework of the research**

This research places the youth’s developmental tasks as the core focus in guiding intervention as the writer believes that the challenge of moving from the streets to the mainstream community, parallels the tasks of moving from adolescence to young adulthood. Therefore this research draws on the developmental theories of Erickson (1950), Blos (1962) and Piaget (1977), all of whom discuss the developmental tasks required of the late adolescent to move into young adulthood. Whilst the three theorists describe concurring understandings of late adolescence, Erikson’s ideas around the need to achieve ego-identity as opposed to role confusion seem to contain and describe the tasks very broadly. Blos separates these out into the components of the process of separation-individuation, the development of ego continuity, the mastery of residual childhood trauma and the formation of mature sexual identity. Piaget’s comments around engagement in the world of work seem a further crucial component. These theories will be discussed in greater detail within the literature review contained in chapter two.

### **The scope of the study**

This study is limited to examining five suppositions. It achieves this through a

process of identifying practice philosophy, operating principles and through exploring the response of a cohort of youth resident during 1997 to an intervention strategy involving the provision of accommodation, acceptance and basic parenting. The research then identifies and explores the response of a cohort of youth, which included most of the youth of the 1997 cohort, to an intervention strategy described as a developmental programme. The response of the three following cohorts of youth who were selected directly from the streets and prepared by the outreach programme, to developmental programme are then also observed.

The cohorts have been named according to the initial date of scrutiny within this study:

- *January 1997* – the youth community resident in 1997 and before, but observed from January 1997 to March 1998
- *April 1998* – the youth who were part of the January 1997 cohort who returned to engage with the new programme and who left the hostel in March 1999
- *June 1998* – the first group selected from the streets who have experienced seventeen months of the eighteen month programme
- *April 1999* – the second group selected from the streets who have experienced the first six months of the eighteen month programme
- *July 1999* – the third group selected from the streets who have experienced the first two-and-a-half months of their eighteen month programme

The April 1998 cohort is the only group that has completed the programme. The other three cohorts are discussed with recognition that they have not completed the process at the time of writing – October 1999.

In essence, the research will briefly explore how the hostel became dominated by stable youth unable to move to independent living, how it worked through this

problem and then how it adapted to help youth directly from the street to become sufficiently stable to achieve goals of independence. Whilst the research does not serve to evaluate the success of the project per se, it does reflect on the hostel's achievement of its goal of helping youth leave the streets.

As the hostel is an extremely complicated environment, with poorly understood clientele leading to a complexity of variables which could not be controlled, the results can not be generalised outside of this time frame or hostel community. Yet by documenting the richness of the practice experiences and the areas of learning, the study will contribute to the limited knowledge base in this sector by reducing a reliance on intuition in developing residential interventions with street youth. It is hoped that this study will initiate further research in this area.

### **The structure of this dissertation**

The dissertation intends to document the process of change in intervention strategy adopted by Don Bosco Hostel and the youth's response to these changes. The introduction orientates the reader to the writer's perspective concerning street youth and the suppositions underlying the changes in operating principles that form the focus of this research. The first chapter outlines the purpose, assumptions and theoretical framework of the study. The second chapter reviews the literature available concerning street youth, the theoretical perspectives of late adolescence, the needs of street youth, the philosophies and principles of intervention strategies, and intervention strategies that include residential programmes. The third chapter briefly describes Don Bosco Hostel and its broader context -- including the services and policies in place for intervention with street children and youth. The fourth chapter details the methodology used in this study. Chapters five and six follow, in which the information gleaned through the document analysis and participant observation with regard to the operating principles and the responses of the youth, is discussed. Chapter five focuses on the period where a custodial model of care was used between 1993 and 1997. Chapter six similarly reviews the principles of and the youths' responses to

the developmental programme from 1998 to 1999. Chapter seven draws this information together to reflect on the initial suppositions of the study, thereby leading to recommendations for work with street youth.

In the appendices the writer has included: a description of her experiences with the youth who were in the hostel prior to 1995; copies of documents which outline the philosophy and principles of each intervention programme; pamphlets that describe each programme to the public; and finally, a newspaper article and a graduation certificate that give a sense of life in the hostel. Whilst the document analysis process drew on a wide range of papers, reports, strategic plans, for practical reasons, only those documents which guided the development of the two programmes are included in the appendices.

## Chapter 2

### A review of the literature concerning street youth -- and the philosophies, principles and intervention programmes used when working with street youth

#### **An introduction to the literature review**

The phenomenon of children between the ages of seven and sixteen/eighteen living on the streets of South African cities is frequently discussed in the media, journals, dissertations and at conferences. Much has been written about these children in terms of: numbers, causes, cultural dynamics, malnutrition, health, HIV status, education, legislation, juvenile justice, impact of government policy, prostitution, level of contact they have with parents, pathology, conventional morality, needs and rights, substance abuse, income generation, lifestyle and appropriate interventions. Furnell's bibliography (1996) lists 255 South African academic articles discussing street children and many other articles have subsequently been published. Yet, with all of this discussion, it is disconcerting that the writers have vastly differing perspectives and there is much conflict in terms of philosophical position. Added to this, is a concern that most articles are written from a middle class professional viewpoint, with little insight into the real world or experience of the children living on the streets.

MS Despite this cacophony of discussion around street children in the developing world, there is a deafening silence regarding these same children as they reach the age of sixteen or eighteen. South African research, definitions and papers not only discuss the issues within the framework of childhood, but also actively exclude those over sixteen or eighteen. These age limits reflect the focus of intervention within shelters, as well as the Child Care Act (no 74 1983).

In searching for South African literature concerning street youth, the writer was only able to identify three papers: a dissertation discussing the attitudes of street youth in and out of residential care in Cape Town (Jacobs 1996); an article

proposing a residential programme for street youth in Johannesburg (Jacobson 1989); and a paper to which she had contributed, discussing the needs of street youth in Cape Town (Daniels & Crawford-Browne 1997). This is affirmed by Jacobs (1996: 5), 'There doesn't seem to be any South African research studying youth and young adults who are currently living on the streets'.

In contrast, western countries are concerned about a group of young people, between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one, who are living on the streets. The first world literature is more unified in its basic understanding of the phenomenon, but offers more variety in professional contributions from sociology, criminology, anthropology, as well as social work and child care traditions. These include brief descriptions of intervention programmes (Bass 1992, Boyer & Killpack 1988) and writings with an anthropological bent, striving to understand the youths' experience and perspective as a guideline for intervention (Fest 1988, 1998).

The dearth of literature concerning South African street youth justifies this writer's use of a qualitative study, drawing together a wide range of themes as the building blocks for understanding intervention with street youth in South Africa. But it also presents the writer with a further challenge -- to cement together literature from several areas to form a solid foundation for the study. One of the challenges is to draw on overseas literature, whilst appreciating the differences in cultural and socio-economic circumstances. The second challenge lies in using research concerning South African street children to balance the reliance on overseas literature.

This literature review therefore begins by briefly discussing the difficulties of using the lessons learned in other countries to broaden South African practices and then will then draw on literature to focus on two areas: a) understanding the client group and b) the principles, philosophies and guidelines for intervention with this client group.

To understand street youth living in Cape Town we need to 1) discuss the literature that focuses on street youth in both the developing and developed countries, 2) balance this discussion by drawing on literature concerning South African street children, and 3) consider the developmental issues that differentiate the youth from the children and which guide intervention.

The recognition that the majority of street children move onto the streets between the ages of seven and thirteen (Daniels & Crawford-Browne 1997; Jacobs 1996) allows us to draw on research concerning street children to understand the childhoods and experiences of the older youth on the streets by inference. Yet the youth are substantively different in outlook, experience and frame. To distinguish between the needs and issues of the street children and street youth, the review will also consider theoretical understandings of late adolescence.

In order to explore the philosophies, guidelines and programmes of intervention, the literature review reflects on both the researchers' and service providers' diverse positions concerning of the causes of the phenomenon of children and youth living on the street, from which they then develop their philosophies, principles and programmes for intervention. The review considers a few programmes focusing on work with youth in developed countries and then discusses two South African case studies – one involving a shelter for children, and one proposing a development programme for youth.

### **Does cultural diversity threaten the validity of drawing on the lessons from the developed world?**

Ironically, when reading literature about street children/youth in developing and developed countries, the staff at Don Bosco Hostel and Sixteen Plus outreach programme related immediately to the portraits of street youth in America. Fest's descriptions (1988 & 1998) of concepts such as: "the pull of the streets", the street sub-culture and issues of "cross-cultural work", the dynamics amongst the youth,

and even his term "street dependent youth" made sense of experiences with youth living on the streets of Cape Town.

Yet, in their writings about street children, both Ennew (1996) and Aptekar (1995) caution against making assumptions concerning the street children of one country based on experiences in another, indicating that the precipitating causes and maintenance factors for children living on the street in the developed and developing worlds are very different, as are the social systems, expectations, resources and hence, appropriate interventions. Richter (1989: 32) comments 'whilst all over the world, children and youth attempt to solve their difficulties with families, schools and social systems by "running away" or living on the streets of the city. In the developing countries the situations and characteristics of these children are acknowledged as being very different to those in the first world countries'. In her research she found that South African street children are between the ages of seven and eighteen, with the majority between thirteen and sixteen years of age. She comments that the children in the poor third world countries seem to be younger – between eleven and sixteen years, whilst in the first world countries the youth are older than sixteen. Le Roux (1997: 14) cites Zingaro who, as a director of a Canadian agency wrote: 'The kids that I predominantly deal with are between fifteen and sixteen and up to twenty-four to twenty-five'.

The age differences indicate complex variants in phenomenon. We need to be particularly aware of importing the western concepts of family, childhood, adulthood and community into very different cultural and economic situations (Aptekar 1995, Bourdillion 1995).

Aptekar (1995) highlights that diverse cultural understandings of family, childhood and adulthood will lead to different responses to overcrowding, poverty, conflict between step-parent and child, and gender roles. He speaks of boys of a community in Southern Africa only expecting to be supported until

puberty, at which point they leave the family to become independent, thereby bolstering the family income, reducing liability and assisting with the problems of overcrowding. Aptekar motivates that the negative and inaccurate description of the “dysfunctional family” is ethnocentric. Cultural sensitivity and an awareness of the assumptions underlying the “nuclear family” are therefore essential in understanding the phenomenon of children and youth living on the streets.

Without clear research it is impossible to know whether service providers in Cape Town should be taking on a more developing or developed world perspective. It is clear that children are sent to Cape Town by their families to earn money. It is also clear that most of the children have western expectations of attending school whilst being supported by and living with their families. Most of the street youth report being alienated from their families, through conflict, hurt or trauma. South African street children poignantly highlight the realities of the discrepancy of wealth and opportunity in a country with both first and third world characteristics – by bringing the realities of the third world into the prosperity of the city. These children then challenge service providers and researchers to consider the concepts of the nuclear family, education and life expectations very creatively – within these dual realities. It is essential that we understand these youth within the unique psycho-social circumstances of the city and its surrounds, and not just consider them to be youth of the developing or developed world.

Intuitively, Fest’s descriptions and guidelines (1988 & 1998) for work with street youth are helpful when considering intervention with street youth, albeit that he is writing about American kids with different backgrounds, resources and who have been on the streets for much shorter periods. By balancing these perspectives with literature and research concerning the experiences of South African street children, we may be able to benefit from this work. Keen (1990: 9) states:

As we are still relatively new to working with street children, much of our work is experimental. We often have the notion that there is one perfect model, the solution waiting to be discovered. Unfortunately there are no easy answers, fortunately there are a range of strategies we can adopt. In fact each project needs to be adapted to local

conditions and needs and a variety of facilities enables children to choose what suits them best. We may not have a blueprint for what to do, but there are some important principles in working with street children.

Historically South African programmes for street youth have relied on the same principles used by programmes for street children and this has not always been appropriate (Jacobson 1989). It is useful to explore the models used in developed countries to supplement these. Similarly, it seems worthwhile to explore literature from outside of South Africa to extend our understanding of our client group – with the proviso that these are understood as hypotheses that need to be supported by South African experience and research.

### **Perspectives of street youth in the developing and developed worlds**

Effective intervention clearly demands a solid understanding of the needs and issues of the client group. Although the literature concerning South African street children ignores those over sixteen years old, this review will indicate their presence, draw on research concerning street children to briefly highlight the causes for the children leaving the family and the statistics in terms of age, conditions and gender, and then explore the national and international literature to discuss the characteristics and issues of street youth

In one of the most well known studies of street children in Cape Town, Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986: 282) noted the absence of youth living on the streets of the city and concluded that ‘strolling constitutes only one phase in the lives of the children’. Linked to the recognition that few of the adult street people had grown up on the streets, they postulated that the youth were able to reintegrate with the community on reaching young adulthood. After significant experience with street children in developing countries, Ennew (1994: 21) supports this opinion:

The long-term outcomes of life on the streets as a child are simply not known. The one telling fact is that, in general, street adults have not been street children. Research in Mogadishu seems to show that being a street child is simply a stage in the life history of

some people, who leave the streets once they become old enough to join the adult labour force. But it is likely that educational opportunities lost may mean being locked into a lifetime of unskilled, casual employment.

Sadly, this is not currently the experience in Cape Town. Whilst certainly for some, street life is a phase and statistically some must return to the mainstream community, there is a significant group of youth who have been living on the streets for between five and twenty years, and are not expected to move into the mainstream community. A census undertaken in 1996 indicates that there were 144 youth living in Cape Town central (Child & Youth Care 1996). The presence of youth on the streets has been confirmed by a recent, more comprehensive census which has not yet been completed, but indicates that the street population includes children, youth and adults (Hooper pers. comm. 2000).

Children arrive on the streets between the ages of seven and fourteen, with few leaving home during adolescence (Daniels & Crawford-Browne 1997). Smit and Maphatane (1993) discuss pre-adolescence and the onset of adolescence as precipitants to youth leaving their families. There is also a growing community of street adults who grew up on the streets (Daniels & Crawford-Browne 1997). Jacobs (1996) surveyed a small sample of street youth attending the outreach project of the Salesian Institute, Cape Town. Ninety per cent of the sample was between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-four. Ninety percent of these youths had been on the streets for between ten and twenty years (seventy percent for over fourteen years). One may infer that most in this small sample would have moved onto the streets at between six and eleven years old. Ninety percent had been admitted to reformatories, Schools of Industry or Places of Safety and seventy percent to projects for street children.

The 1990 Nairobi Seminar (involving service providers to street children in the African region) summarised the circumstances that lead children to move onto the streets as 'a rapid rate of urbanisation, overcrowding, large families, single parent families, poor educational facilities, wars and conflicts, lack of schooling, lack of

security and parental control, limited funding for social welfare programmes, famine, drought and displacement and other social factors such as alcohol abuse, divorce etc' (Barrette reviewed by Mncayi 1996:4). These were further summarised by the Cotonou Seminar of the same year that highlighted economic, social, cultural and educational reasons (Barrette reviewed by Mncayi 1996). Barrette's research within the African context leads him to develop the following list of causes:

lack of father figure, divorce, unaccepting step-parents, parentless children (both new parents after the divorce refuse to accept the child, abandoned children, children born out of wedlock who were looked after by a relative until adolescence), talented children, alcoholic parents, overstrict parents, abused children, prostituting parents, hungry children, delinquent children, broken families due to influx control, overcrowded living spaces, school dropouts, the school crisis since 1976' (Barrette reviewed by Mncayi 1996:5).

These reasons are very broad and not very useful for prevention, identification of high-risk children or in giving guidelines for rehabilitation. Cockburn (1990: 5) who works with street children in Cape Town lists the following causes from the literature: 'poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, family upheaval, alcohol abuse amongst parents, school-failure' and adds from her own observations: 'breakdown in alternative care placements and familial violence'.

In a national survey Richter (1989) noted that fourteen per cent of the street children surveyed had step parents in their household of origin, eighty-three per cent had grown up largely with a parent, fifty per cent had families where there was a difficulty with alcohol, thirty-two per cent had experienced physical abuse and forty-one per cent had left home with a friend. It is significant that most of the precipitants to the child leaving home – usually between the ages of seven and thirteen – would be described as traumatic crises in the lives of children living in the community.

A Cape Town organisation working with street children in the city centre recently undertook a survey of the areas from which their clients originated. Fifty-five per cent came from Khayelitsha sites B and C, twenty per cent from Phillippi and Mitchell's Plain, fourteen per cent from Nyanga and twelve per cent from Manenberg, Netreg and Kraaifontein (The Homestead Annual Report 1999). All of these areas may be termed low socio-economic areas where most families are living under the subsistence level. A key debate raised by the need to draw on international literature lies in the cause of the phenomenon of children and youth living on the street. Is abandoning home a response to the social stresses of poverty, or is it a response to family dysfunction and violence? The literature discussing the reasons for South African children cannot explain why these children left, while most living in similar situations stayed. Some writers highlight issues of poverty (Aptekar 1995, Fortune 1993, Bourdillion 1995, Cockburn 1990) and others of pathology (Richter 1989, Cockburn 1990). Still others consider those who leave as more ambitious, assertive or resilient than their peers (Swart-Kruger 1996, Lewis *et al* 1992, Parker Lewis 1998, Bourdillion 1995).

Moloto (1996) identifies additional "pull factors" which attract children to the city. These include an attraction to city life, the availability of money and entertainment, acceptance and peer pressure. The move from the family to the city centre is a gradual process for most – beginning with the odd truancy from school, wandering in the area of the community of origin, to the first foray into the city. This may lead to day strolling in the city or may lead to the child leaving home to sleep either on the streets in his or her neighborhood or in the city centre (Jackson 1993). NB

Richter (1989) estimates that ninety per cent of South African street children are male. Her research indicates that eighty per cent have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Twenty-eight per cent of her sample showed signs of chronic malnutrition while thirty-seven per cent were acutely malnourished –

consequently the children are much smaller than they should be for their chronological age. The mean age of street children in Cape Town was 12.9 years and she indicates an unusually high level of resilience amongst the children with tests indicating advanced intellectual and problem solving capacities relative to their developmental background and showed little evidence of psychological damage and pathology. Yet forty-seven per cent were rated as intellectually slow or handicapped, with between three and forty per cent experiencing symptoms of anxiety or mood disorders. Forty-five per cent of the children in this study have been in care or containment and only four per cent were true orphans with no living parents. These statistics concerning children living on the streets may offer some guide to understanding the youth.

Daniels and Crawford-Browne (1997) discuss that in Cape Town the street youth's experience is different to the street child's. This paper particularly highlights that youth over the age of sixteen are not accepted into children's shelter facilities, yet will not be considered for adult facilities until they are forty-five. Similarly, at eighteen years old they are suddenly no longer protected by the Criminal Procedures Act and the law begins to act very firmly against the youth. 'Youth usually find that they are unable to return home, as their families do not feel the obligation that they may feel for a younger child and are nervous of the implications of parenting a difficult youth. Families frequently tell the youth to find work, in order to be accepted home' (p7). Daniels (pers com. 1999) tells of a youth who asked to be taken back home after a wilderness therapy camp. Together they found the boy's parents crouched on two oil drums in their living room smoking mandrax with friends. When catching sight of his son and the street worker, the father grabbed a nearby breadknife and attempted to stab his child. The youth said to Daniels that there was nothing there for him, and returned to the streets.

The youth move in loose groups of eight to ten men and one or two women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. There are usually a few younger

children who are a part of the group and who exchange legal juvenile status for protection. Alternatively, there are young men between sixteen and twenty-four years old who lead or follow a group of children. These young men tend to have lower social or mental capacity and therefore are unable to compete or fit in with the groups dominated by the older youth. The youth part to work during the day, but come together in the evenings to drink, eat and sleep. Whilst each group has a territory and traditional sleeping area, the youth move around and easily join up with another group in the city. They rely on casual work, crime, parking cars, car washing and begging for their income. These youth are not connected to criminal gangs, but respect and admire the older twenty-five/thirty year olds who have stronger connections through repeated imprisonment (Daniels pers comm 1999).

There are significant obstacles blocking the youth from leaving the streets to reintegrate with the mainstream community. These include: addictions to glue, alcohol or drugs; unemployment with limited marketable skills; illiteracy; having no identification documents; being sexually active, and the effects of ongoing abuse from officials, community rejection and stigmatisation through being characterised as a criminal (Moloto 1996). Bourdillion (1995: 12 ) observes, 'the people on the streets develop their own ways of thinking, living and organising their society. Some features of their lives train them for a future life of independence in the poverty of their cities'. These mannerisms may be an additional obstacle in obtaining work or accommodation.

Swart-Kruger is a leading South African researcher examining the phenomenon of street children. She comments, 'It takes courage, determination, creativity and empathy for your fellow beings to survive on the streets. You are thrown back on your own and peers emotional resources' (1996: 235). The harsh realities and very real dangers of life on the streets demand that a street culture is developed and maintained. The need for protection, a sense of belonging and for financial and emotional security promotes the development of a certain worldview and social living. These behaviours are distinctly different to those of the mainstream

society, and in order to address these conceptual needs of the youth, it is important to appreciate and understand their worldview. Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986) describe aspects of this street culture in their research with street children, such as the children's value of freedom, individualism, group loyalty and other such rules, norms and roles.

Yet it was the work of an American writer, Fest (1988, 1998) which led to the staff of Don Bosco Hostel to question their original paradigm. Although he is writing about American youth who have not been on the streets as long and do not come from as impoverished or traumatised backgrounds; his descriptions of the youth's behaviour, social interactions and explanations for dynamics made sense of our experience with youth in Cape Town. In particular, Fest's understanding of the 'pull of the streets' and the fact that the intervention with the youth involved changing what 'is under the scalp of the youth' (1988: 21)), not his or her living arrangements, affirmed the experience of the staff at Don Bosco Hostel.

Fest (1988, 1998) describes the youth as street dependent. He believes that a worker needs to accept that he or she is working in a cross-cultural environment with youth living on the streets rather than a sub-group of or the children of the dominant culture.

Once a youth becomes entrenched in street life and alienated from traditional structures such as family and school, they have to all intents and purposes become acclimated to a different cultural perspective. That being the case, it is important for us to understand the mores, values and belief systems contained in that culture in order for us to be effective... While we spend considerable amount of time looking at their issues and needs, we approach those issues from the perspective of our cultural biases and beliefs, and fail to consider the cross-cultural nature of the work that we are doing (1998: 2).

Culture involves shared meanings and perceptions that guide the behaviour of a group of people. Street youth, to differing degrees, are part of a street culture. In order to work with them it is important to understand their perception of the world and their role in it, because it is different from conventional life in many respects. These differences are

often at the root of frustrating and unproductive interactions with the youth; without understanding that you may do unintentional harm (1988:18).

Due to the experiences, trauma and culture of the youth, their condition is not simply one of a lack of housing or basic needs. After adapting to the street culture, the attitudes and beliefs of the youth are the areas of difficulty that prevent functioning within the mainstream society. Fest (1998: 3) writes that moving from the street requires the youth to make conceptual changes, rather than physical or environmental changes.

Helping youth to transition off the street involves changing the way they view themselves and the world around them. Each new youth that you meet will be an individual with different strengths and needs. Services will need to be flexible enough to address these differences.

I truly wish that being on the street were simply a matter of an environmental circumstance. If all that were needed to help young people exit street life was the ability to provide food, clothing, and shelter, we would be demonstrating a much greater level of success with our programmes. What I am referring to when I speak of being 'on the street' is a belief system. It is a way of viewing yourself and your role in the world (Fest 1998: 3).

Fest's comments (1988) concerning the unwritten code of the street assist enormously in understanding the "cross-cultural work" and the "pull of the streets". Loyalty to the group, survival (where youth cross "moral" and legal boundaries to live) and maintenance of integrity are central within this code. Street youth form strong collective family units where resources are shared, there is caring during illness and protection is offered. The street family offers the first enculturation to newcomers. Often youth experience the unconditional acceptance, warmth and economic or emotional support that was unavailable to them in their families, on the street. Within the group the youth feel that they fulfil a unique role and are important or needed in this role. Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986), Hagan and McCathy (1998) and Swart (1987) make similar comments regarding close family group systems. Swart adds that the children

often hold onto a system of conventional morality, which guides their values and understanding of the world.

A youth needing professional assistance may experience enormous conflict between the street ethics which promote independence, a distrust of adults and loyalty, and the meeting his or her need – leading to an approach/withdrawal behaviour. Service providers therefore label these youth as unmotivated, but Fest (1988) indicates that it is important to be sensitive to the conflicts and ambivalence. Through negative experiences street youth tend to perceive adults as punitive and controlling. Scharf, Powell & Thomas (1986) describe street children and Fest (1988) describes street youth as characteristically avoidant of conflict situations and hence avoidant of relationships with adults. Youth try to escape authority either through moving around a great deal, masking the truth or by the use of drugs. There is great pride in the individualism and independence of the lifestyle, and the youth celebrate the freedom of their daily movement, routines and activities. The youth's perception of time tends to be focused in the present, which is usually a very short span of minutes or hours. Anything outside of this is the past, which is not chronologically ordered. In addition aspects of trauma may well be screened or altered in their memory as a defence against anxiety (Fest 1988). The youth tend not to engage with the future that may be threatening and seems to be unimportant (Fest 1988). These are vital insights for any professional attempting to take a case history.

Fest (1988) describes the youth as responding largely in terms of immediate gratification, with a very low frustration tolerance, due to the dangers of the streets and "learned helplessness". He depicts their attitudes as cheeky, lying, rebellious with a potential for aggression and violence. Street youth have very little sense of permanence when it comes to ownership and property. Lewis *et al* (1992) characterise street children as having a low concentration span, impulsive, struggling to take part in disciplined or regular activity due to a lack of confidence and a lack of self esteem to undertake such tasks. Cockburn (1990: 6) adds to the

list of characteristics: 'abuse solvents, high impulsivity, distrustful and manipulative of adults, flight in the face of a problem, greater locus of control, low self esteem, high value on personal freedom, adherence to conventional morality, reluctance to disclose true life stories'. Thus there is great similarity between Fest's descriptions of street youth in the United States of America and South African children. Fest's writing, however, guides one by understanding the youth in the frame of their developmental stage.

Herman (1994) a self-psychologist, who has worked and written extensively around issues of trauma, outlines a reaction of people whose life experience is one of moving from one traumatic incident to the next. She terms this syndrome "continuous trauma". Symptoms include: an orientation to the present, a diminished trust in people, a decrease in a positive sense of self, a reduced trust in the natural rhythm of life, rigid defence structures, emotional numbing or depersonalisation and issues with personal control/independence/nurturance. As often a person experiencing continuous trauma does not feel safe enough to engage with the traumas through therapy, the development of coping skills, problem solving, decision making and other lifeskills will empower the person and increase their sense of control. Therefore, these are important tools.

Whilst Herman's comments are not specific to street youth, her discussion offers an alternative explanation to Fest's sociological/subcultural description of the behavioural characteristics of street youth. Fest (1988) describes survival on the streets as marginal – both in terms of the violence experienced at the hands of the public, police and other street people and in terms of resources. 'Kids die on the street. There is nothing unusual about it. They are beat, raped, shot, knifed and have infectious diseases, and neglect. They suffer from malnutrition, the world of drugs, prostitution, burglary and violence and they handle all of this with the emotional maturity of damaged and abandoned children' (23). Williams (1996: 229) concurs, 'street children are caught in inescapable, cumulative circles of violence. They can be victims and perpetrators'. He highlights that the violence

is multi-faceted involving social relations, power as well as crime. The protagonists may include friends, security companies, police, the public, clients, institutions and supposed caregivers. In the 1997-8 annual report of the Salesian Institute, Daniels remembers eight youth who had died that year alone, six of whom were stabbed by friends (Salesian Annual Report 1998). Thus Herman's discussion of the effects of continuous trauma seems a congruent psychological explanation, considering the experiences which caused the youth to leave their families, schools and communities, in addition to their experiences of life on the streets.

As we begin to understand street youth we begin to see the sacrifices he or she must make in order to be accepted by an intervention programme. Lewis *et al* (1992) point out that street children must give up independence, freedom and risk him or herself with adults, accept adult authority in his or her life, live by rules and participate in a daily structure – should they wish to participate in a programme. He or she will not only need to break from his or her street family where he or she has a role and is valued, but he or she will need to give up alcohol or drugs (Lewis *et al* 1992), which in Herman's terms may be used as a defence against the anxiety of continuous trauma. Again reflecting on experiences with American street youth Boyer and Killpack (1988: 112) comment,

The pull of the fast life is more complex than a choice of lifestyles. Street youth are returned to street ties for many reasons. Among the reasons are: 1) the need to buy or be given drugs, 2) loneliness and a desire for company who know you and still accept you, 3) the attention and self-reinforcement given by a "paying customer", 4) the need for fast cash, 5) to be part of a social network of activity, and 6) a lack of any other possibilities. There is a sense of security and safety for youth on the street, because even the uncertainties are known.

A understanding of the pull of the streets and the street culture will assist staff to be flexible when working with youth through: considering the complications of being loyal to those who remain on the streets, being prepared to negotiate rather than confront, being aware of the youth's relationship to time and the present,

developing systems for consultation where the opinions of the youth are listened to and through focusing on developing self-esteem (Bourdillion 1995). This also explains the process of engagement as the youth enters a rehabilitation programme.

### **Theoretical understandings of adolescence**

Whether a youth lives in the mainstream community or on the streets, the growth from child into adult involves a transitional period involving the development of skills, personality and changes in social roles or tasks. The absence of indigenous theories around adolescence again requires a cross-cultural jump to theorists who generally focused on youth in mainstream Western contexts. At one level street youth have joined the international youth culture and share aspirations regarding designer clothes and footwear, music and cars – and the roles and tasks of young adulthood. Hence these theoretical understandings have some weight, as in order to enter the roles and tasks young adulthood street youth will need to achieve a certain level of social and personal skill. Again, these theories need to be further researched and tested within the South African cultural context and in particular, the context of the street.

According to Hill (1993) theorists over the years have used three approaches to explore this transition from childhood to adulthood. The first outlines the key psychological characteristics shared by adolescents, indicating how these characteristics evolve as the adolescent moves into adulthood (he cites Hall 1904; Fountain 1961). The second approach is to list the tasks which the adolescent is expected to achieve in order to move into adulthood (for example Erikson 1950; Blos 1962; Piaget 1977). A third group of theorists, for example Anna Freud trace the intrapsychic changes, the defence structures, adaptive functioning and object relations as adolescents move into adulthood.

At the turn of the century Hall discussed in Oldham, Looney and Blotcky (1980) proposed a model of adolescence involving “Sturm-und Drang” to describe the

emotional turmoil of the transitional period. Anna Freud, Spiegel, Erikson and Blois (discussed in Oldham, Looney and Blotchky 1980) essentially concurred to understand adolescence as a period of "storm and stress" where the teenager established autonomy. It was viewed as a phase with many risks and challenges. More recently, research has focused on adolescence as a period of normative negotiated developmental transitions. In an extensive study of the developmental issues of adolescents involving exploration of family life, generational conflict, autonomy and individuation, the peer group, the impact of divorce, identity, hormones, mood and behaviour Hill (1993: 93) concludes: 'The ways in which adolescents develop which have so far been identified, reflect multifactorial and interactive influences: social, cognitive, emotional and biological. It seems very unlikely that any single unifying theory or metaphor of adolescent development will prove sufficiently rich to be useful, academically or clinically'.

Due to the developmental approach of this dissertation, this literature review will largely focus on the second approach that considers the developmental tasks for youth to mature to adulthood. Erikson's (1950) model of human development forms the foundation of this approach, theorising that ego development occurs in phases, during which a person works through specific age-related universal psycho-social conflicts or areas of ambivalence. The resolution of this conflict or the achievement of certain tasks then not only assists a person to achieve age-appropriate maturity, but also develops personality and capacity. The achievement of the developmental tasks then allows the person to approach the tasks of the next stage – each phase building on the next, developing the ego strengths of the person. In this model the baby works with trust issues, the toddler on mastery and control, and the latency aged child on task achievement and social structures. Erikson (1950) believed the psycho-social crisis of adolescence involved a resolution of the tension between achieving identity as opposed to what he termed role confusion.

Hill (1993) notes that Erikson's original ego-identity formulation involving the exploratory-consolidating cycles has been revised as it has become understood as a differentiated rather than a unitary concept, involving youth moving through at different rates according to different paths. Marcia (in Hill 1993) developed a model involving four identity statuses: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium and achievement depending on the path to identity that the youth took. Berzonsky (in Hill 1993) develops these statuses to processing orientations. These theorists have initiated some questioning of the assumption that the achievement of identity is related to mental health (Hill 1993). Yet in work with street youth, it has been very helpful to understand adolescence, and late adolescence, as a period where self-concept and self-image is established and worked with.

Adolescence seen by Erikson (1950) as the fifth developmental phase of eight life stages, was further divided by Blos (1962) into five sub-phases according to the intra-psychic forces at work at different times. He saw adolescence as starting with preadolescence, early adolescence, adolescence proper, late adolescence and ending with post adolescence. Late adolescence is placed by most writers as occurring between eighteen and twenty-five years, depending on individual characteristics and socio-economic influences (Adatto 1991).

Blos (1962) recognises late adolescence as a period of consolidation where the functions of the ego become idiosyncratically structured and stable. Interests and values are consolidated, the ego increases in conflict-free energy, and the sexual identity stabilises, as does object relations. Within the adolescent life phase there is a transition from object dependence to object love. The peer group is an essential force to assist the youth in this task of separation-individuation and to move the youth towards identity formation (Blos cited in Kymissis 1993). The peer group is a guide and a support, assisting with the adolescent's move from infantile dependence, coping with anxiety, and developing skills to manage aggression and sexual drives (Kymissis 1993).

According to Blos's theories (1962), three areas of internal conflict are consolidated and settled during late adolescence. These are subject-object, active-passive and pleasure-pain. In working through these conflicts and the tasks of late adolescence, the various parts of the personality blend into a functioning whole. Any conflicts which have not yet been resolved are formulated more clearly, to be taken on as life tasks or life challenges. Values and morals are formed into personal frameworks during late adolescence and as this emerges so does personal dignity and self-esteem. Along with the detachment from parents, the ego ideal begins to emanate.

In 1977 Blos wrote concerning the criteria for the closure of adolescence and the move to young adulthood. Staples and Smaar (1991: 410) referred to this, in discussing these issues as including:

the relative stabilisation of moods, the veiling of emotions, the selected sharing of the self, the attempt to understand oneself, the predictability of behaviour and motivation associated with the stabilisation of character formation, the achievement of ego autonomy over the childhood dominance of the superego and the emergence of a lifestyle.

Blos (1962) proposes four interconnected developmental tasks and challenges which assists the late adolescent in reaching this state.

*The second individuation process.* This refers to object disengagement through individuation at the adolescent level, especially from the internalised objects of childhood. Hoffman developed this further, recognising four areas of independence: functional independence, attitudinal independence, conflictual independence and emotional independence (cited in Hauser & Green 1991).

*Ego continuity.* The adolescent is able to use reality testing to develop a sense of his past, present and future. A positive engagement with adult lifestyle requires trust and a relationship with the future. (Within a culturally diverse context, it has been suggested that a consolidation of cultural identity and roots would also be important.)

*Residual trauma.* The inevitable accumulation of traumas during infancy, childhood and adolescence is dealt with and more or less mastered by the adaptive resourcefulness of the late adolescent, promoting a consolidation of adult personality.

*Sexual identity.* Ideally in late adolescence after resolution of the negative Oedipus complex, the infantile narcissistic ego ideal has slowly and laboriously been transformed into the abstracted and consolidated adult ego ideal, making possible the formation of stable adult object relations. Erikson (1950) wrote that the achievement of identity was a crucial development prior to achieving intimate relationships where the boundaries between self and others may be maintained (Hauser & Green 1991).

These tasks and identifications must then be blended to satisfy both external and internal needs in a consistent manner that fits with the moral framework. From this social roles must be selected that are consistent and compatible. But when faced with having to be responsible for oneself, youth may regress pathologically.

Object relations shift dramatically during late adolescence from a gradual detachment from early objects toward a permanency of a love relationship, due to the achievement of individuation. Gradually distorted images of parental objects shift to a more real understanding of adults, including him or herself. As the internal image of the parents is amended, the individual may experience a sense of freedom from previous concepts of parents as controlling or omnipotent, and therefore a loss of the parental presence (Adatto 1991). This is a vital process for youth who have left parents – frequently with much guilt, hurt and blame.

Blain and Farnsworth (1991: 437) highlight the importance of the youth learning problem solving and decision-making skills during late adolescence in order to prepare them for adulthood. 'The young adult who runs from a problem, denies it, or poorly defines it, has not developed as he should and deserves attention.

Rarely does he experience his problem in these terms. Instead, it is depression, anxiety, insomnia or a psychosomatic symptom such as a headache or a knotted stomach, which is the presenting problem'.

For Piaget (1977) the ability to work indicates the passage from adolescence to adulthood. Work influences a person's self-concept, values, understanding of society and mental development (Kohn cited in Hauser & Green 1991). Through engaging with the world of work the adolescent's fantasies of his or her place in society are challenged by the realities and replaced with more realistic appraisals of their abilities increasing objectivity and decreasing egocentrism. Jessor (in Hauser & Green 1991) noted that with the transition to adulthood, youth have an increased investment in living according to the rules of society and need to find a balance between their hard won values and integrity whilst living within the norms of society.

Youth living on the streets frequently have struggled through the developmental stages of infancy, childhood and latency and hence appear mature in some areas, and very immature in other roles. Traditionally adolescence is seen as the phase of consolidation, where childhood difficulties may be worked through. It is essential that intervention programmes takes cognisance of the developmental tasks and needs of street youth, as this will assist them to reach age appropriate maturity and be able to manage the tasks of independence. Programmes should include the achievement of the tasks of late adolescence as a goal of intervention.

### **Philosophies of intervention with street children and street youth**

Bourdillon (1995) reminds us that for many children and their families, life on the streets is not the problem that needs to be solved – in fact the move to the streets is part of a solution to problems and is often adaptive. A move to the streets solves the child's conflicts with family or step-family members, overcrowding, financial difficulties through the child supporting himself or herself and contributing to the family, boring learning at school, authoritarian teachers or

school fees. The problems of the streets such as the cold and hunger are relieved by sniffing glue. Alcohol or marijuana reduce the boredom, enabling the group to socialise within a supportive collective.

In intervention we need to be clear whose problems we are solving and why. A child or youth may say that his problems are physical in nature – around food, warmth, where to keep his belongings, harassment and how to prepare for an adult life (Bourdillion 1995). He or she may say that their problems of low self-esteem and lack of self-respect come from the NGO's and social workers criticising their lifestyle and the public's attitude towards them (Lewis *et al* 1992; Swart 1996; Scharf, Powell & Thomas 1986). 'Sometimes our problems are their solutions and sometimes our solutions are part of their problems' (Bourdillion 1995: 13). In a developing country it is very important that our expectations for the street children are cognisant of the expectations of the children of the country (Ennew 1994). 'We need to assist them to develop skills for survival and not prepare them for a life which they will not be able to maintain after they have left the services' (Bourdillion 1995: 13).

Internationally, intervention with street children and youth seems to evoke strong emotional reactions, both from the general public as well as from the service providers. The public may either vehemently condemn the children or attempt to rescue them. Similarly, the service providers passionately defend the philosophies behind their interventions, often attacking services using alternative approaches. These differing schools intervene according to their perception of the location of the pathology. Perhaps the conflicts rise through a competition for resources, as well as through the disillusioning experience that there is no one solution in the face of what appears to be an "overwhelming problem". Through his work in Latin America, Lusk (1989) has identified four dominant approaches to intervention with street children, which he calls the correctional, rehabilitative, outreach and preventative approaches.

a) The Correctional Approach

This model has developed with juvenile justice and is based on a psychogenic approach where the problem is located in individual pathology or in family dysfunction. As street children are viewed as “sick”, “maladjusted”, or “emotionally disturbed”, a primary strategy of institutionalism is implemented which at best has a clinical approach – at worst takes on a punitive response.

b) The Rehabilitative Approach

The rehabilitative approach perceives street children as victims of abuse, neglect, extreme poverty and domestic disorganisation. The service providers using this model strive to move children through a system of programmes, which gradually reintegrate the child into society, and into mainstream education, thereby helping the child leave the streets. Whilst this approach locates the cause of the child’s problems in society’s dysfunction, it also identifies that the child may experience emotional difficulties and skill deficiencies.

As most rehabilitative approaches are of a residential nature and invest much energy into each child, the model is frequently criticised as not being cost effective and for not preparing the children sufficiently for life outside of the programme. These approaches do not meet the needs of the majority of the children who are on the streets and do not address the needs of the working children or “day time strollers.”

c) The Outreach Approach

The outreach approach attempts to move into the space and culture of life on the streets in order to more fully understand and accommodate the worldview of the children on the streets. Counselling, education and advocacy services are offered to assist the children in their context, to conscientise the youth and to support self-reliance.

The philosophy behind this approach assumes that there are structural deficiencies on a macro level and takes on an interactionist theoretical framework. Using this framework there is a perception that situational factors determine behaviour. This approach, in turn, has been criticised for being idealistic 'and inadequate in offering children practical ways in which their physical and safety needs are met while they pursue a more just social order' (72).

d) The Preventive Approach

Those who focus on this model believe that the institutionalisation of street children is an inadequate response because this, in itself, does not alter the structural factors of unemployment, inadequate housing, the lack of supervision and weak family bonds which cause children to leave home. It believes that these should be addressed through education, advocacy, technical assistance and community development programmes.

Research undertaken by the HSRC in 1991 examined the views of those making the policies around street children in South Africa. The report indicates that the respondents believe that street children essentially have the same needs of other 'children in need of care' and whilst it was recognised that the children have looked after themselves, few other differences were noted. 'The general opinion was that street children have the same needs as other children of the same age' (Smit 1993:129). This research indicates that a rehabilitative approach is or was favoured by government. Current South African policy in the field of child and youth care is adopting a more preventive orientation and a systems approach to the problem, whilst also engaging with the rehabilitative model -- combining personal and structural factors in understanding the gravitation of children to the street. The Interministerial Commission for Youth at Risk's policy document states, 'No residential care facility, be it a shelter, children's home or secure care... should merely offer custodial care to young people', 'All programmes should meet basic and developmental needs without being any way elaborative',

and 'Every residential care programme regardless of its core mission and purpose should offer programmes which can and do meet the full range of developmental needs appropriate to the age and developmental phase of the young person, including emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual and social needs' (IMC 1996:59). When discussing shelters for street children or homeless children the IMC states they 'should not be seen to be an end in themselves. They should be part of a holistic approach' (IMC 1996:59).

A similar study examined the views of those working with street children showed that service providers recognised a significant difference between the needs of the younger street children between the ages of six and twelve, and those older, between 12 and 18 years of age. The respondents indicated that both groups needed their basic needs met, but that the younger children needed parental care whilst the older ones needed vocational training and work opportunities. There was a belief that the younger children were more able to be rehabilitated. Other issues were that the 'older children may have been exposed for a longer time to violence, drug abuse, absence from school... older children are more powerful and potentially more abusive... the older ones whose defences are (stronger) and who are more difficult to reach' (Maphatane & Schurink 1993:18).

In considering the responses of service providers in United States, Bronstein (1996: 256) makes an interesting comment – which may be pertinent in South Africa. 'Homeless adolescents present with an array of difficulties, being perhaps the neediest group of youths in the United States. While policy and programmatic needs of this population are often discussed, their clinical needs can be overlooked for fear "implied victim blaming". The writer was unable to locate South African literature concerning the clinical needs of either street children or youth. It seems understood that these individual needs would be identified and met in a residential setting or shelter.

**What do the youth need from intervention?**

Having considered the philosophies of intervention, it is essential to identify some of the needs of the youth and possible forms of intervention. Most literature has focused on the philosophy of intervention, rather than the purpose, which seems to left as understood.

Kueffler (1988: 132) draws these issues together in discussing her work with American street youth:

It is important to realise how much a street youth must overcome to reach mature responsible adulthood. ... youth have uncompleted developmental issues resulting from poor parenting and socialisation. They are struggling for self-identity. They have not made peace with their biological families. They have no strong relationships in their lives. They have unresolved sexual identity issues and they have not learned how to recognise or deal with their emotions. They have not known responsibility in their homes and have difficulty with impulsive behaviour and clear judgement.

It is not surprising that many street youth have failed to achieve the competency necessary to become adequately integrated into adult society. There are many things that street youth do not know. They do not know how to manage different feelings such as anger or sadness. They do not know how to act in a classroom or in intimate situations. They do not know how to apply for a job, how to act in the work environment, or how to manage money. They do not know how to keep themselves healthy, shop for food, or communicate when something is wrong. They do not know how to ask for help.

Most street youth are in need of pre-employment training. They have not developed basic work skills such as being on time, making work a priority, or dealing effectively with conflicts with co-workers and supervisors. They are ill equipped to present themselves for a job. They have no idea as to what clothes are appropriate. Because of the complexity of their history and services needs, these youth need to be in a programme that allows them to make mistakes, and improve step by step rather than all at once. They need chances to try over and over again.

Kueffler (1988: 141) lists specific skill areas that the youth need to develop in order to sustain independent living. These skills include:

1. communication,
2. anger management
3. decision making

4. recognising and expressing feelings appropriately
5. relational skills such as listening, trusting, and assertiveness
6. accepting responsibility
7. developing a support network.

Yet when considering street youth in America Fest (1998: 1) comments:

There is no overnight fix with street-dependent youth. Experience has shown us that to transition a youth from street life to a point where we feel that the youth will be successful – and that does not mean that all of their issues are resolved – is generally a two to three year process. You can not expect that an adolescent who is recovering from more than a decade of abuse and neglect is going to be healthy and stable overnight. This means that any work with youth in shorter terms, whether it be short-term programmes, or short-term involvement such as volunteer work, will often be frustrating and appear to yield few results.

Boyer & Killpack (1988: 111) support this, stating:

The longer a youth has been on the street, the longer they will be on the street. The length of time and intensity of services required increases dramatically for youth committed to street life. Also, the longer youth has been on the street, the more likely they are to return following an exit attempt... Commitment to street life involves an organisation of personal and social identity that revolves around the facts of deviance. It is an enculturation process that may not be reversed for some youth.

In their experience with American youth, those youth who were able to leave the streets needed 1) long term housing, 2) family reconciliation, 3) an off-the-street social network, 4) structured daily activity and 5) an income, to accomplish this goal.

After many years involved in researching the phenomenon of street children in South Africa, Richter (1988) advocates the need for shelters to provide expert psychotherapeutic measure as many of the children need assistance to overcome difficulties in adjustment caused by the traumas suffered. This needs to be above the care, protection and education which shelters have been offering as a matter of course. She urges service providers to recognise that they are permanently

responsible for the child, as very few families can be rehabilitated, although she realises that shelters do not have the facilities for the long term care of children.

The longer the boys had spent on the street, the more likely it was that they would show indications of cognitive and perceptual dysfunction. The reasons for this trend are multiple – and include the long-term effects of glue sniffing, injuries and accidents associated with glue intoxication and injuries and accidents associated with the violence and exploitation intrinsic to street life (Richter 1988: 13).

It is currently very difficult to design a programme for street youth in Cape Town, as an assessment of their needs and issues has not been undertaken. This again supports the principle that youth should be involved in the process of designing the programme. Yet practice experience indicates that the youth in Cape Town have very similar needs and issues to the youth living on the streets of cities in America. It is clear through these writings that an in-depth, holistic, intensive programme is needed, if the goal is to assist the youth to move from the streets into the mainstream community successfully

### **Considerations of residential care within the rehabilitative approach**

Service providers and researchers in the developing world have critiqued residential care as a tool for working with street children. 'More than a decade ago, African and international specialists on street children confirmed that incarceration in formal institutions breaks down a street child's spirit and coping strategies and does not replace them with anything of worth' (Swart-Kruger 1996: 233). For writers such as Ennew, who clearly support a rehabilitative stance, the critique of residential care is a challenge to the key tool used in this approach.

Ennew (1994) claims that there is one law which guides intervention with street children – the focus should not be on forcing children to leave the streets... but rather on adding to the choices and alternatives open to them, and then assisting them to make their own decision.

However benevolent an institution may be, it is now recognised by childcare experts that it is not the ideal solution. Children fail to learn the full range of social and emotional

skills they will need as adults. It is impossible for them to be treated as individuals and unlikely that they will be able fully to develop their human potential. Institutions are also not cost-effective. They can take only a limited number of children and are expensive to run (Ennew 1994: 88).

Institutions are seen as ineffective in that children

fail to learn social skills, such as shopping, washing their own clothes, or to develop the social skills of making decisions or forming emotional relationships with particular adults.... institutions ignore children's coping skills and networks, may institutionalise children who are not orphans and ignore their families (Ennew 1994: 89).

Mncayi (1996) motivates that services should be preventive and emphasises family/ community reintegration so as to promote respect for culture and not alienate street children from their roots.

Ennew (1994: 91) however believes open facilities such as drop in shelters and shelters are "non-institutional" although, 'they remain fundamentally focused on service provision, and despite decades of work, not one project has decreased the number of street and working children in its local area'. She enters the debates between the rehabilitative and preventative approaches: 'But giving handouts of various kinds is only a short-term solution, a kind of first aid. And it can create dependency. On the other hand, it is not possible to direct project activities only towards development and prevention'.

Institutionalising street children also concerns Williams (1996: 224):

In Kenya it has been found that street children lose their resourcefulness in institutions and gain little, if anything of value in its place. Whenever we take boys into an institution... it takes away their combativity for their own lives. In the streets they have to fight for their own survival. When they come to us they stop fighting, and that is a danger.

Strathadee (1992: 6) reflects on the consequences to youth that are accommodated in shelters over several years, highlighting the risks of causing over dependency and a difficulty in moving into the mainstream community. 'If youth are kept in a highly supportive environment, beyond the time they actually need this level of

assistance, it is likely to be counterproductive and could undermine their ability to live independently'. Keen (1990: 9) warns us to be

constantly aware of the response of the children to our attempt to help them...we at least should be aware of the fact that short term pleasure does not necessarily mean long term profit. We need to be careful about enticing the children to become totally dependent on a system in which they are likely to be long-term losers.

The Ragpickers Education and Development Scheme (REDS) in Bangalore India used their April 1997 newsletter to describe developments in their intervention programme over the past eighteen years.

Initially a welfare approach was adopted whereby only the material needs of the children were taken care of. Experience later showed the difference between an attitude of charity that promotes dependency and an attitude of encouragement that promotes self-respect and development. Considering this experience there were changes in the programme to help children develop an identity of their own. They were motivated to acquire skills that would allow them to generate income and save it....It was later realised that it is not possible for an organisation like REDS to have a long term institutionalised obligation with the children. It was essential to overcome the drawbacks of the shelter, do away with the attitude of dependency and make up for the lack of family contact (1).

Cockburn (1990: 2) reiterates this plea by quoting Swift who tells of an Indian street child who participated in a residential programme in Bombay, who despite receiving education was unable to find employment. The child is reported to having said, 'At the shelter we were safe, but we did not learn to survive in the world; I am exactly where I was on the day I left street life'. Swift apparently went on to indicate that this child had lost the opportunistic sharpness of the street survivor whilst acquiring unrealisable aspirations and impractical skills.

Cockburn urges service providers to think carefully about the implications and limitations of rescue programmes, which in some cases are limited, often confused acts of power by individuals and agencies who wish to exercise benevolence in a social structure that is not benevolent. "Rescuing" children involves removing them to a safer place, invariably higher up the ladder of economic domination. These programmes fail to address the causes of

deprivation. There needs to be a continuing critical analysis of the "rescue syndrome" especially in the South African context.

Cockburn (1990: 2) raises a concern that service providers

confound the concept of a child. Rehabilitation and resocialisation programmes are geared towards our notion of childhood and what is appropriate in developmental terms.... In attempting to "mainstream" these children, we may be infantilising them, blunting their survival skills and holding up to them a middle class notion of the values and lifestyles, which we believe to be appropriate for children. In many ways street children are functional adults.

Ennew (1994: 13) also warns of the rescuing trap.

Because people feel that they must rescue children from working or from the streets, there is a tendency to think in terms of providing for them or protecting them. Thus a common reaction is to start by handing out food and clothes, or by building an orphanage. The problem with these reactions...is that they fail to provide lasting solutions. Instead they create dependency. In order to plan for developmental solutions, in which people confront their problems, tackle the root causes and find their own solutions.

These writers are discussing intervention with children. Yet, this is particularly relevant for consideration of work with youth, as most of the youth who are on the streets have spent extensive periods in shelters and institutions.

As a writer focusing on American youth, Boyer (1988: 144) writes: 'Criticisms lodged at current (rehabilitation) approaches to the problem are that they are superficial, reactive and do not address the root causes of the problem (such as poverty or unemployment)'. Boyer cautions that services must guard against becoming reinterpreted as part of an adaptive pattern of street existence rather than a meaningful opportunity for real change. Shelters or drop-in shelters may be encouraging street children to come to or remain on the streets by providing incentives such as food, recreation and financial support, without any real emphasis on community reintegration'.

Residential care is controversial, both due to the prohibitive costs involved, as well as the potential costs to the children or youth, should the care be insufficient. Yet intervention with street youth is a long-term process with no easy process or recipe. In essence this debate around philosophy and method of intervention seems to boil down to the goals and role that each service chooses. If a service sets out to assist all street children/youth in a community, they will need to plan their intervention strategy very realistically, perhaps using advocacy, education and on-the-street support as key services – depending on the resources they have available. These broad services need to be aware of the dangers of making youth too comfortable on the street, so that the individual becomes dependent on these services and adapted to street life.

Alternatively, a service may decide to offer assistance to a smaller group of children/ youth and then set higher goals e.g. assisting these youth to make choices about their futures and offer them an opportunity of supported transition from the street. Again, should this be the goal, the service must have the resources to effectively undertake this task and cannot afford to offer custodial care, as indicated by the literature above. These services must also be very cautious of developing the youth's aspirations beyond those of their peers in the community of origin, to prevent further alienation from that community, to avoid drawing youth from the townships and to assist in family reconciliation.

### **Key principles guiding intervention with street children and street youth**

Amongst the discussion of philosophy and approach, there is greater agreement around the principles or process of intervention with street children – although nothing written about principles for work with South African street youth. South African service providers with children (Keen 1990, Cockburn 1990)) have discussed these in the literature and networks have consolidated these into protocols (Western Cape Street Children's Forum 1996, Lewis 1995). Yet it is also helpful to draw on Ennew's work with street children in developing countries

to consider these, and Boyer and Fest's work in America for principles particularly geared for the older age group.

Keen (1990) outlines that all intervention with street children should be child-centred, based on respect for the child with the purpose of developing the child's self-esteem. In order to assist in building solid relationships between the staff and child, projects should be small, accessible and informal, with a warm atmosphere where the child may choose to be involved. The adults must be approachable, easy to relate to, and whilst firm, must accept the child in a non-judgemental manner. The staff need to assist the child in recognising his or her existing skills and strengths, so that the child grows, survives and gains control over their own lives. As far as possible, it is essential that the child be involved in making decisions which impact on his or her life. Service providers must be careful of overprotecting the child, thereby reducing independence.

The Western Cape Street Children's Forum formulated a list of their underlying assumptions and principles as part of a service provision model submitted to the Interministerial Commission for Youth at Risk (WCSCF 1996: 11). These add to Keen's list and those that concern principles of service delivery, include:

That street children's shelters should not see that shelter is an end in itself – it should be seen as a part of a holistic approach, and access to appropriate non formal education, skills training, school return and more permanent planning should form part of the shelter's curriculum.

That street children shelters should see return and reintegration to the family of origin as priority. But where this is not feasible, it should be noted that forcible return to a dysfunctional family is counterproductive.

That street children programmes including shelters should operate within the paradigm of therapeutic rather than custodial care.

That services need to be unelaborated, indigenous, affordable and cost effective.

That self-referral and an open door policy are non-negotiable principles.

consider alternatives and then make decisions with an awareness of the possible consequences. Gradually they should learn about evaluating their decisions so that they are more able to make further choices. Ennew celebrates the resourceful, capable, potential of the children who must be respected, and that their fullest participation should be facilitated. She agrees that although projects should always work with children rather than for them, there will be times when adults will need to make the final decision. Boyer (1988) supports this, advocating for a developmental approach to the phenomenon of street children. She motivates that programmes should involve youth practically and not just promote notions of youth empowerment. Programmes should be structured with opportunities that stimulate empowerment, a sense of achievement and raises self-esteem with the ultimate objective to foster self-reliance.

According to Fest (1998: 27), services must be 'present minded to offer street youth an immediate sense of engagement. Services providers must have an understanding of the cultural context of the child's behaviours and motivations and must understand that the street is far more than a physical entity. It is a conceptual perception of the world'. Yet Ennew (1994) cites Connolly in cautioning programmes on taking on a stance of fighting against drugs. She suggests that providing options and alternatives may be more useful, whilst ensuring that the service does not alienate itself from the children. She also encourages services to consider their target group when it comes to taking on children who are heavy substance users, bidding staff to consider their capacity, level of skill and strength for this work, when educating other children around drug use may be more useful. In contrast, a comment around the use of drugs and particularly the use of solvents, a case study outlines, 'only two boys have been known to be quite unable to give up their glue; most are able to give it up for short periods while on the streets or permanently if taken into a setting where they are given sufficient warmth and caring and positive alternatives to street life' (Swart 1990). This reflects conventional practice wisdom, that the majority of street children stop using solvents when warmed and cared for.

Whilst these principles of service delivery and intervention are very basic, they do offer guidelines. Depending on each organisations target, goal and purpose, each will develop a further set of principles that guide the staff in implementing a coherent programme.

### **Interventions with street youth and delinquent youth used internationally**

In designing a residential developmental programme for street youth living in Cape Town, the hostel staff found that there were very few models, guidelines or programmes to follow. Compilations such as Working with Street Children – selected case studies from Africa, Asia and Latin America (UNESCO 1995) and web sites on the internet make practice experiences around the globe accessible and easily available. Unfortunately, one is often left feeling dissatisfied having read the description of the programmes. There is a sense that the comments have been written for the funders, are idealised and are certainly insufficient for replication. Either that... or the children in their projects co-operate and behave with less creativity, energy and diffusion than the kids in Cape Town! More seriously, these programmes seem not to need to address the complications of street culture, clinical needs of the youth and symptoms of continuous trauma. The majority of the programmes designed for street youth focus on skill development, training and employment preparation. Whilst every youth on the street in Cape Town believes he or she is perfectly able to hold down a job if he or she was given the opportunity, experience indicates otherwise.

Hence in designing a programme to go beyond custodial/residential care, the staff considered a whole range of programmes, models and strategies. These included American models, where clinical issues have been taken into account, residential and intervention programmes with youth, general theoretical models such as Prochaska and DiClemente's Model of Change (1994) and Epstein's considerations of time-limited interventions (cited in Hepworth & Larsen 1990). Therefore the literature review discusses these ideas and briefly highlights the

national transition programmes used in the United States of America, considers lifeskill education as a model for intervention, and draws on work that was undertaken with delinquent youth.

Whilst concluding the research process, the writer accessed a study undertaken by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which surveyed 360 agencies that provide basic shelter, outreach, crisis intervention services or transitional living services to runaway and homeless youths in the United States (Bass 1992). The NASW has developed a Comprehensive Model of Service Delivery for Runaway and Homeless Youths, which includes outreach, crisis accommodation and transitional programmes. The US Department of Health and Human Services defines short term crisis intervention with homeless youth as limited to fifteen days in order to keep the focus on crisis intervention, and involves providing shelter and family reconstruction services. The outreach activities establish informal, one-to-one relationships with youth that have run away or are living on the streets, in the youths' environment or context. This is seen as a central element of the model for service delivery and is used to reach and recruit youth for the Transitional Living Programs.

The "Transitional Living Program" was instituted by the American Congress with the recognition that it is unlikely that older homeless youth can be reunited with their families, and that these youth have serious long term problems. These programmes across the states, provide shelter and services for at most 20 youth per centre, who are between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one and can stay for up to eighteen months. The youth are assisted through a provision of integrated services that aim to assist the youth achieve independence. This would include information giving and counselling in basic life skills, interpersonal skill building, educational and vocational opportunities, mental and physical health care. The programme must develop an individualised, written transitional living plan for each youth that includes referrals and vocational training, legal, welfare and health care services.

Basic principles which guide the Transitional Living Programs include:

- Empowering youth and their families in the development, implementation and evaluation of the services which should include involving the youth and their families in co-operative case planning, peer support and educational groups, outreach and public awareness, agency and community policy making, experiential sharing and advocacy.
- Developing and implementing initial and ongoing assessment tools and mechanisms to identify client's needs problems, resources and progress. Providers should develop, modify, or use a screening/intake tool, an assessment tool, a protocol for the assessment process to ensure its quality, a substance abuse program jointly developed by the youth shelter, and an individual case plan and contracting agreement with the client.
- Developing outcome measures and following-up of service plans to completion or assess clients' achievement at three-, six and 12 month-intervals. Because aftercare is an important part of shelter activities, it is important to continue to assess progress toward achieving and maintain the goals of the case plan and to refine the plan as necessary.
- Four other principles were included in a model with eight components, which involved networking, training, advocacy and public awareness roles (Bass 1992: xx).

'Many of our youths have been so battered by their parents or by society that they require extensive help to become competent and contributing members of our society' (Bass 1992: viii). 'According to the survey, the average length of shelter stay and aftercare for almost half the youths is more than one month. The seriousness of the problems they face suggests that they will need long-term assistance to overcome the problems, or for older youths, to learn to live independently'. 'The staff of shelters and transitional living progress reflects the providers' understanding of the serious long-term problems facing youths who seek their help. The majority employed staff with social work, psychology, counselling degrees – with 30% of all employed staff having MSW, MA in psychology or MA in counselling' (Bass 1992: xviii).

Life skill training is being seen as a basis for many programmes – and is indicated as part of the Transitional Living Programs. Essentially it is seen as a development process where youth are able to learn social and personal skills. Each programme varies, although the principles are usually the same, and involve a facilitated group process of experiential learning. Life skill training usually includes a) specific content information required for healthy living or independence, b) problem solving and decision making, c) coping skills, d) effective communication, e) developing support networks and friends, and f) learning from experience (Boyer 1988). Issues, which may be covered in lifeskill courses, would include health issues, finding employment, sexuality, financing accommodation and budgeting. Boyer reminds service providers that many of these skills are basic to survival on the streets and that the youth have transferable skills which can be identified and developed – although these frequently need to be drastically reframed in order to fit in with mainstream living.

Ennew (1994 citing Gunesekera, Fernando, Indralatha & Perera) highlights one particularly exciting programme where the staff reflected on the importance of drawing in the richness of life into the experience of the youth in the shelter, so that the children were more aware of the choices available to them. This programme drew the children into experiencing the everyday environments of life: post offices, museums, factories, hospitals, temples and concert halls in order to help the children feel on the inside of life, rather than on the outside. They comment on how threatening entering mainstream places may be, if one has been constantly marginalised.

Shore and Massimo (1991) outline a number of principles which guided an 'innovative psychoanalytic therapeutic programme working with adolescent delinquents using developmental psychology. This project essentially involved developing a strong structured relationship with delinquent youth in America and assisting them to meet their everyday challenges through practical involvement and exploring concrete tasks, where the therapist really entered into the youth's

life space and all aspects of his or her life. Key points within this included the usefulness of motivation created by anxiety through time limits, outreach work, the importance of employment, developing a personal conception of time, the verbal expression of issues and the use of natural crises as teaching experiences – sometimes in very casual, informal contacts. Much of the work involved anticipating situations with the youth in order to prepare him or her. Although the content was practical and concrete, it was always held within the context of understanding dynamically of what was going on at the time. The youth was constantly pushed to take his or her own initiative and dependence was discouraged. This programme found it helpful to work with only one therapist, rather than within a team in order to reduce splitting and manipulation. This intervention was found to be particularly effective through evaluations.

Hatchuel (date unavailable) quotes Maier in his description of residential treatment as involving ‘a therapeutically designed round-the-clock living-in experience, the purpose of which is care and treatment. Its clinical components are an integration of functions, structure, physical setting and immediate social environment. Hatchuel draws on Maier’s understanding of residential treatment as requiring three components: 1) an environment which will at the same time protect the child from his or her own deviant behaviour and pressures from the family or peers, 2) an experience where the child can function with a sense of mastery, and 3) a corrective life/emotional experience through using the day to day group living experience. Maier and Kadushin are then quoted to indicate the important function of the child care worker within the provision of this experience. Essentially it is the child care worker who interprets the programme and experience for the child.

Fest’s term “street dependent youth” (1988) raises issues of dependency and the challenges of lifestyle change which led the writer to consider the Model of Change proposed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1994). This was originally developed to assist work with addictions, but has been applied to losing weight

and other lifestyle changes. Essentially they propose that people move through phases in a change process – and of course, may move back and forth through these stages. The strength of the model is that it considers the defence mechanisms of the person challenged by change, and suggests intervention strategies.

The first phase, “Precontemplation” describes the person’s lack of conscious awareness of the need for change. Intervention should take the form of education and general awareness raising around the issue in question.

The second phase, “Contemplation” describes an awareness of the need for change, but with an experience of reluctance and fear. The intervention should involve working with the ambivalence and choices available.

The third phase, “Determination” describes the action process of making a decision. Intervention involves assisting the person consider his or her choices and the consequences of these choices.

The fourth phase, “Action” describes the first steps of change and plans to maintain the change. Intervention involves assisting with planning and support.

The fifth phase, “Maintenance” describes the active process of maintaining the changes. Intervention involves support, prevention of relapse, development of alternatives to meet the needs the changed behaviour served.

These stages and interventions are useful in understanding the youth’s engagement with intervention programmes, for the recruitment and selection of youth to enter the rehabilitation programme and in guiding staff members as to what may be the most effective approach within a counselling setting.

In designing a developmental programme, it seems useful to consider the use of time in the programme. Hepworth and Larson (1990) cite a volume of research that indicates that time limited interventions may be as, or more effective than interventions which are not limited in this way. They add that in general most people tend to intensify their efforts if they need to complete a task by a certain time. 'Time limited services thus employs time as a dynamic to counter the human tendency to procrastinate' (358). Hepworth and Larson list the advantages of time limited intervention, including: efficiency cost effectiveness and reduced waiting lists. They believe that time limits develop the client's confidence and optimism, as it is clear that the practitioner believes that improvement is possible in a short time, and they comment that the time limit makes the process of termination easier, as the client has time to work through the response.

If the goal is to assist youth living on the streets of Cape Town to move into the mainstream community to function as an employee, husband, father and neighbour, the programme needs to assist the youth develop his personal and social skills so that he has choices in differing contexts. A developmental programme, designed with the youth, to address their specific needs and goals is needed to ensure that the hostel provides more than custodial care. The programmes discussed above give ideas as to what this intervention could include. In designing a programme to assist the youth meet the challenges of independent living, employment and family responsibility, it is vital that the developmental tasks of late adolescence are considered, in order to enable the youth to make a dual transition – from the streets and from adolescence.

### **South African case studies of residential intervention with street children and street youth**

The South African literature includes two case studies: one documenting the challenges of a street children's shelter in Cape Town, and another discussing some of the difficulties encountered with youth living in a street children's shelter in Hilbrow – leading to a proposal for a developmental programme. It is useful to

reflect on these case studies, both to understand these programmes and to consider the intervention principles.

In 1998 Parker Lewis published a controversial book Also God's Children – Encounters with Street Kids where she drew on her experiences as a manager and social worker of a street children's shelter in Cape Town to evaluate the value of this form of intervention. The book is highly anecdotal and although it is offered as research, is written for a lay audience.

Claremont Shelter intervened actively with 137 boys between 1991 and 1994 (another approximately 270 boys stayed for short periods). Through her follow up research, Parker Lewis states (1998: 178) that

By December 1995 only 5 boys from this group of 137 were still coping in mainstream society, 110 had resumed strolling in Claremont. The remaining 22 boys could not be traced... 21 of the boys were no longer with their families.

Of the five boys, who remained where we had placed them, three were borderline runaways. They'd never been street children for longer than two weeks and could have been helped just as effectively by a street worker. The fourth was in an institution for chronically retarded in Transkei....

The fifth was still at a children's home two years later.

Parker Lewis (1998: 180) challenges the reported successes of other shelters:

Social workers could be far more transparent regarding their real achievements. It's no success story when a shelter, or second-stage project, boasts about a child being with them for two or three years. He remains a street child, protected from the real demands and expectations of society. The boy has merely learnt to take the best from the shelter and choose what he wants from the street sub-culture. Shelters are an unproven, extremely expensive way of catering for street children.

Pontificating about the number of children a shelter sends to school, when the public challenge the children's criminal activity on the street, holds little meaning. An ability to sustain the gains made is what counts in society. This was something no street child I encountered was able to achieve.

Parker Lewis's research was not well received by the services working with street children, for a wide range of reasons. A critical reading of the book indicates a high degree of subjectivity, problems within the shelter in terms of discipline, staff-client relationships, enmeshment, insufficient staff and material resources, which may be reasons as to why the programme may have struggled. Despite her wide ranging comments and statements about shelters, her sample only represents the boys in Claremont Shelter between 1991 and 1994, and cannot be broadened to describe all shelter experiences. The book does indicate the complexities and challenges of a shelter intervention, and her criteria for success – 'an ability to sustain the gains in the community' is a challenge to all interventions with street children.

In his proposal of an intervention for street youth at Twilight Children's Shelter in Hilbrow outside of Johannesburg, Jacobson's article (1989) reassures us that the experiences of Don Bosco Hostel are not isolated. Jacobson writes of the dependent traits of youth that have lived in the institution for a number of years, their difficulties in holding work and their fears about moving into the mainstream community. His article is essentially a proposal for a developmental programme. The writer accessed this article after the new programme at Don Bosco Hostel had been implemented and was disappointed to find on visiting Twilight, that the proposal was never implemented due to Jacobson's resignation. Yet there are great similarities between Don Bosco Hostel and Twilight, both in terms of the consequences of the shelter model for youth and the programme which was developed.

In evaluating the youth in the shelter he comments:

Whilst the older boys have shown significant improvement in their behaviours over the last two years, it is evident that the current Twilight programme is not meeting their needs specifically. They are not progressing to the extent that they could be viably reintegrated into an ordinary community (129).

Generally, the older boys have developed significantly in their social skills but an immaturity is evident when it comes to their expectations in terms of living standards in the immediate future and how to deal with real life issues (132).

Jacobson then discusses the difficulties in developing these social skills in the large group situations.

The support that Twilight offers can no longer be administered on a group basis but must be more individualised to satisfy individual needs. Group generalisation and group solutions have been hurtful to individuals and periodically damage self-pride and self-esteem. They are trying to establish their own identities but the resources available in facilities and manpower have not accommodated individual idiosyncrasies (133).

Andrews (1995) discusses that at times Twilight had a staff-on-duty resident ratio of 1:100 – caring for children and youth in a multi-storied building. This was improved in 1993 by creating family units where the ratio was decreased to 1:20.

Jacobson (1989) continues by discussing the difficulties of employment:

Whilst it was thought that getting the boys into jobs would be the solution to their problems, it has been noted that they have not been able to hold their jobs successfully. This has emphasised the need for this programme which is geared specifically to the needs of street children whose life, social and behavioural skills need to be groomed so that they can viably enter the normal community as wholesome and ultimately valuable citizens.

Of the first five boys who got jobs, none retained his job. This could be ascribed to lack of job readiness and an inability to comply with rigid work hours and the discipline inherent in a regular job. Earning money and the handling thereof was also problematic (133).

Currently Twilight does not have a formalised programme for assisting the boys to find jobs. It is needed so that each boy can be given a specific direction to reach a specific goal. This will counter the listlessness and “dole mentality” that currently exists (133).

These challenges have also been noted in other projects:

Placing children in a situation where they are trained and employed on a regular basis does not automatically change their lifestyles. The gap between their unplanned

informal street activities and regular productive activities is a large one. The transformation process must take into account minute details and must move not just step by step, but inch by inch (SCF proposal for San Pedro Sula project cited by Ennew 1994: 115).

A bridging programme was required to assist youth to move from the street children's shelter into the mainstream community.

To tell the boys to leave is untenable... they are not in a position to viably reintegrate back into a normal community and they do not have the wherewithal to get a job or hold a job (134).

This (proposed) programme would be aimed at equipping each older boy for independent living where he will have the necessary skills and knowledge to cope in society.

The proposal suggests that the bridging programme needed to be in a separate location to the project for younger children, should be based on behaviour modification token economy with a strong peer government system, including a social and lifeskill training programme. The programme is quite complex, involving a staff of 3 and based on a social learning model. He comments on the behaviour patterns which need to be modified by the new programme – 'like their low energy levels and tardiness, insubordination' (136).

Ennew (1994: 160) recognises the challenges that organisations such as Twilight face, but also warns about interventions which extend the stay and which kick in just prior to the youth being forced to leave residential care.

There is almost no research about what happens to street children when they grow up, and few projects have thought through the question of what will happen to children who grow too old for the project... If they go from your project to another project they are continuing to be institutionalised, which is neat but not developmental.

### **In conclusion**

In this literature review the writer has indicated the dearth of literature concerning youth living on the streets of South African cities. In order to develop an

understanding of street youth she has drawn on literature concerning street youth in other countries, and has reflected on the literature concerning South African street children. She recognises the limitations in drawing inferences from these two types of literature, but attempts to compare them in a way to balance the cultural and age differences. In this process she establishes through the literature that there are youth living on the streets of Cape Town who, having reached the tasks of late adolescence, are seeking an opportunity to move from the streets. They have experienced continuous trauma both in during their childhoods and whilst living on the streets and have sought refuge in taking on the identity of a "stroller" and becoming involved in the street sub-culture. In order to effectively support these youth in a transition from the streets into the mainstream community, a concentrated long-term developmental programme is required which includes lifeskill education, counselling and teaching within the everyday hostel community environment. Such a programme needs to be residential due to the complexities of the street subculture, demands of surviving on the streets, and the need for transitional accommodation. This programme also needs to take full cognisance of the developmental stage as well as the developmental tasks of late adolescence, in order to assist the youth to accomplish the parallel tasks of reaching young adulthood.

This literature review reflects the diverse opinions around institutional /residential care, as well as appropriate interventions with street children and street youth. In particular, within these debates lie the dangers of care given in half-measures – either through making the streets too comfortable without empowering the youth, or providing custodial care with insufficient challenge or teaching. Much more research is required, both to identify the circumstances, needs and issues of the youth living on the streets of Cape Town and real, critical evaluations of the interventions which have been undertaken to ensure that the most effective methods are being used.

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In order to access different types of intervention with youth, the writer drew on a variety of literature, models and techniques – briefly recounting ideas which could be used for the creation of the developmental programme. This indicates that there is much to be learned from programmes working with youth and with lifestyle change across the world. Obviously it is impossible to undertake a comprehensive review of these techniques, but these need to be considered. Those working with street youth need to have the courage to look beyond the sector for guidance.

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## **Chapter 3**

### **The context of intervention with street youth at Don Bosco Hostel**

The changes in philosophy and operating principle in Don Bosco Hostel were a response to: shifts within the Salesian Institute, staff changes, the gaps in service provision for street youth, transformation in national policy and its ramifications at local level. This chapter briefly describes Don Bosco Hostel, the challenges raised by the outreach programme, others services for street youth in the city and national policy – as these have impacted on the programme.

#### **The Salesian Institute**

Don Bosco Hostel is part of a ministry run by the Salesians of Don Bosco, a Roman Catholic religious order that has been active in Cape Town for over a century. At the close of the 1980's the priests and brothers reassessed their work in terms of their world-wide goal to minister to the most marginalised and underserved youth in their immediate vicinity. It was clear that those in greatest need were literally living on their doorstep. The order developed an informal education programme for street children living in shelters, called Learn to Live. Over time, a training and entrepreneurship programme for older youth evolved within the education project, as did a need to accommodate youth who were over sixteen and hence too old for the shelters.

In 1991 the hostel opened to meet this need. This was followed by the opening of an outreach project, Sixteen Plus in 1993 which aimed to develop relationships, motivate, advise and guide youth living on the streets and link the other two projects with these youth. In 1997 Sixteen Plus ran their first camp using Wilderness Therapy principles. Just at that time the hostel was reviewing its programme. The results of the Sixteen Plus camp challenged the hostel to provide a programme for the youth that had chosen to leave the streets through the camp experience.

Don Bosco Hostel, Learn to Live and Sixteen Plus share premises on the outskirts of the central business district in Greenpoint, and work closely to serve the youth. Currently all three projects are co-ordinated and staffed largely by lay people and directed by the Rector of the religious order. This study focuses on the developments in the hostel, but highlights the roles of the training and outreach projects in meeting the hostel's goal.

### A description of Don Bosco Hostel

The hostel accommodates 24 young men between the ages of 16 and 24. The staff complement has varied dramatically over the years. At the beginning of 1999 the staff consisted of a coordinator/social worker, social worker, administrator, two careworkers, a half-day cook and a religious brother in training. Table 4.1 indicates the changing roles and turnover of staff as these have directly impacted on intervention with the youth.

**Table 3.1 The history of the staff complement of the hostel**

|      | Director<br>/Coord-<br>inator | Social<br>Worker           | Admini<br>Strator/li<br>feskill | Care<br>Worker                     | Care<br>Worker            | 1/2 Cook | Relig.<br>Brother | Volunt./<br>SW<br>Student |
|------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1991 | Fr Declan                     |                            |                                 | Reggie                             |                           |          |                   | Potiphar<br>(sw)          |
| 1992 | Fr Declan                     |                            |                                 | Reggie                             | Potiphar                  |          |                   | Shane                     |
| 1993 | Fr Declan                     | Luann                      |                                 | Reggie                             | James                     |          | Paul              | Shane                     |
| 1994 | Fr Declan                     | Luann                      |                                 | Reggie                             | James                     | Lulu     | Jonathan          |                           |
| 1995 | Fr Declan                     | Luann                      |                                 | Reggie                             | James                     | Lulu     | Phillip           | Jann (sw)                 |
| 1996 | Fr Declan                     | Luann                      |                                 | Reggie                             | James                     | Nondima  |                   | Peter                     |
| 1997 | Fr Declan/<br>Sarah—          | Sarah                      | Gillian<br>(June)               | Reggie                             | Lufefe<br>(Oct)<br>Phumla | Nondima  | Vincent           | Lizette<br>(sw)<br>Edwin  |
| 1998 | (Jan)<br>Sarah—               | Sarah/<br>Elanza<br>(July) | Gillian                         | Reggie<br>(April)<br>Alex<br>(Nov) | Phumla                    | Nondima  | Kizito<br>Pawel   |                           |
| 1999 | Sarah/<br>Potiphar<br>(April) | Elanza<br>(left Feb)       | Gillian                         | George<br>(March)                  | Phumla                    | Nondima  | Kizito            |                           |

The hostel is on the third floor of a four-storey building owned by the religious order, with basic but adequate and very well maintained facilities. The youth are accommodated in a subdivided dormitory of three areas – with some of the best views in the city. Each youth has his own bed, locker, linen and clothing. There

is a large recreational room, study and dining room, supplemented by a very large tarred yard and access to several sports facilities. The building is situated in one of the least safe areas of the city, with a high crime rate, drug trade and many homeless people.

The hostel has always provided assistance to youth on two levels. The first level is emergency accommodation. It is offered to youth whose immediate crisis may be resolved e.g. A runaway due to family conflict, or a medical emergency that needs to recover before returning to the streets. Recently this service has been limited to 5% of the youth living in the hostel at a time and for the intervention to last 2 weeks at most. The time limit and criteria for admission have been instituted to protect the integrity of the intake process and the dynamics amongst the youth. Interestingly the time period, method and purpose reflects the NASW model discussed in the literature review.

The second level and core business of the hostel is assisting youth to leave the streets. Until 1998 these two levels were ill defined, and frequently youth with a variety of difficulties moved from emergency care into long term intervention. This research will focus on the core programme, as this is the target client group.

### **Cape Town's street population and the services available**

In 1996 a survey completed by the street workers of the Salesian Institute and the Homestead, indicated that there are 100 male and 44 female youth between the ages of 16 and 30 years old sleeping on the streets of the Cape Town Central Business District (an area including Greenpoint, Tamboerskloof, Vredehoek, Central, Zonnebloem, Bo-Kaap and Sea Point) (Child and Youth Care 1996). In addition to the 144 youth counted, 98 under sixteens were counted and 194 over thirties. This indicates a population of 659 street people in the greater Cape Town CBD area. While this geographic area receives much attention from the public and non-governmental organisations, there are many more people living on the streets in the wider Cape Town metropolitan area, both in their communities of

origin as well as in local business areas.

In the Western Cape all intervention with people living on the streets is undertaken by the non-government sector, with the state providing financial support through a system of subsidies. Service provision with the whole population of street people in Cape Town (i.e. children, youth and adults) draws strongly on the rehabilitative approach to intervention, as discussed in the literature review. There are three organisations that are exceptions. One supports women on the streets using an outreach framework. The other, works with children and youth and takes a preventive approach, but strives to return the children as quickly as possible to their communities of origin. The third takes an independent advocacy approach with no service delivery. There is much conflict between these organisations and the collective – largely over philosophical differences and splitting that sometimes occurs when clients play off the differing organisations against each other.

The services for street youth in Cape Town are limited. In addition to the Salesian's Sixteen Plus outreach, Women in Need support the women with the difficulties of living on the streets. Streets includes street youth under 21 in their drop-in training centre and streetwork initiatives for children. There are three residential projects working with destitute youth in the greater Cape Town area. Beth Uriel in Woodstock focuses on destitute youth who have barely spent time on the streets, usually have high school education and who are encouraged to attend tertiary education. Percy Bartley House, also in Woodstock, draws youth through their projects on the Cape Flats and tends to look for youth that are able to attend school. When reshaping Don Bosco Hostel it was clear that there was a need for a service for young men who would be unable to fit into such structured, stable environments and who were based in the Cape Town area. This was also the group with whom the hostel, outreach programme and education programme had the most contact.

Thus when the hostel was challenged by Sixteen Plus's need for a residential programme to assist youth who had made a decision to leave the streets during the Wilderness Therapy camp, this gap in service was noted. Don Bosco Hostel decided to focus on the youth that had been on the streets for years, who had potential to engage with a change process and who had made a choice to leave the streets. It was decided that assisting runaways over extended periods was counterproductive and damaging to these youth, who usually have access to alternative resources or may return home if not rescued. This distinction was made in 1998, as previously it had been believed that the sooner one was able to draw a young man off the street—the better the prognosis.

To gain a wider perspective, it is also useful to consider the facilities for street children and street adults in the area. The children are serviced by organisations affiliated to the Western Cape Street Children's Forum and work together to provide a stratified, differentiated system of care for the children including: outreach/street work; soup kitchens; drop-in centres; home schools; shelters and second phase children's homes. These organisations use the Forum's principles as discussed in the literature review and particularly value self-referral and open door policies. Cape Town's services for street children will only admit children under the age of sixteen, although they will continue to care for the child until the age of 18 and sometimes beyond this if the youth is progressing well.

The adults are serviced by soup kitchens, shelters, low cost accommodation, skills training and employment schemes. Although separate services are needed for youth, it is appropriate that these operate in conjunction with the services for children and adults, as the population living on the streets is a complex community who relate across ages.

### **The National and Provincial political context**

South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 led to the challenge of applying the National Convention on Rights of the Child to the Child and Youth Care and

the Criminal Justice systems. As children at risk, street children and street youth are frequently drawn into the Child and Youth Care System and the Department of Justice through referral, through being declared in need of care in terms of the Child Care Act no 74 of 1983 or through arrest in a criminal matter.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee of Youth at Risk (IMC) was launched in June 1994 to establish a national programme of action to improve the welfare of South African children, leading to dramatic changes in policy and procedure within the child care system. The initial reports condemned the practices of some state and private childcare facilities for the inappropriate institutionalisation of children, the inadequate facilities, insufficient involvement with families and communities and the lack of intervention programmes in the institutions.

The key paradigm shift in the Child and Youth Care system is the move away from the medical model which focuses on weaknesses, categorizing, labeling, helping and curing, towards a developmental ecological perspective which focuses on reframing problems into strengths, understanding and recognising ecological systems around the child, competency building and environments which empower (IMC 1996: 57).

The new policies and structures aim to promote family empowerment through a developmental and ecological perspective. Prevention and early intervention through developing the family's capacity to cope with internal and external stressors, have become the focus of the new policy framework. Only where the family's capacity is seen as inadequate for supporting the child and a stringent assessment process has been completed, will the child be declared 'in need of care' according to the Child Care Act (no 74 of 1983). The IMC documents have also outlined clear guidelines for residential care facilities where family and community reintegration is stressed (IMC: 1998).

The IMC's recommendations (1996) for the criminal justice system for youth arrested, charged or sentenced include an emphasis on a restorative model of justice, family involvement in decision making and diversion options. Guidelines for arrest, detention and sentencing have also been made.

National policy regarding street children is seen to be provided in the IMC recommendations. In the Western Cape the Provincial Administration headed a process of applying these principles to street children in the region through the development of a provincial policy document, followed by a provincial action plan. The provincial policy was passed in December 1997 and emphasises prevention, family involvement, deinstitutionalisation and the development of creative intervention strategies. The provincial policy document will grow in significance as the action plan is implemented and as the process of granting government subsidies is guided by the priorities of the policy (Western Cape Provincial Government 1997).

### **In conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the reader to the hostel's history, context and work. It has also briefly outlined the sector working with street children and street youth in Cape Town, and painted a brief sketch of the changes in policy. The changes within both the criminal justice system and the Child and Youth Care system are significant for children and youth living on the street. Once these measures have been appropriately implemented it is likely that many children will be prevented from leaving home to live on the streets through: earlier family intervention within the community, more careful assessment and planning processes prior to the removal of a child; improved children's facilities and the prevention of children being kept in prison. The repeated traumatisation of a child through poor parenting, unprepared removal, abusive children's homes and jail, lead children to distrust adults to the point of choosing to live on the street. As discussed in the literature review, forty-five per cent of street children have spent significant time in institutions. This context also develops our understanding of the youth in the hostel as they have grown up in an environment where their rights have been frequently violated. Finally, the IMC recommendations boosted the decision to develop the operating philosophy and principles within the hostel, to move it to a point where it would be in line with national initiatives.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research design and methodology**

Over the nine years, the hostel has moved through phases in terms of its philosophy, principles, focus and target client group. These developed as the staff's understanding of the youth grew, lessons were learned and resources extended – and as the programme attempted to respond to the youth's needs. Through documenting these lessons, this study intends to consider the five suppositions listed in the introduction. Briefly there are: a) the benefits of the provision of shelter and stability, b) the importance of reflecting on the youth's developmental tasks, c) the involvement of the youth in the programme, d) the use of group dynamics as a tool and e) the process that the youth move through when leaving the streets. The writer has chosen to particularly examine the intervention from 1994 to 1997, and from 1998 to 1999, believing that by contrasting these two very different philosophies of intervention, the five suppositions may be profitably examined.

In order to understand the interventions of the hostel during these two periods, the key aspects of life in Don Bosco Hostel are distilled by examining: 1) the operating philosophy that guided the intervention, 2) the intervention or operating principles which determined the day to day activities and engagement with the youth, and 3) the patterns of behaviour and growth of the youth, during each phase. In order to achieve this, Don Bosco Hostel's operating philosophy and operating principles are identified through a scrutiny of a variety of historical documents. The patterns of behaviour and growth of the youth during the two periods, are assessed using participant observation.

This chapter first examines the research context, discusses the research design and methodology, issues of validity and reliability, and finally, the operationalised definitions.

#### **The obstacles in designing the research**

The research needed to be designed to accommodate a number of obstacles such as the experimental nature of the change in the hostel, the changes in client group and the level of anxiety within the hostel due to the changes.

The staff of the hostel entered the process of change with a rough map of how they thought the shift in operating principles would impact on the life of the hostel community. The plans had to be frequently adjusted when the initial strategy did not work. The lack of clarity around the destination of the transition process, necessitated an inductive form of research, 'begin(ning) with specific observations of actual events or things upon which inferences of theories or adjustments were built' (Smith 1988: 103).

The experiences in the hostel over these years were extremely rich and full, and created by a whole range of youth, staff, incidents and mishaps. It is impossible to track this rich data in sufficient detail to show the interrelationships, the impact of individuals and direct effect of each principle or philosophy on the group. It was unfeasible to hold variables steady due to changes in the type of youth, the intake criteria, the lengths of stay in the hostel and the intake process between the two periods under examination. The high turnover of staff meant that few of the current staff experienced the previous intervention framework, and the limited formal training amongst the staff led to diverse frames of reference. In addition to all this, it was essential that any collection of data occurred as unobtrusively as possible, as both youth and staff were at times suspicious and resistant to the process of change. It was likely that obtrusive data collection would have increased the levels of anxiety and allowed inappropriate ventilation. As very little has been written about residential interventions with South African street youth, there was very little for the researcher to build upon.

### **The research approach**

As a reflection on the inductive process of change within the hostel, uncontrollable variables and the very limited previous research, the researcher

chose a qualitative and explorative approach with the purpose of generating hypotheses. Grinnell and Stothers (1988: 225) comment that in using a qualitative approach, 'we only want to build a foundation of general ideas and tentative theories which can be explored later with more precise and hence more complex research designs and corresponding methodologies'.

The researcher chose to explore the broad process, rather than the finer details, believing this to be essential to create a context for what was learned in the process. In order to document the richness in practice experience, the areas of learning and the responses of the youth to the operating principles; the research design needed to be sufficiently open to explore data at a variety of levels, across changing variables within a small, unique community. The nature of the study also precluded a sampling process. For both these reasons, the results cannot be generalised beyond this hostel community. These demands recommend an exploratory study.

Exploratory studies are distinguished by their flexibility. Since they do not focus on verification, but rather on generating ideas that can be verified later, they have a wider latitude in the methodologies they employ -- often keeping their options open so as to maximise opportunities for observation and interpretation (Rubin 1988: 328).

At this stage of knowledge, the exploratory approach is appropriate as the intent is to gather observations and information, not to make any links or infer causality (Grinnell & Stothers 1988).

### **The research design**

This study may be described as a single subject research design where two interventions are observed and described. Nelson (1988) discusses one type of single subject research design as AB – where the situation/behaviour is observed, measured and understood during a baseline phase before the intervention is implemented (A). Then intervention is implemented and the situation/behaviour is again observed and measured during the intervention phase (B). Whilst the writer draws on this model, she would prefer to refer to the two phases as intervention 1 (B) and intervention 2 (C) to acknowledge that two forms of

intervention are discussed and that the baseline measurements are unavailable. This combines the AB approach with the successive interventions design described as ABC as discussed by Nelson (1988: 369 – 371).

The indispensable feature of single-subject research design is the repetitive objective measurements of the dependent variable or the client's target problem. The successive intervention model reminds us that change may not be due to the application of intervention C, but rather due to intervention B + intervention C.

The study explores the operating principles and the hostel community's experiences in two phases – 1994 -1997 (B) and 1998-1999 (C). It uses the analysis of the internal documents to elicit the key operating principles of both periods and participant observation to document the behaviour of the youth, again of both periods. As the phases should approximately cover the same length of time, the observations of the impact of phase B upon the youth will be made from 1997 to 1998. However documents from the full period needed to be processed in order to develop a solid understanding of the operating principles and philosophy of hostel system.

The challenge of this design is that 'a simple description of an intervention used to alleviate a client's problem, followed by a description of the result does not constitute a single subject research study. We need to monitor our exact use of the intervention and to be as precise as possible about the level of intervention and to be as precise as possible about the level of the client's target problem before and after the intervention was implemented' (Nelson 1988: 370). In order to meet these criteria as far as possible, the interventions in the B and C phases are operationalised through the identification of operating principles. The writer acknowledges the impossibility of reducing a complex philosophy as well as the impact of organisational culture, into five or six principles.

The behaviour and progress of the youth are described using participant

observation. Again, due to the inductive quality of this study, this behaviour cannot be measured but rather relies on description of the achievement of 1) the transition from adolescence to young adulthood and 2) the transition from the street lifestyle to mainstream living. This information is gleaned through participant observation from the writer's role as co-ordinator in the hostel, and the review of hostel documents and basic statistics. Similarly, it is impossible to monitor the full responses of the individual youth through participant observation. Thus the experience of the group was observed.

## **Methods of data collection**

### **Historical document analysis**

Before 1998, the operating philosophy had only been formally outlined within the broad framework of the religious order that directed the hostel. Within this order, intervention with youth was supposed to be carried out in the framework and philosophy of their founder - 'a system based entirely on reason, religion and kindness' (St John Bosco 1877: 247). However as fundamental principles were not reflected in the hostel, the writer decided not to rely on the order's philosophy as a starting point – preferring to reflect on the records and reports. An example of the contrasts between the order's philosophy and practice may be seen in the founders' writing, where he discusses the basic operating principles: (the) 'preventive system... consists in making the laws and regulations of an institute known' as a fundamental tool in work with youth (St John Bosco 1877: 247). However, at the time of the writer's appointment, rules had not been written down and were essentially held by the staff, with the youth having a sense of the acceptable norms but not the specific rules. This allowed the staff to manipulate the application of the rules to the specific needs of the situation.

Thus the researcher had to look at documents, pamphlets, seminar documents and the operating procedures to develop a sense of the operating principles – both more informally when she was employed at the hostel, and later when she was undertaking this research. The operating philosophy and principles had up to this

time been assumed and “in the head” of the previous director who was also a member of the religious order. The presuppositions and values guiding the operating principles are contained in a variety of documents that were hidden in a selection of filing cabinets, drawers and shelves. Although the hostel has a short history, it is likely that documents have either not been located or have been lost.

The documents which were available for analysis included: client files, social worker's half yearly reports, annual reports (1995 – 1999), evaluation and planning seminar documents, the social worker's commentary/proposal reports, social work student reports, hostel evaluation documents, hostel applications for state funding, staff meeting minutes, daily critical incident reports, the director's diary, the co-ordinator's evaluation reports, the co-ordinator's monthly reports for the religious community and the co-ordinator's quarterly reports to the board.

The writer first had to choose which documents to process and then develop a framework to analyse them. It was decided that the same process of analysis would be developed for the “historical” documents in which the writer was not involved, as well as those in which she was involved in writing in conjunction with others for purposes other than this research.

The process of analysing the documents involved the writer moving through a series of steps. Stuart (1988) lists these as: choosing a research question, gathering evidence, determining what the evidence means and writing the report. In particular, Stuart alerted the writer to the need to select material carefully, to check for internal and external validity, to set up a framework for analysing the documents and finally, to interact with the material to develop an understanding.

Each document was read checking for internal and external validity. The writer excluded documents written by social work students and brief visitors as these seemed to reflect different view points and contain a different culture to the other documents and indeed reflected a more distanced and possibly a more academic

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view of the hostel. This led to questions of the external validity of these documents, as perhaps these writers were not sufficiently integrated into the hostel life or into social work practice as a whole. Thus the documents that were included in the study were written by the director, social worker (and later co-ordinator), other staff members and external consultants evaluating the programme.

Documents were also examined in terms of internal validity -- whether the ideas were consistent, and harmonious with the rest of the information. The danger in using documents written by staff members and excluding the students' studies, lies in the possible bias of documents written by the staff where they are too close and have an inherent need to reflect on the successes and disregard the weaknesses or areas of concern. In addition, one is not certain whether the writers' are describing a reality that they would like to see, e.g. fundraising pamphlet, rather than the realities of practice. The writer therefore attempts to use a variety of documents written by different authors.

For the earlier phase (B), the study draws on state funding applications written by the director, the social worker's half yearly and commentary reports, pamphlets, public relations material and then a planning and evaluation process written up by an outside seminar facilitator drawing on the comments of the staff together.

The later phase (C) is more difficult as most documents were written by the writer/co-ordinator, or by a combined group of staff, as in an evaluation. Here the writer drew on the co-ordinator's evaluation of 1997, the co-ordinator's quarterly reports, the co-ordinator's recommendations of 1998 and the staff team's evaluation in 1998 and 1999. These documents were written before the writer had planned the research and were strengthened by a process independent of the research, where she was promoting dialogue and developing staff ownership of the changes in the hostel. Therefore all the documents were compiled after discussion, and the Learn to Live and Sixteen Plus co-ordinators, director and

hostel staff members were asked to read, comment and assist in amending what were essentially discussion documents. The documents used in the analysis are the accepted editions that have gone through this process. The director, who had been active in the hostel life prior to the co-ordinator's appointment, accepted these comments and recommendations. The challenges to this process are that the director and co-ordinators understood the hostel through the perspective of the hostel co-ordinator, as she was the key source of information, and the staff members may have concurred due to her role of authority and her assertiveness.

The writer examined each document for clues of the philosophical principles as noted in value comments, goals, strategies and intentions that guided the hostel's operation. She searched particularly for these to be operationalised into operating principles that described the manner of operation. In particular, evaluatory comments, which discussed the progress of the youth, were highlighted, both to garner the operational principles and to indicate that which was seen as a recipe for success.

When searching through the documents the writer sought answers to the following questions: "what is the operating philosophy guiding the hostel staff in the period reflected in the document?", "what are the operating principles of this period?" and "what are the results of these operating principles as discussed in the documents in terms of behavioural trends amongst the youth?".

In seeking to answers these questions, the writer extracted the sections that refer to the philosophy, operating principles and results, and placed these notes in chronological order. These were compiled into quotations of the phrases that referred to the philosophy, principle or results, and reflected the context and author of the extract. These quotations were then considered in a process of synthesis, where the writer attempted to elicit the philosophy, principles and results from the extracts by examining them together in chronological orders.

After extracting these comments, she placed these into chronological phases and developed a sense of the meanings of the comments by engaging with the material – drawing on her knowledge of how the hostel is run daily, the attitudes/opinions and guidance of the older staff members, youth and members of the religious order. The results of the synthesis are conveyed in chapters five and six.

### **Participant observation**

Just as a historical/document analysis was used to establish the operating principles, participant observation methodology was used to record the experiences of the youth community. Ennew (1994) writes of the usefulness of participant observation and structured observation when researching street children.

It consists of essentially unstructured observations, made through being in the company of children and recorded afterwards, usually in diary form. These observations are systematic in that the focus may be on certain events or people, or at certain places or particular times. Usually the diary record begins by recording everything that occurs and then gradually begins to concentrate on particular regularities or unusual occurrences (61).

There are a number of ways in which observations can be structured to answer questions or test hypotheses that have arisen from participant observation (63).

The writer was involved in the staff process of evaluating and attempting to understand the youth's reactions to the changes in the programme. This was the centre of staff discussion, during the handover sessions where a careworker was orientated or debriefed in either going off or coming on duty, at staff meetings, at staff evaluation discussions, in staff supervision with the co-ordinator, in management meetings with the other co-ordinators, and between the co-ordinator and her external consultant.

The purpose of the participant observation process is to describe the behaviour, development and dynamics of each cohort of youth. The scope of this study allows only a brief general description of key themes and dynamics. In order to

organise the vast span of information, the writer has focused on each cohort in chronological order, where she initially describes the broad experience of the group, followed by a more focused evaluation of the group's achievement of the tasks of adolescence as highlighted by Erikson (1950), Blos (1962) and Piaget (1977). The writer will conclude her discussion of each cohort by reviewing the responses of each cohort to the programme.

Van der Burgh (1988: 64) draws on Taylor, Bodan & Ackrody, and Hughs to define participant observation as: 'a method or strategy which involves social interaction between the researcher and those being studied in the milieu/environment of the latter, during which data are systematically and unobtrusively collected. This data collection involves a number of activities including looking, listening, enquiring, and recording'. He later relates Schatzman and Struass's definition where 'the researcher participates either openly or covertly in the daily lives/everyday social world of the people under study'... to 'observe the people and their activity (and perhaps even participate in this activity), listen to the symbolic sounds that will make meaningful much of this activity, record his experiences and analyse them and validate his new understanding'.

The management system and the hostel staff were both aware of the research process, although this was rarely discussed as the team was managing so many other challenges at the time. In October 1997, at the time of asking the staff's permission, the writer discussed her intention to undertake research involving participant observation. The youth were also made aware of the participant observation process, which largely did not interest them. The research process was also discussed when the co-ordinator inducted new staff members and youth. However in this period, neither staff or youth were particularly interested in the research and this allowed the writer to continue with little difficulty. It was only in 1999 that it was clear that the document analysis was an important facet and was integrated into the research design.

Van der Burgh (1988) highlights that the process of recording the data gained during the process of participant observation is central to the research. The researcher needs to choose a method of recording that is concise, concrete, accurate and detailed. It needs to be undertaken with care and self awareness and decisions need to be made as to what should be recorded, how it should be recorded and when. He refers to Taylor and Bogdan who indicate that the notes should 'include comprehensive description of people, events, and conversations in the setting as well as a record of the observer's action, feelings and hunches or working hypotheses' (72).

The writer wrote brief notes about her observations linked to the suppositions discussed above. Initially, in the desire to record the richness of the experience as well as offer an initial three-dimensional account of the change, the writer attempted to track a wide variety of themes and developments, noting the most apparent dynamics of each phase. The writer made notes prior to her weekly or bi-weekly meeting with her external practice consultant/supervisor, as a process of preparing for this meeting as well as contributing to this research process. In the notes she described the climate of the hostel community, the key events of the week, the areas of concern, the areas of growth and her own hypotheses regarding the suppositions with descriptions of what had led to the development of these hypotheses. The writer looked for signs of the accomplishment of developmental tasks, the preparation for independence in the mainstream community, trends amongst the youth as cohorts moved in or out, areas where there seemed to be difficulty and areas where there seemed to be progress. The writer attempted to track themes and experiences shared by the residents, rather than focus on individual movements; although the experiences of individuals were useful in illustrating common themes.

Even in 1997, when the old programme was in place, the staff was speaking about what was going wrong, what could be done and where were the areas of concern.

As co-ordinator, the writer wrote up these staff observations along with her own observations on a weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis – and included these observations in her research notes. Thus the writer's perceptions were developed through her understandings of other staff members' insights. This process offers some triangulation of the data, however the observations remain largely subjective as they were undertaken by people engaged in the project.

### **The process of the analysis of the data**

A content analysis is used, where in analysing the historical data the writer worked through chronologically ordered quotations from the documents to develop a sense of the underlying philosophy and to operationalise this into operating principles that embraced all the common tenets of day to day life in the hostel. The observations of the youth were used by reviewing the notes to draw the trends and experiences into descriptions of behaviours shared by the majority of youth. These were then ordered to form a logical description of the cohort.

The writer then considered the observations within the framework of the operating philosophy and operating principles of the two periods, to reflect on the suppositions that had been made through practice experience. A second process of analysis was used where data were reconsidered, searching for disconfirmatory results (Skinner & Van der Walt 1997).

### **Issues of the validity and reliability of the research**

The greatest challenge to reliability within this study is the subjective nature of the change within the hostel and the data collection process. The researcher was not only the change agent within this setting, but also an authority figure for both youth and staff. The suppositions of the research were drawn from her practice experience, which then drove the change process within the hostel. The writer then draws on data collection methods that rely on subjective assessment, from which to consider the suppositions. Conversely the method of research allowed a review of experience in the hostel through the most intimate and natural of

In considering the reliability of the study the researcher is charged with checking whether the study is measuring what it has set out to measure. The reliability of the results of document analysis seems to be strong. Not only are the documents available for scrutiny by others and key documents included in the appendices, but the documents hold similar themes across the authors. These documents were also written in a context of discussion and debate with colleagues working in the same setting. The observation of the youth however cannot be repeated or validated, and had to reduce complex individual and group dynamics into basic themes – when the neither the group or the individuals were fully understood. The notes could be further scrutinised by future researchers, but the complex assessments of what was being observed could not. A further concern is the cultural bias within the study. The youth were viewed from the perspective of a female, white, middle class social worker. The assessments of the level accomplishment of the tasks of adolescence were made from a middle-class, western framework, drawing on American theories.

The observations of the last two cohorts are particularly weak, as the writer had left the hostel before they were admitted. Therefore her observations were made during visits and through discussions with her colleagues.

### **Definition of terms**

This research will use the definitions of street child, street youth, shelter, streetwork and drop-in centre that are accepted by the Cape Town service providers in the Western Cape Street Children's Forum, an informal networking body linking role players working with street children.

*Street youth* are 'men or women over the age of 16 and under the age of 25 years who, for a variety of reasons find him or herself on the streets of the city' (Child and Youth Care 1996: 11). In terms of this study, a street youth sleeps, socialises, eats and subsists in the context of the city's streets and business district.

*13*

A *street child* is identified as 'a person under the age of eighteen, unless otherwise stated, who for a variety of reasons leaves his/her family and community to survive on the streets of the city and is inadequately cared for and protected by responsible adults' (Child and Youth Care 1996: 11). The writer notes that this definition technically excludes children who have run away from Places of Safety, children's homes, foster care as well as those children whose carers may have disappeared, and who are therefore living on the street. While this does not impact on the use of this definition in the research, the writer would like to include these latter children in the definition. MB

The researcher notes that these two definitions are not mutually exclusive in that a youth who is sixteen or seventeen may be included as a child, but this does not impact upon the process of the study.

*Strolling* is the term used by street people in Cape Town for leaving the family of origin, to live on the streets of the business district by *aanklop* (asking for money), scrounging for food and living by one's wits. This verb is expounded into a noun – a *stroller* is one who engages in strolling (Parker Lewis 1998).

A *shelter* 'is an open door facility providing residential care, social work services, and opportunities for education and training to self-referred children/youth living on the streets' (Child and Youth Care 1996: 11).

A *drop in centre* 'provides on a regular basis basic services to children/ youth still living on the streets. These would include access to food, clothes, ablution facilities, basic first aid, education and recreational opportunities' (Child and Youth Care 1996: 11).

*Street work* 'provides an opportunity for contact, relationship building, monitoring and advocacy with children and youth still living on the streets. Dissemination of information on available resources is an important function'

(Child and Youth Care 1996: 11).

*Children's Homes* 'are second stage facilities for children referred from shelters who are settled enough to return to formal school or training programmes' (Child and Youth Care 1996: 11).

*Adolescence* is a developmental phase which 'will connote the growth that occurs between childhood and adulthood, which can be divided into the sub-phases of prepuberty and early and late puberty' (Kimmel & Weiner 1994: 18). This study reflects on late adolescence, particularly the psycho-social developmental tasks that a person needs to achieve to move from childhood to young adulthood. 'It is the degree of co-ordination and integration of ego functions, old and new, that spells out the completion of any developmental stage' (Blos 1962).

*Young adulthood* is the developmental phase following late adolescence or late puberty, at which time the person is able to engage with the adult world and adult responsibilities, having integrated the tasks of adolescence and other childhood developmental phases. Erikson (1950) views this phase in a person's life as pre-occupied with achieving intimacy and a sense of belonging in society.

The *operating philosophy* describes the assumptions, strategies and informal theories used to guide the design of the intervention process. This philosophy encompasses the philosophical approach to intervention and informs how it is believed the goals of the programme may best be reached, thereby guiding decision making in areas where policies or principles have not yet been debated or in the many grey areas of complex community-individual life.

The *operating principles* are the components of the intervention programme which operationalise the operating philosophy and which are used to assist the youth move from the streets. The operating principles are more concrete and

operationalise the philosophy, bringing this into the everyday realm through describing what is done to achieve the goals.

The term *cohort* is used to describe a group of youth who moved through the hostel programme together as a group at the same time. These youth are prepared, admitted and discharged together. This definition will include the group of youth who were living in the hostel in January 1997 who although did not enter together, shared a common experience of the hostel at that time.

For ease of discussion these cohorts are named using the time when each group was first scrutinised by the study. Therefore the cohorts are as follows:

- *January 1997* – the youth community resident in 1997 and before, but observed from January 1997 to March 1998
- *April 1998* – the youth who were part of the January 1997 cohort who returned to engage with the new programme and who left the hostel in March 1999
- *June 1998* – the first group selected from the streets who have experienced seventeen months of the eighteen month programme
- *April 1999* – the second group selected from the streets who have experienced the first six months of the eighteen month programme
- *July 1999* – the third group selected from the streets who have experienced the first two-and-a-half months of their eighteen month programme

A *developmental* approach 'refers mainly to a focus on strengths rather than pathology, to building competency rather than attempting to cure, and a strong belief in the potential within each child and family regardless of the reason for referral. This term also implies the necessary momentum in any intervention which moves clients towards healthy function and reintegration rather than providing them with static' (IMC 1996: 4).

### **In conclusion**

Through documenting the operating philosophy, operating principles and the experiences of the youth during these periods, the writer wishes to consider the suppositions that guided the practice and bear witness to a complex and exhilarating growth experience for all involved.

The research is qualitative and uses an exploratory design to explore the five suppositions of the study. It seeks to gain access to complex interactions and processes, through identifying the philosophy, the key aspects of intervention and the responses of the youth during two periods – one where Don Bosco Hostel could be described as a “home” and another when the hostel could be described as a “school of life”. The writer recognises that these summaries of the interventions and experiences can only hint at what happened, but believes that these comments may guide future intervention and initiate further research.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Life in Don Bosco Hostel from 1994 to 1997**

#### **A review of the operating philosophy and principles, and a discussion of patterns observed amongst the youth**

Although Don Bosco Hostel started as a shelter in 1991, meeting only the most basic needs of street youth, it evolved naturally into a home due to the caring and honest relationship between the staff and the youth. The core years of Don Bosco "Home" were between 1994 and 1997. This chapter seeks to briefly record: the transition from shelter to home, the philosophy of the "home", the core operating principles and finally, the patterns observed amongst the youth in 1997. The philosophy and operating principles were consolidated over this period but never recorded in a cohesive structure. The researcher has reviewed the internal and external documents written by hostel staff members and consultants between 1994 and 1997, to extract the core elements. The trends and dynamics amongst the youth were drawn through participant observation of the cohort who experienced the consolidated version of the Don Bosco "Home" through living in the hostel in 1997, as discussed in chapter five. By reviewing the hostel philosophy, operating principles and the youth's patterns of behaviour during this period, inferences may be made which will assist the consideration of the study's suppositions.

#### **The early days of Don Bosco Hostel**

The hostel opened in 1991 as a shelter for male street youth, particularly for those who were attending the skills workshops. Self-referred youth were accepted directly from the streets to be assisted with basic accommodation and food, with some advice if necessary. At this stage the youth tended to move in and out of the hostel for a few months – often returning to the streets permanently. A group of youth did stay, and the shelter staff began to parent more and more actively, leading to the development of a children's home (Scott 1993).

During 1992 the hostel felt that there was a growing need for a more structured and goal orientated intervention programme to assist individual residents. Don Bosco Hostel grew

into more of a residential setting and in 1993 sought the services of a social worker in order to provide more therapeutic intervention for youth living in the hostel (Scott 1995a: sec 6).

The staff worked within this framework, trying different types of intervention. These were consolidated into a programme that, although not formalised, operated between 1994 and 1997.

(Appendix A includes a description of the writer's experience of youth that had been resident before 1996. During 1997 and 1998 these youth were very strongly bonded to the hostel, in almost a form of symbiosis, where they did not experience a strong boundary between themselves and the hostel staff. The youth had almost amazing expectations of the staff in their demands for favours, for colluding against the police and in their ownership of the hostel space.)

#### **The philosophy of the hostel between 1994 and 1997**

Particularly during the early years the hostel drew on the broader philosophy of the Salesian Institute and the Salesian Order, as the director was a Salesian priest. The writings and example of the Salesian's founder Don John Bosco, who worked with street youth in Turin, Italy in the mid-eighteenth century, guide this philosophy. Essentially he writes of the need to balance the use of reason, religion and kindness to guide the youth. The writings prescribe a particularly striking relationship between the youth and the adult, which is respectful and collaborative, with a good dose of fun and care (Van Looy *et al* 1992).

The approach of the hostel could be described as rehabilitative in terms of Lusk's model (1989) as discussed in the literature review. In this model the children and youth are seen as victims of abuse, neglect, extreme poverty and domestic disorganisation. This model recognises that the child or youth may have some emotional difficulties and skill deficiencies and therefore intervention involves moving the child or youth through a series of programmes with the goal of reintegrating the individual with society.

At the core of the hostel's philosophy during this period was a belief that the clients were children who were victims of an unjust society who needed help to move from their situations. It was believed that through meeting the youth's basic needs within a context of caring, structured and dignified relationships with adults, they would be able to become independent. This philosophy becomes apparent in the documents written at this time and clearer as the programme is consolidated.

In 1994 a mission statement was developed for the Institute that includes a commitment to:

to the physical, educational and spiritual needs of *street children* (1994) [and older youth (1995-1997)] frequenting the City Bowl area of Cape Town.... We seek to be sensitive to the changing times and circumstances of the abandoned youth of Cape Town in the firm belief and hope that our Christian style of life and values are the backbone of our outreach. We wish to create an open, welcoming community that values the *child* without regard to race, colour or creed...we seek to bring a measure of hope and a message of love to the disadvantaged youth of Cape Town. (Salesian Institute annual reports 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997). (Writer's italics & square brackets)

In many subtle ways the hostel tended to view the youth as children and victims who needed to be rescued from street life as they had few resources. The signboard to the hostel spoke of the "boys" hostel, the fundraising pamphlet indicates that the hostel 'offers shelter and care to needy youth who are too old for admittance into *other children's* shelters' (Salesian Mission Office 1994 [writer's italics]). The youth were encouraged to return to reconstructed families, many attended schools with much younger children, and even the director's title was coincidentally, "Father".

With the employment of the social worker and the decision to structure the hostel around more clearly therapeutic activities, the staff worked through a series of three workshops with outside facilitators to: develop a strategic planning process, identify the philosophy and outline the operating principles. The first, held in February 1994, outlined the key values, goals and tasks. This was then followed

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by a similar seminar in July 1994, where progress was evaluated. In the first document the following values were accepted amongst the staff to guide the work in the hostel:

That the hostel would provide an environment for the residents and staff that is based on trust, respect and acceptance for self and others, is non-judgmental, non-discriminatory, by race and/or sex, is underlined by unconditional love for the individual.

That it is an evolving living hostel that must aspire to the freedom of the individual, in terms of self-awareness, growth, understanding and spirituality, but maintain the accountability or discipline of group living.

That the hostel routine and programme must compliment the progress and development of the individual allowing for empowerment wherever feasible, to cope with life outside.

That communication, loyalty, friendship and humour between all involved is important in creating a transparent and open working environment for all (Keen *et al* 1994a: sec 1.2)

The philosophy of the hostel emphasised the importance of providing stability, care and love for the youth, hence making accommodation and the provision of basic needs the key elements of intervention. It was believed that stability would facilitate the reintegration of the youth into the mainstream society and the personal development of the individual. Within this approach the unit or focus of intervention was on the individual resident.

There was a strong emphasis on assisting the individual youth to recognise his special talents in order to develop self-esteem. From this has developed a system of contracting, counselling and mentorship as part of rehabilitation, as well as education, training and job placement. In 1994 a fundraising pamphlet was published which highlights the individual focus by listing the hostel goal as:

To empower street youth aged 16 and over to improve their lives, enabling them to discover a sense of their own dignity and self respect, while helping them to prepare for eventual independent living in society (Salesian Mission Office 1994:2).

The evolution in the development of the hostel's programme over the years has been driven by a conflict between the need to give stability through providing a home and the push for "rehabilitation" or a therapeutic programme which may lead to independence. This is reflected by the key goals identified by the staff during the annual staff planning workshop in 1995. These goals are:

- To offer youth 16 years and over, who live on the streets and are not catered for by any other agency, a place to live,
- To give the individual off the streets a sense of love and of belonging, the dignity of work and a sense of independent living (other than the hostel).
- To re-integrate these youth back into society, connect them back with their families and/or refer them to other agencies(Keen *et al* 1995:2).

#### **Operating principles between 1994 and 1997**

The hostel's philosophy is operationalised in the operating principles that guide the day to day interaction between the staff and residents and which form the foundation of the programme. The hostel initially developed using the principles of the street children's shelters, as at the time there were no other services for youth in the city or nationally. In 1994 the staff began a strategic planning process as discussed above which started with an evaluation of the services and an outline of "resident's needs" was developed, which were essentially staff tasks and became operating principles. Plans were implemented to achieve these goals and these were then evaluated and discussed in July 1994. The process was again followed up by subsequent planning workshop in October 1995.

As the goals and principles were somewhat diffuse, this study located different goals in different documents. By drawing together lists of the principles and then using documents evaluating progress, the writer attempts to establish the programme that was implemented.

The 1994 planning and evaluation documents, indicate that the hostel focused on

stabilising the youth most in need, through attracting and holding the youth in a mainstream environment with mainstream expectations. At the same time staff aimed to maintain empathy for the youth's experience that the streets were an attractive option. Thus the key components of the intervention programme included the provision of stable accommodation, informal or formal schooling, flexible expectations in terms of the youth's contribution to the hostel community and building, in order to promote stability and teach lifeskills (Keen *et al* 1994).

The staff outlined the issues that the hostel had to address in order to meet the residents' and staff's aspirations:

- To reduce the pull of the streets
- To continue to build up confidence in each resident by helping him cope with peer and other pressures
- To continue counselling for substance and alcohol abuse
- To network with other concerned community organisations to the benefit of the residents
- To encourage empowerment and to develop lifeskill
- To continue schooling and homework programmes
- To investigate possibilities of family contact
- To investigate conflict and stress reduction
- To evaluate skills training programme for work
- To develop talents and skills through hobbies and recreational activities
- To foster inner understanding or spirituality of self and others within the hostel
- To develop the embryonic volunteer programme (Keen *et al* 1994a: 2).

Seven goals were set from this list: the recruitment of volunteers, the development of a life-skills programme, the encouragement of schooling, the development of a therapeutic programme with individual plan setting for residents, the use of hostel group meetings, the organisation of recreation activities, and the facilitation of family contact.

In November 1995 the social worker compiled a report entitled Understanding the plan of action and substantiating the need for therapeutic intervention (Scott 1995a: 1). Here she outlined the hostel's goal as:

To empower street youth aged 16 plus to improve their lives allowing them to discover a sense of their own dignity, self respect, while helping them to prepare for eventual independent living.

We set out to do this through a number of clear objectives:

1. Lifeskills to enable more effective independent living
2. To facilitate meaningful family contact and reconstruction back into the family
3. To facilitate supervised recreational programmes for personal growth and development of residents
4. To maximise each resident's educational potential through education and skills training
5. To facilitate employment opportunities
6. Therapeutic intervention for the psychological development of residents through counselling, groupwork and social work intervention (Scott 1995a: 1 )

As one works through the documentation of this period of hostel life, it is possible to extract twelve operating principles which cover the intake process, the emphasis on stability, a lifeskill programme including participation in the undertaking of chores, mainstream schooling, group work, discipline and authority, individual intervention, a key work system, recreation, finding employment opportunities and contact with families. These are briefly described below.

### **Intake principles**

The hostel always tried to take in the youth who were most in need and had no where else to go. By providing accommodation, the hostel aimed to offer the youth an alternative to street life and believed it was assisting youth to take the first step to mainstream living or was preventing the youth from being enveloped by the street lifestyle (Keen *et al* 1994b).

It took the cue from the children's shelters in Cape Town in relying on self-referral and an open door policy where youth could come and go, as they were ready. Young men would arrive at the gate with the request to stay in the hostel. The social worker would interview them, assess the level of motivation, truth and

need. She would then recommend to the staff team whether the youth should be admitted. The criteria for acceptance were that the youth had to be between the ages of sixteen and twenty four, living on the streets of Cape Town, motivated to move from the street lifestyle, and have no other resources. Usually the only source of information was from the young man himself, although where possible the hostel demanded that the youth brought a parent to meet the social worker. Young men who had just become destitute were also included, believing that speedy intervention increased the chances for the youth to leave the streets. Gradually in 1994, more and more refugees were accepted and there were always a few youth that had arrived from the rural areas in search of family or work. (Scott 1994a).

#### **An emphasis on stability**

A key principle of intervention was the provision of a stable, secure and accepting environment. It was believed that the sense of stability would reduce the youth's level of anxiety, allowing him to engage with the process of adapting to mainstream expectations. The youth were welcomed into a home environment where, as long as they followed the rules, they knew that they would be supported and cared for. 'It is only once our residents have either gained technical skills or have been in stable employment that we encourage and assist them to move on to a more independent lifestyle where they are able to support themselves' (Hantane 1996: 1). All their needs were filled at no effort to themselves. Pocket money was provided weekly, transport costs covered, regular holidays to visit family in the Transkei, Port Elizabeth or Gauteng were paid for, school uniform was provided and replaced when lost. The youth shared the channel television connection with the religious community – requiring some patience if they wished to watch something different to the priests upstairs, on the subscription service (Scott 1994a).

#### **Participation in hostel chores**

One of the goals of the February 1994 planning process was to start a lifeskill

programme that involved teaching through involving youth in the hostel chores e.g. cooking.

It was agreed that for the residents to have a greater chance of surviving independently that an emphasis should be placed wherever practical on self-reliance... As a result the following goal was set: That Don Bosco Hostel will put in place an integrated on-going Life Skills programme to enable residents to handle more effectively the idea of independent living (Keen *et al* 1994a: 3.1.b).

There were a number of difficulties in the implementation of the lifeskill programme, which largely identified domestic tasks as the focus. These included the challenge of organising youth that were engaged in many different activities outside the home, to cook on time. There were also limitations imposed through being a part of a greater institutional context e.g. food was ordered for the entire Institute preventing the youth undertaking the shopping, laundry could not be collected from the communal laundromat (Keen *et al* 1994b). Employed youth were expected to contribute nominally to their expenses by paying a third of their wages towards board and lodging and also to save a similar amount (Heindl 1997).

### **Mainstream schooling**

Mainstream schooling was seen as a powerful tool to promote stability, with the belief that if the youth could adapt to the rules of the school, he was not only being prepared through education, but would gain social skills which would assist him to adapt to mainstream settings.

It was agreed that the schooling aspect of Don Bosco Hostel was working well with ten residents at full-time schooling and six at Learn to Live (informal school for children/youth in shelters run by the Institute). It was felt that this was excellent for learning discipline and social interaction. As a result the following goal was set: "That (the) hostel maximise each residents' educational potential by providing the opportunities to attend the most appropriate educational programme supported by an in-house homework programme (Keen *et al* 1994a: sec3.1.c).

Whilst these goals were sustained, the July 1994 document comments on 'the lack

of motivation and sustaining power of the youth is often problematic' and 'the financial burden the educational sector is placing on the hostel' (Keen *et al* 1994b: 5). Gradually as the hostel increased the proportion of youth coming from the black community, there are appeared to be a corresponding increase in youth attending school. 'Last year's school attendance of six, has jumped to a current school registration of thirteen...yet we need to work hard to teach the youth the discipline, dedication and focus that are required for school achievement'. (Salesian Annual Reports 1996/1997: 10). Five of the other youth at this time were attending informal schooling linked with skills training at Learn to Live.

### **Authority and discipline**

On entry, the youth were informed of four basic rules that involved curfew and meal times, weapons, theft, substance abuse and obeying staff members' instructions. These were not displayed and all other rules or norms were carried by the director and staff. Discipline and decision making were managed entirely by the director and staff. Although there was a disciplinary code which involved a process of a verbal, then written warning and then disciplinary hearing for repeated offences – following the conventions of labour practice in order to prepare youth for this aspect of life. These offences may not have been covered by the initial rules. Youth could appeal against a staff member's behaviour to the social worker, yet there were no guidelines that outlined what could be expected from a staff member. The director and the staff respectively, held the authority within the hostel and did not draw on the youth's own leadership (Heindl 1997). A set of norms did develop, which covered other concerns such as smoking areas, staying out, involvement in activities during the day etc. but these were not recorded (Scott 1995b, Crawford-Browne 1997b).

### **Groupwork**

The July 1994 seminar recommended further group work focusing on broader areas inclusive of sexuality, conflict management, assertiveness etc (Keen *et al* 1994b). At this time group meetings were used to foster communication between

the youth and the staff, and were facilitated by an outside volunteer psychologist. It appears that some groups were initiated but these seemed to not have been sustained over any length of time. A group focusing on drug and alcohol abuse continued through 1993. Hostel meetings were held through 1994, but seemed to become more sporadic in 1995 and phased out at the end of this year (Scott 1994b, 1995b).

In September 1993, Scott refers in her half yearly report to the weekly hostel meetings: are going very well and there has been a noticeable growth in group process and development, illustrating a very clear work phase where there is a growth in shared decision making...It has been a very positive experience in building a platform where the youth are able to challenge the staff and talk quite openly about their feelings, fears and frustrations. The Drug therapy session group has gone through a number of rough patches...as no one is really in the decision of identifying themselves as addictive, the group is more of an educational, experiential one rather than a rehabilitative one (Scott 1993:6).

Scott refers to hostel group meetings again in 1995, 'through having weekly hostel group meetings with the assistance of an outside facilitator we try to include the residents in decision making, providing an opportunity for open discussion and sharing' (Scott 1995b:1). Yet in 1995 the hostel meetings had been discontinued.

### **Therapeutic intervention focusing on the individual**

In the move away from the shelter concept, the therapeutic response to the youth's needs became highly valued, but was also particularly difficult to define or organise. 'The whole area of therapy and counselling was discussed and it was agreed that the idea of 'wellness' should be dealt with on an individual basis'. [The wellness model encourages positive reinforcement rather than continual crisis response only when things go wrong] (Hantane 1996: 1).

The staff decided that individual goal setting should be put in place which would deal with the residents' personal goals, education and/or work, relationships and

social interaction with girls/family, health and spirituality. Arising from this a goal was set: 'To develop the concept of wellness with the residents of Don Bosco Hostel by way of a written plan for each resident that has been discussed and agreed on to maximise his potential' (Keen *et al* 1994 a: sec 3d). This was to be accomplished '... through using goal orientated resident's contracts, the key worker system and maintaining and encouraging family contact or reconstruction' (Keen *et al* 1994b: 6).

Social work and childcare intervention was driven by an emphasis on the contracts drawn up between the youth and the social worker. This was supported through the keyworker programme where all staff were drawn into a mentorship programme which supported the contract agreements. 'The purpose of the contracts was to reflect the resident's long and short term goals, the means to reach these goals, behaviour changes and aimed to provide staff with increasing insight into the difficulties, needs and aspirations of the residents we work with, as well as to empower the residents' (Hantane 1996: 3).

The tasks of the social worker included: drawing up case files which gather information to assist developing an understanding of the client in their social context as well a dynamic diagnostic understanding, develop goal orientated contracts, social work services in terms of referral, resource allocator and family reconstructive services as well as individual counselling (Scott 1995b: 2).

The evaluation seminar and document compiled in July 1994, indicates that in the six months,

many changes had occurred, the hostel had moved considerably away from purely crisis intervention, to more goal orientated work there had been an increase in professionalism.

We have moved away from being purely a shelter to offering more of a therapeutic response, which concentrates on the individual residents and the goals for that particular individual. Thus our work centres around the individual's goals, which they contract with the hostel and at all times we work together as a team to assist the resident in

reaching certain goals (Keen *et al* 1994b: 1).

Yet the social worker reflected in May 1995 that:

the goal contracts have only been successful in certain areas. The goal contracts with residents have been beneficial in setting boundaries, encouraging focused goal orientated plans. However not all residents have taken these contracts seriously and there have been ongoing difficulties with co-ordinated follow up and response from staff (Scott 1995b: 12).

Reports, case files and discussion documents indicate that most intervention relied on informal lifespace counselling with some reference to psycho-social assessments. The social worker relied on a system of contracting where the youth outlined his expectations or requests for assistance with some prompting in terms of the staff's observations.

### **The key worker system**

The keyworker system was first introduced through the 1994 planning and evaluation seminars. Essentially each staff member was assigned 3 or 4 youth to mentor, guide, counsel and support. The purpose was to ensure all youth received attention (Keen *et al* 1995).

The social worker commented on the progress of the keywork system in during her six monthly report:

The expectations of the keyworkers system could have been quite unrealistic in terms of the feasibility of it as well as the capacity of the Careworkers to respond in a clinical and therapeutic manner. The role of a clinical therapeutic intervention strategy is also questionable, is it a need, is it a realistic strategy with regard to our client group... Without a doubt it has been evident that work with street children goes beyond the boundaries of traditional methods of intervention or treatment. This is only reaffirmed in that the problems of youth living on the street are complex and ideally our work should be in the development of communities of origin, enabling these communities to have access to resources and opportunities, thus preventing children leaving home. (Scott 1995b: 12).

## **Recreation**

The social worker indicated concerns that there was a lack of motivation and understanding amongst the staff to implement the recreation programme (Scott 1995a: 6).

By the hostel action plan it meant that more activities and programmes are co-ordinated and carried out, which support our goals and objectives. If it be group activities, games, sports, outings, music, educational talks or excursions or even just more time spent with individuals with regard to their individual goals, difficulties and stress. If we talk about goals and objectives such as building self-confidence, learning life and social skills, facilitating personal growth and development there is most definitely a more intensive programme needed which promotes this. Where in the evenings and on weekends, there are co-ordinated and organised activities arranged allowing youth to interact, learn different skills and be exposed to different situations and not just spending their time watching television. I also see this, as being very important in offering more attractive options to drinking and drug taking – exposing the youth to alternative options.

## **Contact with families**

Family contact and work with the youth's families was valued. A high level of contact was maintained with the families despite the distances involved. The hostel promoted family reconstruction as an ultimate goal, and attempted to return youth home where possible. The February 1994 seminar reflects

it was felt that the idea of family contact should if at all feasible, be encouraged and developed. It was noted that there are programmes operating at present, like social worker reconstruction programmes for home visits. To improve family contact the group suggested networking with other organisations to assist in the contact process and the encouragement of family visits to hostel or weekend outings together. The following goal was set: "To facilitate and encourage meaningful family contact for the residents." (Keen *et al* 1994a: sec 3.1g)

The social worker reflects on this goal in her December 1994 report and later, after greater experience in May 1995.

I feel that we should place a lot of emphasis on maintaining contact but going further in eliciting, support co-operation and shared responsibility with families. I would like to draw as many families as possible into drawing up contracts with the hostel residents this coming year, thus encouraging families to take on some responsibility and to assist in the

programme through participating in the decision making surrounding their child instead of remaining passive recipients of a service, which disempowers families more, alienates them from their role as parents, leaving them apathetic and relieves them of their responsibilities as caregivers. Understandably this is rather difficult, as many families have limited resources and infrastructure to assist them in this process. The reality also is on occasion that families refuse to take on responsibility, often feeling that their children are now adults and should be able to stand on their own (Scott 1994b: 6).

In 1995 the social worker reflects on her contact with families.

It is difficult to include the families in the contract with the youth. Families like ourselves, often only feel obliged to maintain contact when there is a problem or difficulty. There is an increase of youth coming from places far away, who have no family in Cape Town, which makes contact and communication with the family problematic (Scott 1995b: 11).

### **Concerns raised by the social worker in early 1996**

In discussing the progress in the hostel, the social worker comments:

the hostel has developed from being purely a shelter to a more goal orientated and therapeutic environment. This development has been positive in responding to youth that are committed to growth and development, placing importance on their future and working on specific developmental goals. There are however at the same time a large percentage of youth who are unable to follow through with goals and who are still very much operating within the street sub-culture. When youth do not respond to the programme offered they often return to the street and could be asked to leave the hostel. (Scott 1995b: 12).

It is my feeling that we often get stuck, going around in circles with youth, often the same youth that come and go repeatedly, who do not comply with conditions or contracts that are established with them. A large percentage of time in and out of meetings is spent on these youth, which often results in our neglecting the youth that are progressing and doing well, not posing any disruptive behaviour. A lot more energy and time is needed for these youth, to encourage their development and to assist them through providing support and motivation, while putting structures and programs in place that will enhance their development, providing them with resources that they are motivated to use...decisions around admission and discharge are being made on an adhoc basis...without clear policies...we continue to pursue assisting youth who often use the

facility, without much motivation to make changes, thus blocking the way for many youth whom could use the facility in a more constructive and meaningful way (Scott 1995b: 5).

In this document, the social worker also weighed up the merits of working with those who have recently become destitute, as opposed to those who had been living on the street for some time (Scott 1996a).

She questions the intake process, motivating for a separation between those who are still struggling with the pull of the streets and those who have settled.

...is it possible to have a facility that provides an intake shelter, while also trying to provide more permanent, settled accommodation to youth that are more capable and motivated to move away from the streets and are requiring a far more intensive and therapeutic service. Both sections...have quite specific needs and requirements, are we being fair to both, is it possible to provide the range of different services within the same structure and does this promote the development for youth who come into our care...Are we able to provide good and effective services to both sectors, e.g. our move to create more structure and goal orientated work has made greater expectations on youth towards independent living, without the resources to do this effectively, i.e. through more staffing, real support for families and community work, we could be doing little more than window dressing. (Scott 1996a:4)

It appears that the hostel staff continued to battle and experiment with intervention principles – not entirely satisfied how things were going, and concerned about the levels of success – but confident in the basic principles listed above. The philosophy of the hostel was essentially rehabilitative with the core principles involving the creating of a stable, containing experience involving the provision of basic needs and caring relationships.

### **The cohort resident during 1997**

At the end of 1996 there was an almost complete staff turnover and many of youth had been living in the hostel for over two years – some for three or four. When the writer entered into the hostel community in January 1997, she observed

young men who saw the hostel as the place where they lived which was responsible for providing their basic needs. Their attitude towards the staff and the hostel was similar to that of a stereotypic teenager who assumes that food will be dished on time, pocket money will be made available regularly, that all adults live in a weird “other” reality with no experience of teenage years and therefore had little of value to teach – and that mowing the lawn is far too much to ask. The youth expected to live at the hostel for as long as they needed.

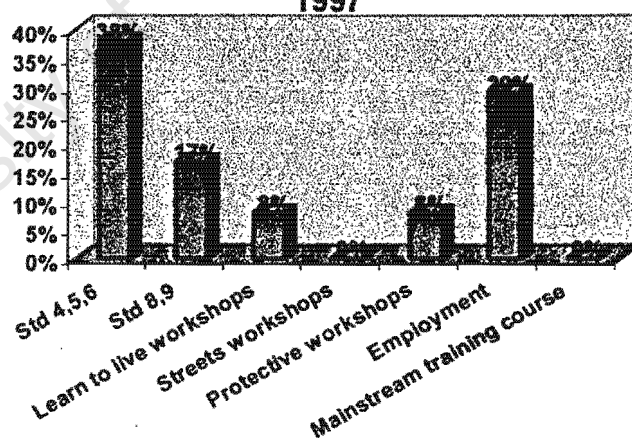
The January 1997 cohort was particularly stable. Reportedly this stability had been increasing over the previous two years. In describing the cohort as stable, the writer is referring to the youth’s move from the ways of the street, and a resistance to the pull of the street through a more mainstream manner of engagement. She is not referring to levels of maturity or mental health. Whilst most youth used dagga and drank heavily, only one was really addicted to mandrax. None of the youth were abusing solvents. The youth had broken their relationships with the youth living on the streets, tending to socialise in the townships. The friends and girlfriends who visited the youth at the hostel would be living in the townships, as opposed to living on the streets. This identification with township youth was particularly apparent in the use of language, in that the youth would rarely use the language of the streets. The hostel youth were very aware of the latest fashions, sports shoes and cool accessories, and tried to keep up with their peers. Although very few youth had a clear sense of direction, all had a belief that they would be living in the mainstream community when they left the hostel i.e. in a house, with a job and a family.

The cohort could be characterised as dependent, immature, reluctant to take on responsibility for tasks or for their lives, passive, lacking in skills for independent living, struggling with interpersonal relationships – particularly those with authority and with women. The youth’s bond with the hostel had an umbilical quality where the youth relied totally on the hostel for support, containment, goal setting and physical needs. Many of the youth were struggling with their tasks in

mainstream society – especially in settling in stable schools or employment situations. These difficulties seemed to be related to concentration, frustration tolerance and interpersonal relationships.

Thirteen of the youth were attending formal schooling in Langa, Mowbray and the city bowl; two were in skills training workshops and nine working (two in protective workshops). Those who were employed were in fairly marginal jobs, usually as artisan assistants or as car wash workers. The racial divide was clearly split where only one of the coloured youths were attending school and only two of the Xhosa youth were employed. Cultural backgrounds seemed to inform coloured and black youth differently in terms of the value of education and the status of manual work. Whilst education was valued amongst those attending school, they lacked an understanding of the process of learning. Most of the youth were over age for their standards – some by four or five years.

**Figure 5.1 Day time activities of the youth at the end of 1997**



In January 1997 there was very little energy, focus or planning in the hostel. The residents did not hold a strong sense of the goals they were working towards, but rather attended school for example, because this was a condition of their contract with the hostel and it was expected. Most of the youth would come home from school, training or work in the afternoons and either sleep in the dormitory or in front of the television soap operas. Demands for homework sessions were met with avoidance through sleep or aggressive empty promises. There was very

limited contribution to cleaning or cooking and if this did happen, it usually required vigorous prompting. After supper at 6pm a couple of the youth may kick a soccer ball around the yard, but most would disappear into the city and townships until the 9pm curfew. Over weekends sixty to seventy percent disappeared to stay in the townships or to attend clubs in town right through the night. Those who stayed in watched television, played with a soccer ball downstairs or slept.

In contrast, there was a high level of violence, unpredictable behaviour, substance abuse and theft in the hostel. Everything in the hostel was locked, and staff members each carried a bunch of keys to gain access to the office, pantry, kitchen, fridge, video machine, iron, laundry and other keys. Should a young man ask for milk for his coffee, the careworker would have to get up, unlock the pantry, unlock the fridge, pour out the required amount and reverse the process. Youth could not be trusted to share milk, or with communal resources such as a soccer ball or iron. Even the fire extinguisher was stolen. At least once a month staff had to take a youth to the trauma hospital for various injuries sustained during conflict either inside or outside of the hostel. Yet on the whole the hostel was a happy place where youth and staff were trusting and relaxed with each other.

The relationship between the staff and youth was warm, loving, trusting within the boundaries and generally non-judgemental. Authority was particularly held by the co-ordinator and staff, and as few rules were formalised or written down, hostel law and order tended to reflect the understandings, resilience and whims of staff. Due to the power invested in the staff, there was a significant gap between staff and youth.

The hierarchy in the hostel was upheld everytime the staff unlocked a door or made a decision outside the four basic rules and programme principles (dealing with curfews and meal times, violence, alcohol, theft and obedience to staff member's instructions). This dynamic tended to be disempowering of the youth,

placing them at the receiving end of service, learning or discipline as opposed playing the role of a participant or hostel community member. Due to the number of staff and youth involved, inconsistency in the application of rules or principles, further disempowered the youth. There was little real contact or conversation between the youth and the staff.

The majority of the residents had strongly developed survival skills gained whilst living on the streets, in institutions or in difficult family environments. These survival skills equipped them to look after themselves, seize advantage of every situation, manipulate adults, bully weaker ones, blunt any feelings and avoid anything with more power than they have available. These skills are highly focused on meeting the needs of the individual, at whatever the cost to others and formed a strong dynamic in the hostel both between peers and between the staff and youth.

Despite the individualistic nature of the survival skills, the loyalty to the peer group at the cost of outsiders, adults or authority figures was also a fundamental principle guiding relations. Daily examples of these dynamics were noted. In August the third iron of the year went missing. It was clear that every youth had an idea of who was responsible for the disappearance, yet no one would "pimp" (report) despite the co-ordinator's refusal to buy another iron. The youth believed that it was the co-ordinator's duty to supply another iron, there was great anger at her resistance and there was little reflection on a peer stealing from the group.

The youth did not have strong friendships or relationships within the hostel. They tended to socialise in terms of their cultural backgrounds, within three or four cliques with differing levels of power within the hostel social structure. The bonds between the youth seemed particularly distant although there were a couple of cliques where friends supported each other and socialised with each other, but these shifted and were exclusive rather than inclusive. Clear boundaries were maintained between the race groups, where at that time approximately 60% of the

youth were black or Xhosa speaking and 40% were coloured or Afrikaans speaking. There were frequent conflicts across the race divide usually involving three or four youth at a time, with misunderstandings or disagreements in the hostel frequently being understood in racial terms. The youth did not have a sense of community. This was particularly illustrated by occasions where the soccer team captain would rather recruit youth living on the streets, than youth living in the hostel to represent the hostel. The youth understood their relationship with the hostel as one between themselves as individuals and the staff team. Racism was a key dynamic, with there being frequent allegations made that the careworker was unfairly giving advantage to the youth of his cultural group. Competition for resources and power within hostel life was high. The person closest to the television would determine what would be watched, irrespective of the language preference of the others watching. The staff viewed issues and growth in terms of the individual residents.

The comfort of the hostel seemed to lead to the youth developing a culture of entitlement and dependency – because they were cared for like children, they acted like children. Not only was it very difficult to involve youth in assisting with everyday chores such as cleaning, carrying food, cooking; but they were critical of the staff's dedication to these tasks and were constantly asking for more clothes, school clothes, sports equipment etc.

Chores were an ongoing battle where youth tended to do as little as possible, be as resistant as possible to requests and this fed directly into the power and the "us and them" dynamic. The careworkers were expected by management to complete whatever tasks the youth had not and frequently they found it easier to do the work than to cajole, plead and request. Gradually a dynamic of demanding dependence/entitlement was entered into -- reflecting primitive defence mechanisms at work and the resistance to taking responsibility.

There seemed to be a danger of the hostel feeding into the youth's unrealistic expectations of life. The most focused youth, who was also a leader, planned to be a lawyer although he is 23 in standard 6. Another planned to go to New York after standard 10 – despite having just been expelled from standard 9. A third expected to move from the hostel to a flat in Sea Point and a fourth believed that he will be able to buy a new car in his first year out of the hostel.

The focus of the hostel was to help each youth achieve his potential. Staff held the unwavering confidence that each youth would sort himself out, given enough opportunity, love and encouragement. A twenty-year-old, who was admitted into the hostel in February 1993, had achieved well academically over the years. He had moved through Learn to Live's informal education to completing standards 4 and 5, and then having registered in standard 6 at a private school in the city bowl was encouraged to jump two standards to standard 8. He coped well with standard 8, although near the end of the year he was found to be truanting -- frequently to gamble on the games machines. Yet he passed. Standard nine was a disaster and finally after numerous warnings and interventions, he was expelled from school. He blamed his difficulties on a difficult and disruptive class. When unpacked, it seems that whilst obviously extremely intelligent and able, he lacked the emotional maturity to overcome disruptions, frustration while the class had to catch up, as well as the concentration, responsibility and discipline required to consistently attend school. In the hostel the new co-ordinator was furiously attempting to set limits with this youth, but was told to wait, hope and to avoid suspension. There was confidence that he would come right. He was charming, with good social skills. Adults liked him. His peers were very unsure of him. He was musical, computer literate and aware of the world around him. He was private and there were few opportunities for him to talk about his anger at his mother's conversion to Islam and subsequent marriage. There were also few opportunities for him to acknowledge the experience of leaving home at ten years old, to live on the streets for five years before moving into the hostel. When he was finally asked to leave the hostel in November 1997 according to "Toughlove"

principles, he returned to the streets, unable to make the shift to the mainstream community. Similarly, several of the youth lacked the emotional maturity, concentration skills and frustration tolerance to sustain employment, and during 1997 three of the youth lost permanent employment opportunities due to their difficulties.

As the youth came to live in the hostel and move into mainstream settings, survival skills were no longer enough. They were forced to supplement these through developing social skills and personal skills. This is, in essence, the process of becoming more stable within mainstream expectations. Another youth who was twenty, had lived at the hostel for three years was attending standard 8 at a school in Mowbray, struggled to understand how his persistent sexual harassment of a girl in his class, in addition to his smoking of dagga during break times on the school grounds were problematic. He was finally expelled, and then vehemently blamed the co-ordinator for denying him an education the following year when he was encouraged to learn a skill.

Youth, who have stayed in the hostel for a long period, tend to become institutionalised, lose survival skills and regress. At the end of 1996, approximately half of the youth lacked the skills to make the leap back into the community, although most had been living in the hostel for two to three years and sixty-five per cent were over nineteen years of age. These youth had become reliant on the institution for support, guidance and security and were not open to moving. An example of this was a young man who stayed for over four years and then sabotaged any steps towards independence and refused to become financially independent. When employment was found for him, he gave cause to be fired. When accommodation was found with his aunt, he refused to go due to the violence in her residential area. He would say that the hostel cannot teach him anything that he does not already know and hence refused to participate in lifeskill activities or counselling. Yet when the hostel closed as it moved into the new programme, this young man refused help to find alternative accommodation for a

week saying that he had a place – and then slept at the hostel's entrance with a very long face.

Another example is of a young epileptic who moved into the hostel in 1994, who held onto the defence of quasi intellectual disability, who was unable to administer his own medication – and when encouraged to do so, assaulted a staff member, was convicted of shoplifting and had uncontrolled seizures. (In 1999 he entered the Comrades marathon, did not require reminders to fetch medication or attend hospital appointments and was self-employed).

Despite this, it was fascinating to watch three of the more mature youth prepare to leave the hostel. The first had been resident for just over a year, after two or three years on the street. His case history indicates that initially he had held onto his connections with the streets – keeping these friends, smoking dagga and continuing an involvement in petty theft. He was enrolled in the Learn to Live workshop. Gradually, in a very quiet way, he settled. His relationship with the careworkers developed – although distance was maintained. He began to ask for distinct practical assistance. His interest in panelbeating led to a referral to Streets for training. He took the initiative to contact his mother and gradually over the next months he found a girlfriend in the community, a part time job and finally a job assisting a panel beater. He gradually became independent. Although he was always self-reliant as well as responsible in terms of undertaking his chores and tasks, this gradually increased with the length of his stay. A few months before he moved out, he spent less and less time in the hostel, especially over weekends. He began to stretch the curfews and request special arrangements for his supper. Despite his polite manner, he increasingly challenged the rules, until he announced that he was moving back to live with his mother.

Similar patterns were noticed with two other youth in the months before they moved out. In these two cases the youth were not as polite, challenged the rules, disagreed with staff, fought for their autonomy in decision making and clearly

began to resent the lack of choice in food, the high levels of theft and the parenting roles of the staff. These two waited for amicable departure deadlines before leaving. All three were working, which facilitated their move from the hostel. Interesting all three had stayed in the hostel for under eighteen months, had not attended school and had a slightly more removed perspective than the other youth – less entitled and less dependent.

### **An assessment of the youth's achievement of the tasks to move through adolescence**

In order to guide reflection around the suppositions in consideration, the writer has reviewed the notes made through participant observation to assess the cohort's achievement of the tasks of adolescence. This assessment is recorded under the six tasks identified in chapter 2.

#### *The achievement of ego identity vs role confusion*

Aside from the three who achieved independence during the year, the youth did not have a strong sense of personal identity or personality, chosen value structure, faith or sense of aspiration. They struggled to take on the role of a school attendee or employee, or in identifying with a sport or activity. Some struggled with confusions around their experience of a range of South African cultures, but with an idealisation of America. This was evident in accents, choice of sports, clothing and music. There were underlying internal conflicts between an identity with the "ghetto" (an American rap concept) and having grown up in rural South Africa. When asked to describe themselves, the youth struggled even after prompting, examples and questions such as how would your best friend introduce you? In asking the youth what type of work they would like to do, they generally chose those jobs that had uniforms – but otherwise were not committed to a particular form of work. Uniforms gave status, position and a role. There was a sense of depersonalisation with many of the youth – as if there was not a person inside the body.

The three youth who left during this period had stronger senses of who they were. One in particular spent an enormous amount of money on clothing, and four or five sets of very expensive sports shoes and viewed himself as a ladies' man. He engaged more with the staff members – particularly the women. But he would not discuss or consider his past. Every six months or so he may have divulged a few sentences about his childhood, at which point he closed up. He refused to get an identity document and whilst a great extravert, kept people at a distance. This young man had an image, but there was a sense that he did not have access to himself.

The youth who left to live with his mother, certainly gained a quiet sense of maturity and belief in himself. It was if he had made the choice to grow up, and suddenly his behaviour changed dramatically in terms of drug use, street culture and attitude.

#### *The formation of sexual identity*

The youth's struggle with self-identity was particularly evident as they developed relationships with women. Not only did the concept of monogamy evade them, but they also could not understand the woman's viewpoint as they struggled to see women as separate from themselves. During a group session youth defended the need to have three girlfriends. Sex was seen as an affirming act involving power, confirmation of machismo, and male strength. Youth were seen by staff, "in the act" on the streets around the hostel. They had clearly not achieved the 'formation of sexual identity as the base for future stable adult relations'. The girlfriends who were chosen tended to have their own problems and difficulties. During the writer's first few months at the hostel, she suggested to the co-ordinator of the shelter for girls that the two programmes should come together for a dinner or event. This suggestion was met with horror, indicating that particularly the young men could not be trusted. With time the writer understood this and learned that the annual sports day was always a concern for

the careworkers, as it was very difficult to monitor the youth at such an event, the girls from the shelter were usually there and there was invariably an incident. There were persistent rumours that two youth had been involved with rape incidents in the townships. As these youth clearly avoided these areas, it seems likely that there may be substance to these stories.

Similarly the youth refused to take responsibility around contraception or the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. They believed that it simply was not going to happen to them – perhaps more a symptom of living for the present than an issue around sexuality.

#### *The recapitulation of the separation-individuation process*

This process as described by Mahler (1972), and reworked to frame the move from adolescence to young adulthood by Blos (1962) could be seen at work in the hostel. The level of the youth's symbiosis with the hostel was the co-ordinator's greatest concern. Youth seemed to lower defences and lose their ability to function independently as they came into the hostel, as if the relief of finding a trustworthy parent figure and place of safety, let them regress to childhood. Youth relied on the hostel to provide basic needs, energy, drive, decision-making, discipline and planning. In terms of Hoffer (cited in Hauser & Green 1991) as discussed in the literature review, the youth were not independent in the four areas of functional, attitudinal, conflictual and emotional independence. For many youth this was illustrated by a reluctance to make any kind of decision, a difficulty in initiating action, a dependence on external structures for discipline and direction. This support was acknowledged as youth returned with prizes, achievements, and report cards – as well as the requests for staff to accompany youth to lawyers, dentists, employers and doctors. Not only were the youth unable to grow up and move out of the hostel, but their dependency seemed to be leading to further damage – particularly when the hostel was unable to reach the youth's expectations in terms of containment, assistance and power. The youth in fact were very threatened when the hostel was unable to protect them from the

school, police or courts – or each other. Youth were furious with the staff when their sports shoes were stolen – but unable to take the responsibility to lock the shoes away or be angry with their peers.

Most of the youth appeared to experience a phase of symbiosis with the hostel, which generally started a month after they had moved into the hostel. At the end of 1997 it appeared that many of the youth were stuck in this phase, and unable to move to separate from the hostel.

The three who graduated seemed to gradually differentiate and gained a sense of self through holding onto the secure support of the hostel. These youth gradually began to take back initiative, decision-making and discipline. Initially they did so with support from the hostel, and then moved to doing this independently. Frequently whilst they took on these skills, there would be a period of rapprochement where youth who had gained self-discipline or a level of independence would slip, demanding attention from the staff. This may be noted in the testing behaviour of the youth over the three or four months before he leaves the hostel, where he challenges boundaries and limits. Finally, the youth separated from the hostel – relying on occasional visits to refuel. During 1997, only three youth reached this stage and few moved out of symbiosis. Aside from these three, none of the youth had goals in terms of future accommodation or work.

*The development of ego continuity through the development of a personal view of the past, present and future*

Whilst the youth were engaged in a symbiotic relationship with the hostel, reviews of their history, current experience and plans for the future were difficult to achieve. The majority were traumatised by their past experiences and avoided considering these memories as far as possible. The youths' reflections on their pasts tended to be disjointed, out of perspective, with dissociation, depersonalisation and numerous gaps. There was rarely any reflection on their

families or homes. They resisted a focus on the past, frequently saying it was too painful and not important any more. Occasionally, youth would bring these events into interviews with the media, but not discuss them with the staff in general. One had the sense of a fear that these memories may contaminate the current experience and must be held outside of the present. If pressed by staff, many would develop fictitious stories to meet the demand, or move away to avoid the request. There was a desperate need to avoid the pain of memories and disrespecting this need led to disengagement with the adult caretaker.

Likewise, they were also extremely anxious about their futures and managed this anxiety through developing unrealistic, surreal goals and plans. Most youth would struggle to describe their plans for the future. Those that could tended to be unrealistic and unlikely to be achieved. The youth focused on the events of the present and hence would struggle to plan for their involvement in the weekend, homework and this seems to have impacted on their tolerance of frustration, where youth could not look beyond the discomforts of the immediate situation to the gains of the future.

In part, the youth's attendance at school seemed to be a defence against having to manage the challenges of the future. Even youth that were really struggling e.g. an 18 year old in standard 3 in Langa, were determined to continue with traditional schooling at an almost irrational level of commitment. This seemed particularly irrational considering they were struggling academically and were in classes of with young children. The youth knew that they would not be asked to leave the hostel, as long as they were not financially independent – it therefore served them well to avoid employment for as long as possible.

Similarly whilst racial conflict was a chronic issue in the hostel, the youth were largely unaware of their cultural heritage or roots. There was an idealisation of international youth culture and American images in particular.

As the youth began to engage with issues of independence – particularly the three who left – they also began to engage with the future, with planning and with goal setting and moved out of the symbiotic relationship. They spoke a little more of their families. One was able to return to his mother, as mentioned earlier whilst his younger brother stayed on in the hostel. Another returned to live with his grandmother, and began a search for his mother – just prior to leaving the hostel.

### *Mastery of residual trauma*

Youth living in the hostel were actively repressing previous trauma. This was never spoken of, unless, occasionally late at night with a careworker. The pain was at some level acknowledged, but only in presence as opposed to the cause. The co-ordinator once asked the youth why they slept with their blankets tucked all around them and around their heads. She was told that this habit had come from prison days, when it was safer to sleep in this way. It appears to a habit used to soothe and provide personal containment in an unsafe world.

When difficult events happened, staff tried to debrief the youth with a reflection on what had happened before they came to the hostel – but this would be very rarely shared. When challenged about substance abuse, youth would say that they need the drugs to forget and they cannot therefore stop. The hostel had a macho atmosphere, where these issues were never raised. As most street youth have lived through successive traumas, their psychosocial development processes had inevitably been interrupted. It is clear that the traumas have challenged the youth's sense of trust, autonomy, initiative, competency, identity and intimacy.

Due to the diversity of needs and occupations of the youth, as well as their resistance to one to one discussions, opportunities for counselling were extremely limited. The youth placed sleep, television or soccer as higher priorities, and were resistant to counselling. It appeared to the co-ordinator, that part of the difficulty in separating from the hostel, lay in the youth's compulsive avoidance of the painful memories of their past. Somehow there was a sense that the hostel could

protect them from these difficult memories and there were fears that if they moved out of the hostel, they would again be left alone with these traumas. Symbiosis implies a sharing of the unacknowledged pain. There was a belief that the hostel would be able to protect them from further pain, hence the terrible anger at the hostel staff when one of their peers had stolen their shoes or when the police had arrested them "unjustly". The hostel went to great lengths to advocate on the youth's behalf, especially in terms of the law or at schools, because of the youth's need for protection and non-judgmental acceptance.

It may be useful to consider Herman's discussion (1994) of continuous trauma where she lists a syndrome involving rigid defence mechanisms, an orientation to the present, a diminished trust in people, a decrease in a positive sense of self, a reduced trust in the natural rhythm of life, emotional numbing or depersonalisation and issues with personal control, independence and nurturance. Perhaps the youth have not resolved their previous traumas. Herman's writings around continuous trauma allow us to recognise that few street youth are going to be able to resolve years of ongoing traumatic experiences – particularly in a hostel which is unable to maintain their safety. Yet the hostel built up the youth's sense of control, trust in other people, sense of future... all which in fact are tasks of late adolescence.

### *Engagement with the world of work*

Nine of the youth were working during 1997. Amongst these were two working at protective workshops. The youth varied in their relationship with their employers. Some were able to consistently meet the expectations of the employers with only a few adolescent pranks (a car washer with no driver's licence driving a brand new 4X4 into a wall, as opposed to the washing bay); others struggled to arrive on time, sober and follow instructions. The youth also struggled to find work with employers who valued them, and tended to be exploited, retrenched and held on a casual basis. The hostel was frequently called in to mediate between the employer and the employee. The hostel staff was

constantly concerned about youth rudely telling their employers that they could keep their jobs, at the slightest frustration. Whilst this did happen from time to time, work was highly valued by the youth and frequently, this was the area where they first began to practice their skills of independence. Once they had learned of the expectations of the world of work, they had made a significant step towards independence. Those who were unable to take this step were those who were most reliant on the hostel's support and holding. By the end of 1997, five of the nine had lost their jobs either due to the marginal nature of the work, or due to their being unable to manage the expectations.

By and large the youth were not ready for the world of work. They struggled to prioritise their jobs over present needs or issues. They did not know what to wear, struggled with punctuality, attendance, and following instructions. In particular, they struggled to ask for help from employers when they needed it or were unsure of the task. They tended to blame employers or colleagues before taking responsibility for their own behaviour or weaknesses, and they were convinced that they were being exploited in some way or other.

#### **An assessment of the January 1997 cohort**

The youth's need for support and containment, seems to have led to a dependency which then paralysed them in moving forward. Although many had been in the hostel for more than two years, they were far from being able to move into independence. The youth were struggling with the tasks of late adolescence which would assist them to move into the developmental phase of young adulthood. It appeared that for some, entry into the world of work and employment was helpful in drawing them out of a symbiotic relationship, into the world. However most were unable to achieve this due to difficulties with frustration, irritability, absenteeism, avoidance of authority, poor self-esteem and refusing to take on responsibility. The youth did not have a strong sense of self. Their interests and values had not been consolidated. Their egos were unstructured, still open and unstable. Sexual identity still shifting unresolved –

wavering clearly between object dependence as they were not ready for object love. The youth held on to their attachments to their primary caregivers at the hostel, which allowed them to hold on to their distorted images of their own parents. These parents who were viewed as controlling or omnipotent, were remembered with either much bitterness and anger or they were idealised. The youth were still struggling to manage anxiety, aggression, social skills and sexual drives. There was no real sense of ego ideal -- causing mood swings where their emotions were open and raw or rigidly defended against. There was a poor trust of others and hence a very veiled sharing of self, usually late at night with those with less power. There were very few attempts at self-understanding, leading to their behaviour being unpredictable and their motivation wavering in different directions. Ego autonomy had not yet developed, as there was still a need for external discipline and guidance. The youth have not yet chosen a lifestyle direction.

### **Challenges to the philosophy and operating principles**

1997 was a turning point for the hostel. At the beginning of 1997, the major foreign funder sent a consultant, Hubert Heindl to evaluate a number of programmes operating in partnership, including the hostel. He raised a number of concerns (Heindl 1997) which were then again echoed in the co-ordinator's evaluation in September 1997 (Crawford-Browne 1997a). These challenges and themes were far from new. Many of the same issues had been discussed in the seminars of 1994, 1995 and the social worker's reports in 1995 and 1996.

Yet for at least four reasons the issues came to a head in 1997. Primarily, more than half the youth in the hostel had been resident for longer than 3 years and were not yet moving towards independence. The hostel community had become so stable that the street youth no longer felt welcome – and the hostel residents were so comfortable and lacking real lifeskills which would allow them to move into the mainstream community. Hence they became dependent on the hostel... and would not move. Not only did this raise questions about the

effectiveness of the hostel system, but also the large number of relatively stable youth blocked street youth's access to the resource for both physical and social reasons.

Secondly, the external consultant's evaluation (Heidl 1997) freed discussion around the hostel difficulties, legitimised an adjustment in perspective and demanded change in terms of accountability for funds granted. This process was supported by changes in the national child care system, where the government was beginning to demand accountable and professional services in terms of the Inter Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk. The simultaneous departure of the director and the social worker at the beginning of 1997 which was followed closely the resignation of a youth child care worker in late 1996, led to the construction of a brand new staff team – with limited investment in the past system and new energy.

Thirdly, near the end of 1997, Sixteen Plus laid down a gauntlet to the hostel staff by selecting fifteen youth from the streets and taking them on a camp which successfully motivated the youth to leave the streets. These youth needed an effective residential programme.

The final turning point was the realisation that the youth that came onto the streets after fourteen years old, usually had sufficient resources and therefore invariably returned to the communities after a week or two – if they had not been rescued by an institution (Daniels & Crawford-Browne 1997). This challenged the hostel staff to work with those who had been on the streets for an extended period.

#### **Comments made in the evaluations of the hostel in 1997**

Heidl raised a number of challenges recorded in a report (1997), including that the

Stable group of boys (around ten) facilitate and encourage the (re-) integration work and dynamics, but blocks at the same time hostel places and opportunities for other boys;

No systematic approach to encourage and accompany independent living

The authority and decision system in the hostel is very much adult focussed: no use of educational potentials of sharing competence and responsibility

Stretched staff because of very limited staff number: that means stress and consequently sometimes non-adequate reactions! (p26),

could be reorganised in a way to have an intake hostel here and a more settled Hostel elsewhere (p44)

Lack of sufficient involvement and use of group dynamics: involve the community of boys in the management of the hostel (co-operating in the running of the day to day life of the hostel) (p45).

A number of strengths were also raised including:

We are achieving goals, we do save lives: street children and youth threatened to be imprisoned, brutalised and disorientated by gangs, killed,

We organise and run the hostel as a "happy place", where belonging and warmth can be experienced by the boys: positive relationships with adults

We are able to offer counselling to the boys: lifeskill teaching and individual development.

There is teamwork and loyalty in the hostel: amongst the boys, amongst the staff, between the boys and the staff (26), the boys have a strong link with the hostel, even boys who left the hostel (44).

In the recommendations for the future the consultant suggests:

- set up satellite schemes: private homes or communes to (re-) integrate boys according to their own life experience
- instil group work (dynamics) counselling for example weekly for those getting ready to leave the hostel
- use status rituals to encourage and build up dynamics to leave and build up own lives

- reemphasise rules and structure: use proper group dynamics in leadership, roles, camps and group decision making.
- introduce a systematical approach and dynamics to encourage and accompany independent living (48).

At the end of 1997 it was apparent that the hostel was no longer meeting the needs of the youth living in the hostel. The co-ordinator compiled an evaluation document with consultation with the staff (Crawford-Browne 1997a). Before discussing her concerns, she describes the service that the hostel was offering.

Currently within this programme the hostel offers board and lodgings, daily support; educational fees; books and travelling; some spiritual activities; recreational facilities of soccer, swimming, television/videos; and some "parental" guidance on an individual level. Probably the most important aspects of the programme are the positive relationships with adults and the opportunity to live within a small community structure (Crawford-Browne 1997a: 1).

She listed a number of concerns including:

- the hostel is struggling with both quality and quantity issues, in that we are reaching a small proportion of youth who need this service, and that the service we are offering is not sufficiently effective or concentrated;
  - the emotional problems of the youth are not being addressed,
  - we are not using the group dynamics or working to involve the youth in the running of the hostel. The youth are resistant to this, and the staff finds it easier just to do the work, rather than fight the negative pressure. The youth have learned to be helpless, and do not want to move from this.
  - the youth come in and sit – we provide for the physical and educational needs and little else – they lack energy and commitment to participate in activities;
  - the careworkers (and social worker) are ineffective due to the long hours and high demands
  - limited real contact with families' (Crawford-Browne 1997a: 2 –3).
- 
- In essence we are currently offering custodial care to our clients. This model means that we accept the youth with little assessment or selection, and then hold on tight, hope for the best and try to provide assistance in response to issues that come apparent. In this approach we simply hope that the goodwill and modelling and occasional guidance, will rub off and do some good. The co-ordinator and careworkers attempt to pick up issues through the day to day relationship, in order to assist the individuals with these issues – however it is rare that we

get to the root of the difficulties. The youth are exposed to the dynamics of a very large peer group, which is difficult to influence from a staff level. (Crawford-Browne 1997a: 5).

- The result is that many of the youth do make real changes in their lives. They stabilise, begin to think about their goals and the hostel gives them an opportunity to bridge the gap between street life and the mainstream community. It is as if they have flown into a comfortable nest, which allows enough time and space to heal their wings, in order to fly out. But, not all fly out, and many try to fly with wings which are still so damaged that they are ineffective. If we have not been able to adequately assess that a youth is suffering from clinical depression which is inhibiting his ability to concentrate at school, leading to theft, preventing him from sleeping or eating, and struggling to have the energy to engage with the opportunities at the hostel – what are we doing (Crawford-Browne 1997a: 6).

## **Conclusion**

Between 1994 and 1997 the youth were well supported and cared for. In this process the staff members were able to draw together lessons around what had worked, what were the challenges and had also developed solid relationships with the youth which allowed some discussion around what they were wanting from the hostel.

The three key lessons involved 1) a realisation that stability would not necessarily lead to independence, 2) allowing the youth to remain in childhood activities and roles such as being a scholar led to further dependency, 3) the youth had not achieved the tasks of late adolescence which would allow them to move into independent living and 4) the focus on individual needs and levels may lead to a reduced sense of boundary or group norm. By the end of 1997 the staff had realised that changes were needed, although the shape of change was still unknown.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Life in Don Bosco Hostel – 1998 to 1999**

#### **A review of the operating philosophy and principles and a discussion of patterns observed amongst the youth**

##### **Developing the new philosophy**

The new philosophy and operating principles for Don Bosco Hostel were developed at the beginning of 1998 through extensive evaluation and discussion between the director, the co-ordinators of the three projects, the staff and the youth. It was decided that the intervention process needed to be streamlined and focused to create a programme which was as effective, efficient and appropriate as possible. Street youth living in the city bowl were again identified as the target client group. In focusing on the needs of this group, the hostel staff drew on the experiences gained in the hostel over the years and on the experiences of Sixteen Plus. The Salesian charism continued to hold the frame of reference for the project.

The key change lay in the move from the focus on providing a stable “home” for the youth, to collaborating with the youth to form a developmental programme -- what was dubbed, rather grandly, “A school of life”. This chapter describes life in Don Bosco Hostel during 1998 and 1999, by identifying a) the philosophy, b) the operating principles and c) the behaviour of the youth who participated in the programme from April 1998 to March 1999, and from June 1998, from April 1999 and from July 1999 until the time of writing in October 1999.

##### **The philosophy of the “School of Life”**

Together the hostel community selected a new purpose and goal for Don Bosco Hostel:

The purpose of Don Bosco Hostel is to give youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four who have been living on the streets of Cape Town, an opportunity to develop the occupational, emotional, spiritual and social skills which will enable them to move

from the streets into the mainstream community.

The goal of the hostel is to equip youth so that they can cope as a spouse, father, employee and member of the mainstream community (Crawford-Browne 1998a: 2).

Within the purpose and goal quoted above, it is easy to see the shift in philosophy, from that of a shelter to that of a developmental programme. Life in the hostel was to become a programme to assist street youth to develop the skills and capacity required to be able to move from the street life into the mainstream community, as functioning young men who could sustain employment, marriage, parenthood and citizenship. The school of life placed the core emphasis on the development of personal and social skills to enable the youth to move into the mainstream community successfully – as opposed to accommodation and stability (Crawford-Browne 1998a). In fact, the provision of accommodation and basic needs were seen as only necessary to achieve the new purpose and goals, but not an aim of the hostel.

It was decided that youth would be selected on the basis of their potential and motivation to develop the skills required for independence, not on their basic needs. The co-ordinator drew on Prochaska and DiClemente's model of change (1994), realising that youth had to actively make a well-thought through decision to move from the streets and therefore needed to be in the determination phase according to this model. Youth who made the decision spontaneously were less likely to have developed the motivation required to cope with the challenges and frustrations of hostel life, and were therefore more likely to drop out leading to further damage to hope and self-esteem. Similarly, a month or two longer on the streets may sufficiently motivate the youth to move through the difficult transition. The use of the model of change immediately released the hostel staff from the obligations of rescuing and saving youth, and assisted in returning power to the clients (Crawford-Browne 1998d).

This change in itself was assisted by another shift in the hostel's philosophy. That is that the youth are not seen as helpless children who need protection, but rather, young people who may be invited to engage in a programme, but who need to take responsibility for their own lives and choices. This shift in recognising the age and experience of the street youth, assisted in 1) developing a collaborative relationship with the youth, 2) placing a stronger level of responsibility on their shoulders, 3) developing a successful suspension process when consequences for behaviour were required and 4) identifying the developmental tasks with which the youth may need assistance to achieve successful independent young adulthood. The staff believed that the youth have personal resources and personal skills which need to be accessed and developed to assist them in moving from the streets (Crawford-Browne 1998b).

Linked with this was the implicit goal that when the youth leave, they should be able move directly into independent living. Under the new philosophy there was a concern about prolonged institutionalisation of the youth, leading to 1) a focus on developing an efficient and effective programme, 2) an avoidance of referring youth to "second-phase" institutions, and 3) a reluctance to take on referrals from children's shelters. This is made all the more relevant when a review of the youth's histories indicate frequent stays in children's homes, Places of Safety and prisons (Crawford-Browne 1998b). This also links with the time limited approach.

A philosophy of empowerment, responsibility and accountability was to be built into the lifestyle at the hostel. This would be operationalised by issues such as: in the giving out of pocket money in return for chores being completed; allocating daily chores to build responsibility and accountability, and ensuring that the youth are involved in all levels of life in the hostel (Crawford-Browne 1998b).

Finally, the new philosophy believed that most adolescents rely on their peer group as their frame of reference, support and focus. The staff believed this as

even more true for young people living on the streets, who have “walked out” on the adult world of parents and teachers, and relied on their peers for survival. Under the new philosophy the hostel community and the sub-groups of the different cohorts became the focus for assessment and intervention, as opposed to the individual youth. Obviously individuals were encouraged, assessed and their progress tracked through the programme. True to the Salesian charism strong collaborative, respectful relationships were developed between the individual staff members and the youth. But the hostel community or cohort was the place where for example, issues of conflict, difficulty or challenge were monitored and addressed (Crawford-Browne 1998c).

Although there are differences in emphasis and outlook between the philosophies of the “home” and the “school of life”, much remained the same, and much of the new system was built on the areas of success of the old. The clear break between the two philosophies was needed to challenge the staff and youth to recognise the real change in expectations.

### **The key principles of the new hostel programme**

In January 1998 the co-ordinator completed a document for discussion called: Don Bosco Hostel: a new vision (Crawford-Browne 1998a -- Appendix F). This was then workshopped, discussed and thrashed out in a series of meetings with 1) the Learn to Live, Sixteen Plus Co-ordinators and Institute Director (a new group, which along with the hostel co-ordinator formed a management team for the projects); 2) hostel staff team and 3) the youth who were currently in the programme – and summarised into a pamphlet Don Bosco Hostel, Salesian Institute Cape Town – Basic objectives, goals and principles. (Crawford-Browne 1998 -- Appendix G).

Out of these discussions developed a set of 6 principles which were to form the framework of the new hostel programme. These principles are:

1. The selection and preparation of youth

2. A time limited intervention
3. A division of the youth's stay in the hostel into 3 phases with rites of passage to celebrate progress
4. A focus on employment preparation
5. Structured intervention programmes and group therapy
6. Peer responsibility -- youth involvement in decision making, leadership, and responsibility (Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998: 2&3)

The principles are recorded in different forms between 1997 and 1999 as the programme evolved with discussion. It is at times difficult to reference which idea is discretely discussed in which document. The writer has engaged with an initial evaluation document written in 1997 (Crawford-Browne 1997), a proposal document of 1998 (Crawford-Browne 1998), co-ordinator's monthly, quarterly and annual reports, pamphlets produced for the youth (Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998a and members of the public at the hostel re-opening, an evaluation report to account for the subsidy from the Department of Social Services (Crawford-Browne 1998b) and a consolidation document developed in a seminar in 1999 (Crawford-Browne *et al* 1999a). The principles discussed below are those that were adopted at the opening of the new hostel programme in April 1998.

### **Selection and preparation**

The move to a programme perspective necessitated a selection process so that those with the most potential to complete and benefit from the programme were included. Similarly preparation for admission was also vital due to the enormous challenges that each youth faces in leaving the streets. With reference to the hostel's commitment to the use of group dynamics to support and work with the young people, it was decided to draw youth into the hostel in groups of twelve -- cohorts -- in order to facilitate a supportive orientation process and provide peer support. This also would mitigate against previous problems of needing an intake phase in the hostel system, as discussed between 1995 and 1997 (Crawford-Browne *et al* 1999a; Crawford-Browne 1997c).

The selection of appropriate candidates not only assisted in making the programme more effective, but also 1) put pressure on the youth living on the streets to make a choice and a commitment, 2) gave status to youth on the streets who were selected, assisting with the transition process, 3) gave an alternative to relying on youth's stories as an assessment procedure for admission, and 4) allowed admissions of cohorts who could move through the preparation, intake, settling, and moving on processes together (Crawford-Browne 1998b).

Selection was undertaken by the co-ordinator of Sixteen Plus who had already developed relationships with the youth on the streets, and was therefore able to undertake broad assessments of the level of drug addiction, internal motivation, defence mechanism, ability to attach and insight. The selection was based at this stage on the Sixteen Plus co-ordinator's broad assessment and intuition. He also considered the potential cohort's composition – balancing leadership, cultural background, age and street family issues. The understanding of the assessment criteria developed with the hostel staff's experience of the cohorts. Commitment, motivation, level of personal insight and maturity thus became the criteria for acceptance into the hostel, rather than the youth's need of accommodation (Daniels 1998; Crawford-Browne 1999b).

In order to assist the youth make a well-thought through decision about returning to a mainstream community as guided by the Prochaska and DiClemente model (1994) and to prepare these youth for the very significant challenges; the outreach programme agreed to facilitate two preparation camps a year, with fifteen youth on each camp. The goal of the camps was broader than preparation for the hostel in that some participants chose to return directly to their families and has become part of the Sixteen Plus programme to assist youth to move from the streets. These camps are based on a pilot camp held in 1997 and draw on the concepts of wilderness therapy (Salesian Institute annual report 1997; Daniels 1998).

The Sixteen Plus camps have been extremely successful in reaching the youth at a

level that is very difficult to achieve within the city environment. The camps are run over 10 days in Stellenbosch, and use physical exercise, team construction projects, team building activities, community work, camp fires, hiking, sports to engage the youth in a process of considering their lives on the streets, what had led them to choose this lifestyle, what was keeping them there and what they wanted to achieve. There are times for reflection, talk, journalling, storytelling and prayer. It is the beginning point for discipline, rules, ethos, relationships with staff and hostel community members' routines, concentration and goals. This camp led to significant growth in maturity amongst the youth that had participated in the initial camp, where they gained a greater sense of direction, improved self-awareness and increased self-esteem. Thus it was decided that the camp would form an excellent intake process, and in some way meet the need for an intake phase of intervention in the hostel (Daniels 1998).

In order to ensure that the youth were committed and had insight into the process; they were asked to return to the streets for five days after completion of the camp. Those who chose to take up the opportunities offered by the hostel, were then asked to report for a three day hike which develops motivation, prepares for the challenges ahead and develops a team spirit. The hikers return to admission rituals that allow them to join the hostel community (Crawford-Browne *et al*: 1999a, Salesian Institute annual report 1998; Crawford-Browne 1999a). The week back on the streets after the camp, was essentially a time of confirmation. Many of the youth were also challenged prior to the camp to show their motivation through attending the workshops – and this worked particularly well – especially when settling the group in the programme. Thus the model of change was a useful framework in translating complicated defence mechanisms into tools for assessment and manageable interventions (Crawford-Browne 1998c).

### **Time limited programme**

Time limited intervention strategies were integrated into the new programme in order to: 1) create a useful level of anxiety to facilitate growth and the sense that

the hostel is a bridge to something else, 2) set clear goals for independence that both staff and youth needed to work towards, 3) to work against apathy, dependency and regression by setting realistic but challenging goals for independence and 4) increase efficiency by ensuring that youth left when they were ready for independence. The advantage of the time limit was that it also set a frame for the interventions that was not specific to staff or youth – thereby moving the launching process away from issues of authority. It assists in developing the relationship between the staff and youth, by imposing an external boundary. In order to determine an appropriate length of stay, the co-ordinator reflected on the statistics from 1994 to 1998 which indicate that the majority of youth who successfully leave the hostel, stay for between eighteen and twenty-four months. This will need to be reassessed as the programme is implemented and may need to be extended for individual youth with three or six-month contracted extensions. At the welcoming ceremonies, youth are given a date in eighteen months time, as their goal date for independence and this is held in contracting, counselling and planning with the youth (Berger 1998; Crawford-Browne 1998b; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998; Crawford-Browne 1998f).

### **Three phased interventions**

The eighteen month programme was to be divided into three six-month phases, in order to help the staff assess the progress of the youth against the ultimate goal of independence, to reduce the time frame and the goals to more accessible concepts for youth with a reduced sense of the future or of planning and to facilitate rites of passage. As the cohorts would be moving into the hostel at 6 monthly intervals – it was planned that at any one time there would be 3 cohorts in the hostel – one group in the orientation phase, one in the middle phase and one in the preparation for independence phase (Crawford-Browne 1998a; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1999a).

It was envisaged that that the first phase would focus on learning to take responsibility for self, the second on responsibility for living with others and the

third with responsibility for the future. It was thought that initially the staff would play a stricter role in discipline but as the youth moved through the phases, the staff would gradually help the youth develop self-discipline (Crawford-Browne 1998a; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1999a).

### **Employment preparation**

Preparing youth for employment is seen to be crucial in that this is an age appropriate task, develops social skill and self-esteem, will assist the youth to be financially independent when he complete the hostel programme and will assist them in one of their most challenging life tasks. In choosing this as a focus point, it was decided to encourage youth who wanted to return to school to attend night school – unless they were completing their last two years of high school which then in turn may assist them to find work in due course (Crawford-Browne 1997a; Crawford-Browne 1997 report; Crawford-Browne 1998e).

During the orientation phase the youth are expected to attend the Learn to Live workshops to learn about the work environment, employers expectations, frustration tolerance, entrepreneurship; whilst learning leather, wood and metal work skills. After the youth had completed a course in one of these workshops, his commitment, ability and motivation would be assessed and he would be encouraged to attend a course offered for the general community in a specific skill of his interest e.g. Forklift driving, catering. Those with aptitude in the workshops would also be encouraged to continue in these courses. During the third phase it was intended that employment opportunities would be found for each youth, so that they would become used to this environment and these expectations before leaving the hostel ( Salesian Institute annual report 1998; Crawford-Browne 1998d; Berger 1998).

### **Structured intervention**

The staff committed themselves to running “Bosco Weekends” on alternate weekends. These are fun group interventions using sports, outings, discussions,

group projects and activities to teach lifeskills and prepare the youth for independence. Included in these sessions are hostel meetings which reflect on the processes in the hostel life as well as group community work projects. The weekends were to start with the hostel meeting and a brief discussion of the weekend's theme on the Friday evening, followed by activities on Saturday, devotions, community projects and sports on Sundays (Crawford-Browne 1998; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998a).

In addition to the Bosco Weekends, the staff intended to facilitate a group process with the cohort in orientation. The key work system and the careworker's lifespace interventions would remain key in order to help the youth integrate and make sense of the programme and also to teach on an individual level. Each youth would be assessed, supported and counselled by the social worker as required – who would also make appropriate contact with the youth's family (Crawford-Browne *et al* 1999b).

### **Peer leadership and accountability**

The involvement of youth in the everyday functioning of the hostel was aimed to develop their skills in areas such as budgeting, financial management, cooking, laundry and correspondence. This involvement is seen as an integral part of contributing to the group interaction, the development of leadership and social skills, responsibility and accountability. Participation by the youth is also facilitated to promote ownership of the hostel and their own development process, and empower the youth to achieve independence. It functions to reduce the staff's role in maintenance work, freeing them to counsel, teach how to complete chores and organise other activities (Crawford-Browne 1998a; Crawford-Browne *et al* 1998).

Hostel meetings are convened to facilitate the youth participation, where the meetings are chaired and minuted by the youth. Youth are also involved in eight revolving capacities or portfolios which include laundry, food management,

cooking, cleaning management, conflict resolution, treasurer, entertainment and equipment. Each portfolio is facilitated by a youth, who had a team of three or four young men who undertake the given tasks and a staff member who would quietly support. This process is a learning experience which develops leadership, accountability, responsibility and self-esteem. The achievement of these tasks was reflected upon at the hostel meetings (Crawford-Browne 1998a; Crawford-Browne 1998e).

### **Further changes**

In order to support the changes in the operating framework, a number of other changes were needed. The staff worked to change their relationship with the youth to make themselves more accessible, predictable and involved in the lives of the youth. This was most clearly illustrated through the transition process, where the changes in the hostel were negotiated and discussed with the youth. (Crawford-Browne 1998f).

Similarly, the entire hostel community was involved in negotiating a new set of rules which were then written down and displayed. A discipline system was more clearly negotiated and written down. With the beginning of the new hostel system, pocket money was earned through completing chores within the building, which were in addition to the day to day cleaning in the hostel (Crawford-Browne 1998d; Berger 1998).

The staff began to view the shifts and issues within the hostel community (which now included themselves as participants) in terms of group dynamics, and intervened within this framework in order to teach, facilitate and move the group. Thus conflict, theft, uncooked meals and decisions as to what to do on the weekend were framed within the group. The group was naturally divided along the lines of cohorts, which allowed the staff to influence the smaller groups and gave space for the staff to respond to youth at their different levels of development. Key work teams were assigned to the cohort groups as the groups

entered into the intake process, encouraging the key workers to engage with the youth as they went through the camp, hike and orientation process (Crawford-Browne *et al* 1999b).

### **Life in the hostel from 1998 to 1999**

During the first quarter the staff and youth met frequently to discuss and plan the new programme. Everyone was involved in designing around the basic outline and contributing to the change process. Although there was resistance at times, the youth were surprisingly enthusiastic about the plans. It was difficult for the staff, the volunteers and youth to grasp the types of changes involved. The co-ordinator tended to hold the focus and the change process, pushing through many of the changes. Planning and discussion took place at weekly meetings within the staff team and with the youth, as well as a final weekend away to consolidate the changes.

It was decided to pilot the developmental programme with the cohort of youth who were living in the hostel in January 1998 – in order to assist this group move to independence and to familiarise the staff with the nature of the programme. The January 1998 cohort was given one final year in the hostel, with their graduation date set at the 31 March 1999 – believing that due to their length of experience in the hostel, the full eighteen months was not needed. There was some selection, where two of the youth whose drug habits were unmanageable were counselled/challenged out of the hostel. Most youth were assessed as committed, motivated and with potential for independence and were therefore invited to participate in the new hostel programme.

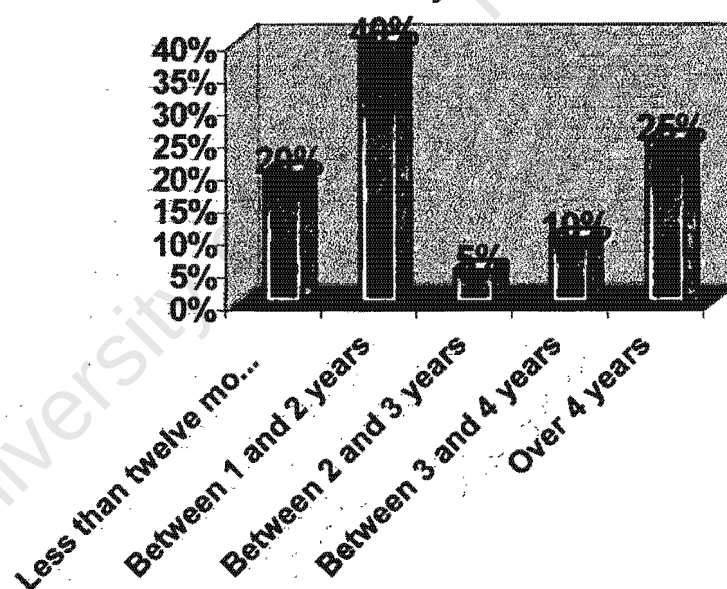
Sixteen Plus agreed to start preparing the first cohort from the streets to enter the hostel in June 1998. Lessons learned from mixing the stable January 1998 cohort with this group who came into the hostel in June 1998, led to a decision to wait for the graduation of the January 1998 cohort before taking on groups in April 1999 and July 1999. This section therefore reflects on the experiences as the

January 1998 cohort moved through the programme, and then the experiences of the first months of the three cohorts from the streets.

### **The January 1998 cohort**

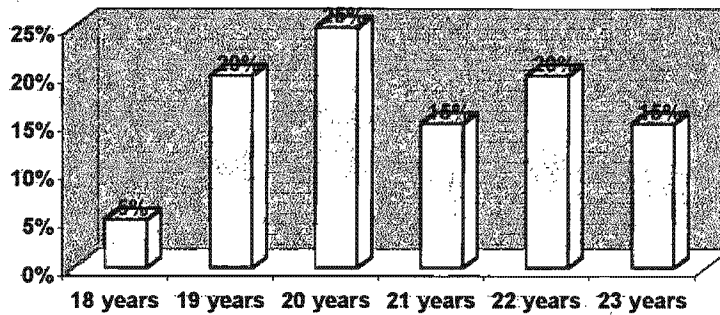
There were twenty youth living in the hostel at the beginning of 1998. Of these, forty percent had lived in the hostel for over three years, forty percent for between one and two years, and twenty percent under nine months. As the new programme was still under negotiation and it was difficult to contract with new youth, it was decided not to admit further youth at that stage —despite a programme capacity of 24.

**Figure 6.1 The length of time those resident in January 1998 had stayed in the hostel**



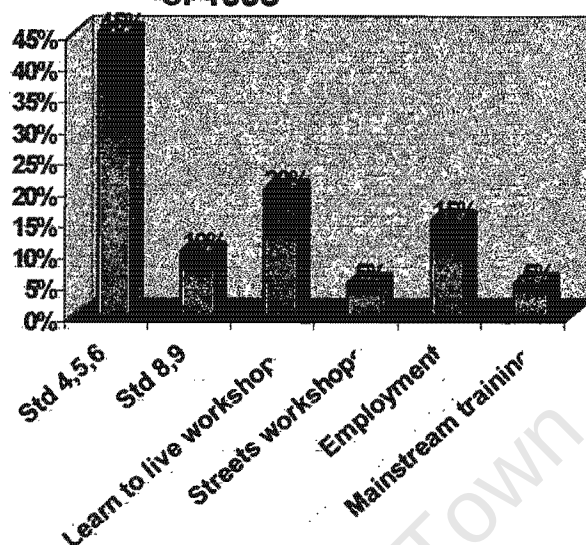
The ages of the youth ranged from 18 to 23 years. Fifty percent were between 18 and 21 years and 7 (35% youth 22 years and over.

**Figure 6.2 The ages of those resident in the hostel on 1 January 1998**



The greatest concern was that at the beginning of 1998 11 (55%) of the youth were attending school and intended to complete their formal education despite the majority struggling with standards 6 or 7 in the Langa schools. In attending a “children’s activity” these youth were immature in their outlook, their level of lifeskill, their readiness for integration in the community and their readiness for work. In addition they lacked skills to compete in a poor employment market. The hostel was in a double bind of either supporting them through school, or asking them to leave without being financially independent.

**Figure 6.3 Daytime activities of the youth at the beginning of 1998**

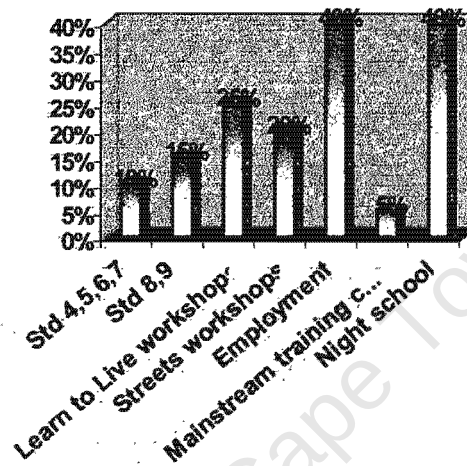


The youth in the hostel in January 1998 were very stable, managing well, but not ready for independence because they were dependent on the hostel financially and emotionally. The youth lacked the skills to set goals, plan and move to independence. The hostel had achieved its original goal of assisting youth to stabilise – yet found that something more was needed as the youth were far from independent.

In order to prepare for the change to the developmental programme, at the beginning of 1998 each resident was told if he was interested in participating in the new programme, he would be supported by the hostel for one last year during which time he would be encouraged to equip himself for independence. Those who were attending school were motivated to attend the training workshops, technical college or external mainstream courses, which would prepare them for employment. Five insisted on remaining in mainstream schooling. These youth were warned that it would be very difficult to find employment for them, as they would be essentially unskilled when they were to graduate from the hostel. Night school was offered as a facility for those who wanted to continue their education whilst learning skills. Eight registered at night school in Greenpoint but none of

them were able to sustain this type of learning and responsibility for more than a few months and all dropped out by the end of the year.

**Figure 6.4 Daytime activities of the youth during 1998**  
(some youth attended more than one activity during the year)



#### **Implementation of the new programme**

Finally in April 1998 the hostel closed for a week for refurbishment. The youth had to move out for this period to reconsider their goals and recommit to a contract, which would allow them to stay in the hostel until 31 March 1999. The new hostel programme, dubbed The School of Life, was affirmed by a fresh coat of paint, a spring clean undertaken by the youth and staff, new furniture, shifts in the allocation of beds and a rededication ceremony. The new programme principles were put into place as the youth moved back.

Two of the youth were unable to commit to the revised expectations largely due to their reliance on drugs, and after counselling decided not to return. Two others tested the new expectations and within the first six weeks were asked to leave – with one of these returning in December to graduate in March 1999 with the rest of this cohort.

With the new programme the staff was careful to change the hostel structure to increase the youth's participation in decision making, activity and responsibility. The youth were encouraged to participate in ongoing fine-tuning of the new programme and this consultative role acted against their tendency to allow the staff to make all the decisions in their lives. Concrete changes were implemented, for example: the youth started to cook for themselves, negotiate the menu, collect their own laundry and pocket money was only paid after pocket money chores were completed.

Attempts were made at dividing all the tasks in the hostel between teams of youth and staff. The equipment team had spectacular success, perhaps as it was understood as gender appropriate and led by the volunteer who enjoyed teaching the handyman type work around the hostel. Youth suddenly began to take initiative and ownership to notice and repair broken furniture, replace light bulbs and clean the video player's heads. This new interest led to a significant shift in responsibility within the wider hostel community, as well as developed new skills and understanding. Unfortunately few of the other team co-ordinators were as committed and the other teams (treasurer, cleaning, laundry, sports/entertainment, conflict resolution, cooking and food) underachieved. The staff was divided, over stretched and did not buy in to this structure. Yet somehow a general shift was made so that the hostel was no longer a comfortable home, but a working environment in which it was difficult to "park off".

Independence had become an achievable desired goal. Suddenly the future became real. The time limited approach framed counselling and life planning sessions, so that youth were clear that they were expected to leave on the 31 March 1999 and began to plan around this. The deadline has made a tremendous difference to their attitudes. Their goals became more concrete and most of the youth developed very solid plans for year after graduation in terms of work and accommodation. For example one youth started to push for his part time job as a griller to become permanent and full time. Another, pushed really hard to get a job as a messenger. Staff were also under pressure to assist the youth achieve independence. Workshops were held to discuss housing and problem solving.

Behaviour was now framed within an understanding of the dynamics of the community, rather than only the individual. It seemed easier for the staff to accept and work with the behaviours of the youth, within this concept. Within this frame individual behaviours such as theft, drunkenness and even the breaking of a contract to study/work/ attend a skills programme could be discussed and responded to, in the hostel community. For example when a youth stole a loudspeaker from the dormitory, this was understood as stealing from the youth community rather than from the hostel capital. This violation was then discussed in terms of the youth community, and in terms of restorative justice. Not only did he have to replace the loudspeaker, but also apologise to those living in the dormitory. This not only facilitated teaching and the youths' understanding around the consequences of violation of other people's rights, but also linked the individual with the broader society. Through engaging with the group process by reflecting issues into the group, the staff were released from their position as inaccessible authority figures, moving them to concerned participants who could offer guidance and who contained the community. Admittedly both the staff and the youth struggled with this shift, but it was gradually resolved through the year.

Compulsory Bosco Weekends focused on a range of topics and exposed group dynamics in a way that involved the staff, thereby opening them for

understanding and intervention. The weekends formed the focus for lifeskill development and intervention, as well as for the youth's testing out and resistance. Bosco Weekends were facilitated every alternate weekend, involving all the youth who were not working and three staff members.

Themes, such as growth, employment, getting a job, who am I, family, parenthood, formed the focus of the weekend around which the outings, discussions and lessons evolved. The core issues of personal identity, social skills and skills for independent living were continuously reflected in the activities. The weekends included the Friday evening during which the theme was introduced and a hostel community meeting was held. Saturday and Sunday involved events such as a "Big clean", sports, fun, devotion and several lifeskill workshops. Less experienced staff struggled to hold the group over weekends, sometimes moving to a more punitive authoritarian role to regain control – leading to further resistance. Yet in comparing the youth who attended regularly and those who avoided through work commitments or acting out/resistance, it was clear that the weekends were contributing to significant individual personal growth. Shy young men blossomed, adolescents moved into young adulthood and simulation exercises, which allowed them to take on the position of a girlfriend or employer, extended their perspective and therefore significantly increased their social skills. Unfortunately, by the end of the year staff resistance, youth resistance and low youth numbers due to the holidays, initiation and youth departure led to the weekends being suspended until later the next year.

Between April 1998 and March 1999 the youth became much more co-operative, trustworthy and helpful towards each other. There were far fewer fights and fewer thefts. The emergency visits to the Trauma Hospital all but came to an end. Youth were being trusted to the point that staff would stay chatting to a youth, whilst they gave the bunch of keys to another needing milk or their plate of food. This was a far cry from the year earlier, where youth would steal food from another's plate while he was not looking. The soccer captain was able to keep

track of the soccer gear – not only did he develop the skills and assertiveness, but most of it was returned after a game. Youth had free access to the laundry basket where previously every item had had to be checked in or out. Youth helped each other with Maths homework or with learning for a learner driver's licence.

Cultural identity was discovered and some of the Xhosa youth participated in traditional initiation rituals in July to become men. Others followed to undertake this in December and this further increased the level of maturity within the group. At times they even thanked the staff or offered prayers for them during devotion – previously unheard of behaviour, indicating that they were beginning to see the staff members as people.

Whilst there was conflict and resistance at times, on the whole the youth were able to make decisions and plan. One young man began to work around his alcoholism and took up the responsibilities of parenthood. Other youth began to talk of girlfriends. But the talk about women became more mature, and there was a shift to a more respectful focus on one woman at a time. Whilst their attitudes tended to be sexist and chauvinist – their views seemed to reflect those of their peers in the townships, rather than those on the streets. Although the youth were not ready to engage in equal partnerships with their girlfriends, some progress had been made on where the previous year the staff had been aware of at least two youth being accused of rape and in a therapeutic group the youth had agreed on the importance of having a selection of women so one would never be alone.

The new programme's inclusion of the principle to work with 3 cohorts of youth, each engaged with a different phase of their eighteen month process, aimed to draw on the different areas of experience, celebrations of entry or exit and role models to develop the community. The first group of youth, who had been selected from the streets and prepared through the Sixteen Plus camp, entered the hostel in June 1998. Their entry impacted dramatically on the group dynamics within the hostel. The January 1998 cohort had been carefully prepared and primed to accept the new youth through a weekend away, staff support and a

social evening at the co-ordinator's home. The new group (who will be discussed in greater detail in due course) was welcomed with a bonding ceremony and braai.

The new youth's entry was a growth point and challenge for the first cohort. Overnight the "older" youth seemed to mature, become mentors or older brothers on the brink of adulthood. This growth was a consolidation of what they had gained in the hostel change and prepared them dramatically for independence. It was as if the older youth needed to prove to the staff and to themselves just how far they had come – how removed they were from street life. The entry of the new group was also a reminder that their days in the hostel were coming to an end. Yet this growth also distanced them even further from the street youth that had just entered and caused conflict, competition for resources and some bullying. The staff really struggled to contain the needs of such diverse groups of youth. Although this was a stressful period for the staff, the growth spurt amongst the older group was real and facilitated their speedy and successful graduation.

Despite all this progress, a worrying trend was noted where youth of the January 1998 cohort became quickly discouraged and paralysed with depression when challenged with obstacles or difficulty e.g. when struggling to find work. In these cases a range of depressive symptoms were noted, in particular that the world was against them, blame and projection. When the situation was rectified – usually by staff intervention – the symptoms dissipated quickly. Similarly, while most were managing with their day to day tasks, almost all the youth were drinking or smoking dagga heavily over the weekends. One young man (who had manipulated his way out of most structured weekends) was becoming more and more involved in a gang and violent crime in the townships despite having a good job. His illiteracy seemed to be an increasing threat to his self-esteem. Although the youth have learnt skills, it is suspected that the deeper psychological issues have not been resolved

By the close of the year there was very significant staff resistance which had developed over several months. Whilst these dynamics are to be expected in an adolescent unit undergoing transition and a country adapting to a change in political ideology; the dynamics were further significantly complicated by the trainee staff (religious brothers and volunteer) belonging to the employing religious order but managed by a lay, (exhausted) female co-ordinator. In engaging with transition in the hostel, the co-ordinator had naively thought that a larger staff would be more able to move the hostel through the transition. In fact, the larger, less experienced staff worked against and at times sabotaged the change process through the co-ordinator's difficulty in containing such a large staff, their lack of experience, their sanguine belief in the youth and their acting out the youth community's need to split the staff.

Between May 1998 and March 1999 sixteen youth graduated from the programme (the seventeenth graduated in August 1999). This means that they were deemed ready for independent living in the community, had an income and accommodation. Some returned to their families, but most built shacks in Khayelitsha or Langa (informal settlements on the outskirts of the city). Despite the January 1998 cohort being offered the 31 March 1999 as their final graduation date, six graduated early.

**Table 6.1 The January 1998 cohort's occupations after graduation**

| Task at graduating         | Comments                                           | Number of youth | Percentage |              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Full-time employment       | Messenger                                          | 1               | 35%        | (Prison '99) |
|                            | Upholstery                                         | 2               |            |              |
|                            | Metal assistant                                    | 1 } = 6         |            |              |
|                            | Wood assistant                                     | 1               |            |              |
|                            | Ship's cook                                        | 1               |            |              |
| Self-employment            | Leather work                                       | 1               | 6%         |              |
| Placed at Camphill & Orion | Life placement on farm                             | 2               | 12%        |              |
| Casual employment          | Plus schooling                                     | 1 } = 3         | 18%        |              |
|                            | Plus further training                              | 2               |            |              |
| Schooling                  |                                                    |                 |            |              |
| Std 6                      | Chosen after having worked<br>- messenger, janitor | 2               | 18%        | (Prison '99) |
| Std 9                      | Never worked                                       | 1 } = 3         | 12%        |              |
| Std 8                      | Never worked                                       | 1               |            |              |
| Std 5                      |                                                    | 1 } = 2         |            |              |
| Total                      |                                                    | 17              | 100%       |              |

Six of the January 1998 cohort graduated with full time employment, one left self-employed, two left having had full time employment but whose families wanted them to return home and to school, four left with part-time employment which would support schooling for two of them and further training for the other two and one returned to his family with the intention to continue schooling – he did not have work experience. One was transferred to Orion in August 1998 and one to Camphill Village in August 1999, for life long care in a structured environment.

Despite much pressure from the hostel, four youth have been determined to continue with their schooling – one of these has had a successful year as a messenger but on return home in the Eastern Cape, his family asked him to return to school. Many of the youth have had casual work experience, for example two of them have spent their holidays dressed up as giant dancing penguins for the Aquarium and it is hoped that these will become permanent opportunities.

Unfortunately two were given prison sentences for robbery, within 1 year of leaving the hostel. In mitigation of this, one of these youth had chosen to leave the hostel in June 1998 and had not experienced the full programme and both had many problems. (The other youth was mentioned earlier as becoming more involved with gangsterism, and struggling with illiteracy.)

Of the three who have elected to remain at school, one is supporting himself with part time work and the other two are living with their mothers for the first time in their lives. The hostel staff has had contact with most of the youth since they left, with almost all the youth reporting that they are coping well – in fact one has opened two informal businesses above his work as a messenger.

### **An evaluation of the progress of the youth in terms of the tasks of adolescence**

In order to establish the progress of this group of youth, the writer draws again on the developmental tasks of Erikson (1950), Blos (1962) and Piaget (1977) to explore the youth's readiness to take on the tasks of young adulthood. Any growth achieved during 1998 could be ascribed to several factors, not least of which would include the fact that the youth were one year older and had matured in this period, notwithstanding the hostel programme. Most of the Xhosa youth had also attended traditional initiation rites either in June or December 1998.

#### *The achievement of ego identity as opposed to role confusion*

Each of the youth seemed to gain a stronger sense of themselves, of their personality and of their values during the year. Their personalities became more robust and focused, along with a stronger sense of personal integrity and coherence. Youth began to pursue individual interests and were able to defend idiosyncratic taste in music. There was also a stronger sense of cultural background and rootedness, as opposed to racial identity and youth were better able to relate across racial divides. The shyest young man began to pursue soccer for a league team. Another moved very seriously into running. And another pursued his interests in youth leadership training and his church. The youth became very clear in the shifts in their association to youth in the townships opposed to street youth – and toward youth with self confidence and esteem, as opposed to those involved in criminal activities.

When working with the youth the staff were aware of working with very different distinct personalities, interests and needs. This energy was much stronger at the end of 1998, than at the end of 1997 – although it is difficult to describe and is an interesting dynamic considering that the hostel had moved from a focus on individuals to a focus on a community. They were able to raise their needs to the staff in a much more mature and assertive manner. Similarly the youth's defences seemed to be much more mature in that there was less projection, less passive-

aggressive behaviour and more of the youth taking responsibility for difficult issues. Certainly ego identity had consolidated over the year to that which one would expect of someone entering young adulthood ready to enter the adult world.

*The recapitulation of the separation-individuation process*

As the self image and ego identity of the youth increased, the youth became functionally, psychologically and emotionally independent of the hostel, began to engage more in the outside world and take on more responsibility for themselves. From April to June this engagement with the outside world seemed to be an opening of rich, exciting opportunity where the youth would return to proudly describe their achievements and experiences to the staff.

With the arrival of the June 1998 cohort, there was a period of exaggerated confidence and importance, and strong challenges to the hostel rules and structures through resistance, disobedience and wilfulness. This bravado seemed to crumble for the less secure as the departure date moved closer. Amongst these youth there was an increase in defensiveness and in their use of primitive defence mechanisms. Some pushed the hostel to either extend the deadline or pretended that they had no resources or skill – demanding that the hostel provide. These youth became angry and blaming, viewing the staff and particularly the co-ordinator as uncaring and punitive. Several refused to discuss their plans for accommodation and income with the staff, and some just left before the date.

Despite this, the graduation date was reached with a sense of achievement and celebration amongst the youth. Once the date and the occasion was reached, the anger and defensiveness was relieved. Having moved through this resistance, all of the youth had plans in place to move and all achieved independence within the mainstream community. Virtually all of the youth found their new accommodation themselves, and many had also found their own work opportunities. These youth have maintained contact with the hostel, but clearly

on their terms. They have moved through the individuation process and are now making their own decisions, taking responsibility for their actions and recognising their own ability to provide for themselves as young adults. They have clearly moved from childhood. This group moved through a particularly difficult separation-individuation process, having been subsumed into the hostel culture of dependency to then move to a space where they could not only leave this containing framework, but also leave with a strong sense of their personality, value and self image.

*The development of ego continuity through the development of a personal view of the past, present and future*

The youth's acknowledgement and understanding of their limited stay in the hostel and therefore the implied future independence, developed their acknowledgement of a future and their personal responsibility to prepare and plan for that future. Most also began to acknowledge and explore their past more openly within the hostel community. Three youth returned to meet their mothers for the first time in years – with all three finally making arrangements to live with these families. Others reengaged with families that they had ignored, or with whom previous social workers had engaged on their behalf. As the hostel was struggling with programme issues, the social worker did not reach out to families, but rather encouraged the youth to explore these issues and then supported them as they tried to come to terms with their experiences. The youth community did not openly explore the issues of the past, but frequently youth would chat to a careworker late at night or casually with the social worker. They were not safe or secure enough to explore the most painful issues, but many of the youth seemed to acknowledge to themselves and the group that their past experiences had been painful.

One extraordinary young man began to talk openly about his feelings about his parents' divorce and how his leaving may have pre-empted their separation. He began to visit both parents to try to repair the relationship and came back to the

hostel where he would talk in meetings and with staff members about how he was struggling with these issues. At the same time he was actively pursuing his driver's licence and became excited about his casual job at the Aquarium. The year before he had spent most of his time watching television or sleeping in front of the television. In this time his energy level had shifted enormously, as did his ability to plan, make decisions, set goals and his self-esteem.

One of the most clear experiences of the youth's difficulty in opening the wounds of the past, was apparent over a weekend where all the staff had taken the whole community to a retreat centre in Stellenbosch to contain, consolidate group identity and to hold – prior to the new intake. The co-ordinator attempted to explore past family relationships using clay modelling. The youth struggled, resisted – but significantly acknowledged the painful memories and hurtful relationships. This experience taught the staff that the programme could not contain the anxiety sufficiently to engage with traumatic material – particularly when working within the city environment. The programme therefore was correct in striving to build coping skills, as opposed to work with the underlying pain.

#### *Mastery of residual trauma*

Whilst the above incident indicates that the youth had much unresolved residual trauma, at the time of graduation each had developed sufficient coping skill that they were able move into independence. Some of these coping mechanisms were functional as in they had developed a sense of self dominated by a positive belief structure, a belief that the world functions in a comprehensible and expected manner, and a belief that there was good in the world with some well-meaning people, despite their continuous experience of trauma. These coping mechanisms worked as long as the belief structure was not shaken. If the structures were shaken at all, the youth seemed to lose all belief. Similarly, many of the young men propped up their coping mechanism through less functional means by way of substance abuse.

Two youth displayed paralysing depression a few months before graduation, when challenged by life obstacles. The first became demotivated when he was unable to find employment due to his unrealistic expectations and his exaggerated assessment of his skill. He had struggled through standard 6, had difficulties with speaking in English, but was determined to find a job as a shelf packer in a men's clothing store. When this was not achieved he sunk into blaming, angry depression... but refused to engage with other training courses. Finally when he took an opportunity to attend a cooking course, found a job on a ship his outlook became positive [Note:- in February 2000 he was exploring employment opportunities, in London!]. Another was wrongfully arrested for dealing in drugs. He became convinced that he would be convicted to a long prison term, required excessive reassurance from staff, was unable to study for his learner's licence, considered going into hiding and retreated into watching television. Again when charges were dropped, the mood shifted immediately. Other youth complained of struggling to concentrate at school because of the memories of the past. Current frustrations seem to hook into past trauma. The youth's resilience seemed to be low and frustration tolerance was difficult.

*The formation of sexual identity as the base for future stable adult relations*

Most of the youth had struggled to achieve a stable sexual identity, as sexuality is loaded with a multitude of cultural, social, peer and personal meaning. The youth have battled with abandonment, self-esteem and power issues and these were all apparent in their relationships with women.

Yet, as they moved to the end of their stay in the hostel, the majority of the youth had achieved stable relationships with a woman. Others had moved to accept the virtues of a monogamous partnership and still others had accepted the responsibilities of parenthood. Gradually there had been a shift where most of the youth were able to recognise and appreciate the needs of a partner within the relationship.

Certainly, not all had achieved this. The youngest young man of the cohort seemed to be the most ill at ease with his sexuality. Perhaps this was to be expected as although he was eighteen he was struggling academically in a primary school in classes of eleven and twelve year olds. Interestingly, he graduated from the hostel to live for the first time with his mother and stepfather, one of the only youth who was not economically independent. His intention was to continue schooling, despite his difficulty with academic work and his skill on the soccer field. Despite being a particularly talented soccer player, he was unable to maintain the discipline that the sport required and was therefore passed over during regional selections. Nevertheless, this young man had entered the hostel as a reserved tentative and shy boy, who behaved more like a twelve year old and on leaving seemed to have filled out to consolidate his identity, was able confront both staff and peers and had a strong sense of self. Yet another youth, who had also decided to continue with his standard 9 had maintained a relationship over 5 years and was becoming increasingly settled in this partnership. As this cohort prepared to leave, the four women on the staff noticed an increase in respect, value and an improvement in their relationships with the young men in terms of gender issues.

#### *Engagement in the world of work*

Eleven of the youth left the hostel with full time, protected, casual or self-employment. Two was actively seeking work and participating in training when they left. Only two of the youth left the hostel having had no experience of employment. These last four had elected to remain at school during 1998. All of the youth had had an exaggerated set of expectations of employers, which had been gradually lowered during the year through lessons, experience and teaching. Unfortunately they were entering the employment market with few skills and little experience which opened them for abuse and exploitation. Frequently permanent positions would be retrenched, or employers would withhold pay increases or leave for no real reason. One employer disciplined his artisan assistant by forcing him to carry bags of cement up four floors, only to take them back down later in

the day... because the youth had not listened fully to instructions in the youth's second language. The hostel struggled to advocate on the youth's behalf in these circumstances, as too much interference would lead to dismissal and work was hard to find. On the other hand, the youth were well prepared for the work place in terms of their experiences in the skills workshops, the extra courses that many had attended and the lifeskill workshops that had taught them about both their rights and responsibilities. Whereas a year ago the staff had worried that youth would turn around and abuse their supervisor when they thought they were being unfairly treated; the staff were now amazed and humbled to see the conditions of employment that the youth were prepared to endure. In conclusion, the youth left the hostel ready to take on the discipline and responsibilities of employment and most had a range of very basic manual, but marketable skill e.g. forklift driving, grilling, metal work, wood work or leather work.

#### **Final assessment of the January 1998 cohort**

The youth in the January 1998 cohort matured greatly during 1998 – particularly those who stayed for the full period and who attended the Bosco Weekends. In assessing the youth's maturity according to Blos's description of late adolescents (1962) who are ready for young adulthood – the youth had achieved most of the tasks. Their identities, interests and egos had become stable, structured and individualised. Their sexual identities with their object relations, have consolidated and stabilised, indicating that they have moved from object dependence where girlfriends met primitive needs of power and affirmation, to object love. Through the peer group they have learned how to move through dependence to coping with anxiety and managing aggression. The youth moved from passive energy to active responses to challenges.

Certainly as the year closed, moods stabilised within the hostel – although there was anger which expressed the anxieties of their immanent departure. The moods seemed much more consistent, realistic and clear. Behaviour stabilised. Youth began to share their feelings and thoughts in safe contexts with the purpose of

solving a problem or resolving a difficulty. There was a notable change in the locus of discipline – youth moved to be more accountable and responsible for their actions and choices. Staff were able to step back – manage group behaviour and did not have to nag, parent and encourage in the same way as the past. This also reflected the gradual detachment of the youth from the hostel parent figures. Gradually as youth returned home (which they usually did quietly on their own initiative) youth began to understand their parents more fully and therefore gained a more rational/mature relationship with staff and a more balanced understanding of adults in general. This almost gave them a sense of freedom from past ghosts as they took responsibility for issues and let go of guilt and anger.

Whilst some moved further than others, it is obvious that not all started in the same place. There was only one youth that the staff was worried about in terms of coping as a spouse, father, employee and member of society -- and it is hoped that in reuniting with his mother and step-father, the family may take him further.

The staff noted during an evaluation that there was a dramatic difference in maturity, mood, social skill and integrated identity, especially amongst those youth who had attended the Bosco Weekends. Those who tended not to attend were those who were working, but were also more resistant and had many more problems -- so it is difficult to make inferences, although there are indications that the Bosco weekends had an impact.

The writer's image of the youth in 1997 was that of kids glued to the television, oblivious to homework, chores, the future or the opportunities available to them. Her image of the January 1998 cohort was of the youth dramatically increasing the volume whenever the radio played the song "I believe I can fly" (words cited at the beginning of this document) and their singing this song in the passage at top volume -- (usually when there was a chapel service below!) There are also memories of graduation ceremonies in Newlands forest around a campfire where

the youth were able to verbalise their learnings, sense of community, hope and gratitude.

In the staff evaluation process, one of the careworkers Phumla Gqomfa commented: "In this year we have really become a bridge for the litties (boys) -- a bridge to a new life, and it is so good to see each one of them walk across that bridge and know that when they wave goodbye on the other side, its really a *Good* bye. They are really going to make it and I am so proud of them' (Staff team evaluation February 1999).

#### **The June 1998 intake -- the first group from the streets**

In June 1999 the hostel accepted its first group of youth who were directly from the streets, into the new programme. This group offered the hostel a very significant challenge and although the results were very discouraging, much was learned. This group was characterised particularly by a tension between the "pull of the streets" and the opportunities offered by the hostel.

Sixteen Plus selected fourteen young men for the camp. All were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two -- although the average age was low at eighteen years. Eight of the youth came from a clique living together in Sea Point and five came from the Cape Town clique -- with one of these being an independent loner. One youth was taken from Claremont Shelter. Nine were coloured and five were black. Most had very little education with a range between sub a and standard 5. All had tried a variety of street children's shelters and some had been detained in Places of Safety. Several had girlfriends still living on the streets despite the fact that they had been encouraged to move to the parallel facility for girls.

This camp was particularly physical in nature, focusing on what the youth could accomplish and reach outdoors as a team. On first assessment the youth had many difficulties, had no sense of the future, poor reality testing, and all, barring

the Claremont youth, were abusing solvents and other drugs (it was later realised that one was in the later stages of alcoholism and another has a significant addiction to mandrax and possibly crack). From this group, twelve reported for the hike and were admitted to the hostel in June 1999 – the other two returned to their parents.

The entry into hostel and workshop life was eased by a three-week orientation period where the youth were occupied every day with fun outings, activities and chores. Right from entry youth struggled with the pull of the streets. There was a clear regression in the youth's functioning where their behaviours reflected those of young children in terms of very low frustration tolerance, attention seeking, a need for immediate gratification and poor reality testing. The cohort's need for security, affirmation, acceptance, containment and safety were so strong that they constantly set up situations where the staff would fail to hold these needs. This dynamic was clearly created by having to compete for attention with the older cohort, as well as acting out of internal conflicts between trust and freedom. In addition there was some conflict between the Sea Point and Cape Town groups and difficulty in simply joining the two groups.

This group lacked internal resources to meet challenges. Initially this cohort had a very limited frustration tolerance. If they were asked to wait for even a few minutes before the careworker went to get the milk or laundry, the youth performed indicating their experience of rejection, abandonment and inability to tolerate any challenge. Their poor self-esteem would not allow them to see how well they were coping and they would then give up or avoid the tasks. In the leatherworkshop one of the youth was actually showing great talent and skill in working with leather, but despite enormous reassurance and containment, had frequent temper tantrums saying that he could not do this, and finally after frequent absences, left.

The youth's constant attention seeking presented in constant challenges of authority: taking staff keys to demand a game of chase, to driving the hostel vehicle, to climbing up into the hostel on the outside of the four story building, to hiding under the bed or refusing to wake up – sometimes due to a severe hangover and sometimes just to express control. Youth were unable to sustain the even fairly minimal demands of getting up on time and spending the day in the Learn to Live skills workshops.

Containing the youth within a structured community life, whilst also not suffocating youth used to the freedom of the street – and still looking to the needs of the existing residents, was a very difficult task. The central difficulty was working against the “pull of the streets” as described by Fest (1988) and mentioned in the literature review in chapter 3. Not only were the youth's girlfriends, friends and family, drug habits and easy money drawing them back into the street life, there was even a well meaning Sea Point charity programme offering the youth weekly parties at Kentucky Fried Chicken, which meant the youth were too late for the curfew. During these parties they made contact with friends, drugs and the lifestyle they were leaving behind – making it more difficult for them to return to the hostel life.

There were also push factors in play, where the new youth struggled to settle in the community dominated by stable young men who had been living in the hostel for years, and who were very hostile towards solvent abuse, drunkenness and childish behaviour. The previous cohort was dominated by the Xhosa youth and traditions, with two coloured youth remaining at the entry of the new group. The new group was dominated by the coloured youth, with the Xhosa youth being the quieter ones. At the same time, four of old cohort had just returned from Xhosa initiation rites, and were now beginning to push their weight around as men. Many of the new cohort found the workshops too difficult, saying particularly that as they worked on their tasks they had traumatic memories flooding back with which they could not cope. The shift from containing stable youth on the brink of

independence, to twelve unknown young men with diverse levels of maturity and inner strength, knocked the hostel staff. There also seemed to be a difficulty with too many underexperienced staff, who were unable to hold the demands of balancing firm encouragement with discipline.

Gradually youth left the programme – with one just disappearing after two days and the others bouncing in and out as the staff attempted a variety of interventions to try to hold them. Eventually in September the staff tried suspending youth for a week at a time for offences such as continual drunken behaviour, continual absence from the workshops, continual sleeping out. Initially this seemed to lead to youth reconsidering their behaviours, but eventually they left.

The staff struggled to hold the limits against the multiple-tests of the June 1998 intake. Issues that were particularly difficult to deal with were drug abuse, non-completion of chores, refusal to wake up and refusal to attend the workshops. The staff struggled as it was clear that the youth were unable to manage their feelings, fears and the change. They were therefore using drugs and were struggling with issues around concentration and frustration tolerance within the workshops. With the increased drug use, poor time keeping (inclusive of being out overnight) and non-attendance in the workshops, the staff struggled to hold the youth to their goals and within the hostel. Gradually one by one the youth were called in for disciplinary hearings and eventually asked to leave.

After five months the staff thought that it was likely that three of the twelve would “make it”. The youth that had stayed had stabilised and had really progressed. Then the older cohort decided that one of the three was abusing mandrax. He was harassed and accused of theft until, despite staff intervention, he left.

**Table 6.2 The length of stay and outcome of the youth in the June 1998 cohort**

| <b>Length of Stay</b> | <b>Numbers of Youth</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Outcome</b>                                                                                |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| < than a week         | 2                       | 16%               | Jail (1), Home (1)                                                                            |
| 1 week – 1 month      | 1                       | 8%                | On streets-no hope                                                                            |
| 1 month- 3 ½ month    | 6                       | 50%               | Home (2), on streets (April intake) (2),<br>on streets but close relationship with hostel (2) |
| 3 ½ months – 5 months | 1                       | 8%                | Streets (April intake)                                                                        |
| 11 months             | 1                       | 8%                | Ship catering & at home                                                                       |
| 18 months             | 1                       | 8%                | Forklifting                                                                                   |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>12</b>               | <b>100%</b>       |                                                                                               |

One other lasted eleven months, before his rude uncontrollable outbursts led to successive suspensions and a final expulsion. His temper seemed to become more and more uncontrollable – yet clearly linked with oedipal issues and events that were happening at that time in his life. It is likely that he left his family to live on the streets due to severe violent spouse/ physical child abuse at home. During the months before he left the hostel, his father disappeared from the family – just as he was re-establishing contact and relationships. Two weeks later the youth found his father living with a second spouse and second family. Also at this time, the two male and one female staff members who were successively assigned to this young man for support and an individual relationship, left the hostel unexpectedly – all through conflict within the hostel. Yet in the eleven months that this young man had been resident in the hostel much had been achieved. It was probably the longest period that he had been off the streets since he left home at twelve. He settled inside of himself, gained focus and began to plan. He gained a stronger sense of himself, developed direction and settled into a marine catering course. The facilitators of the course were so impressed with him and one of the youth of the older cohort that they offered them a business opportunity in the township. These two youth could not be reassured that this was a genuine offer and turned it down, scared that it was too good to be true. He disappeared from the streets after being expelled and it later transpired that he had gone for initiation rituals in the Eastern Cape, to return to live with his family. It was also said that new cohort from the streets pushed him out, when he pulled his weight around.

Only one youth of this cohort was able to remain in the hostel – and he was the one transferred from Claremont Shelter. He is very quiet, has struggled with the pull of the streets and with concentrating on the future. Yet, whilst at the hostel he was able to locate his adoptive family in the Eastern Cape and rebuild a relationship with them. This has increased his stability, belief in himself and rootedness. He has completed a course in forklifting and is now looking for employment.

Four youth of this cohort were sufficiently motivated and strong that they were considered and accepted for later intakes. Of the six that lasted between 1 and 21/2 months, two have been readmitted in the April 1999, and two in the June 1999 intake as it is believed that on a second attempt they will be ready to make decisions and commitment. Two others are well bonded to the hostel and want to return – one lacks maturity and was placed on a waiting list six months and the other's alcohol problem was too severe to manage in this setting. Three others have settled home. One who left the hostel within the first week was a leader of a group in Sea Point and also had a girlfriend who had been encouraged to go to the shelter for girls – however both issues drew him back to the streets and ultimately into Pollsmoor. With clearer assessments, the youth that lasted a month does not have the capacity to leave the streets. He is severely addicted to mandrax, has limited intelligence, low social skills and poor reality testing.

Holding the youth in the programme was a challenge. On the one side it was recognised that too much structure and too stringent a discipline would lead to them to leave. On the other, it was recognised that if there were no limits, chaos would reign, the youth would learn little and they would feel uncontained.

Between the two points of the continuum, the staff endeavoured to recognise the youth's attempts to adapt to the hostel by starting in a less demanding manner and increasing the discipline as the youth came to understand what was expected and

were more able to cooperate with the structures. Within these difficulties the staff was also attempting to hold the limits for the more stable youth.

Very early on in the intake process, the power of a girlfriend became very clear as one of the leaders was drawn out of the process within 3 days. The fact that she was alone and unprotected on the street which demanded his loyalty and protection. Another followed this leader, two months later, for when the first leader was arrested, the group was unprotected and required his loyalty. This second youth was very conflicted about leaving the hostel and a future. These experiences have taught the importance of the relationships and family on the streets, and suggest that successful intervention will need a closure of these relationships in order to allow the youth to move into the hostel permanently

An aspect with which the staff initially struggled was the realisation that the youth live primarily in the present. The youth do not have a strong concept of the future, particularly in terms of a time frame, planning or setting a goal. In fact for many the future does not exist. Similarly their perception of the past tends to be a jumble of memories, blanks, question marks and trauma. This makes traditional responses to low frustration tolerance almost impractical and makes a discipline and containment system virtually impossible to execute. A series of warnings have little meaning – yet one cannot punish a 20 year old – particularly one who will run away if he feels the current situation is unpleasant or meaningless. Similarly the youth's capacity in terms of concentration, goal setting, frustration tolerance and determination was initially overestimated.

The actual process of the youth coming into the hostel: 1) led to emotional regression which was very difficult to contain in a young adult setting, 2) evoked emotions as many memories of home were elicited within the day to day routine (e.g. washing up), 3) limited the use of the usual coping patterns such as drugs and meant that the youth struggled with managing feelings, and 4) raised a desire to return home – without a capacity to change the realities at home. Youth would

frequently encourage each other to clean, saying that their mothers had taught them to wash the dishes properly. With the emotional regression, the staff found that bridging the developmental issues of the different youth was very difficult. Some youth said that whilst in learning manual skills in the workshops, they think of their families and experiences and are overwhelmed by the feelings. They do not have the coping defences and up until now they have responded by either running or drugging.

Youth struggled to work as individuals and individual achievement or work seemed to be extremely threatening and this was often avoided, e.g. the youth struggling in the leatherworkshop. The youth struggled with pressure from their peer group – to leave or to drink, and were unable to make decisions as individuals. This was a difficulty when leaders or peers were drawing the youth back to the streets. The self-esteem was extremely low, so that they did not see how well they were doing at the workshops and became quickly frustrated and demotivated. A short concentration span and a need for ongoing excitement or activity exacerbated this.

The youth seemed to need a staff leader or person that they could focus upon. At the time of intake, the staff team was particularly large with 2 religious brothers and a full time volunteer joining a brand new social worker, an administrator, a careworker, a half day cook and a co-ordinator /social worker. One of the careworker posts was vacant at the time of the intake and relief shifts were being taken by the religious brothers and volunteer (i.e. shared by 2 ½ people). This team was complimented by the workshop team consisting of another four people. Although we had hoped that the key worker system would mitigate against this overloaded team, as well as the fact that 2 of the staff members had been on camp with them, it seemed that the youth struggled to develop secure relationships with staff members and looked to peers for constant support.

An aspect of having a large, new staff that was not highly trained is that the youth were able to quickly engage with any splits between the team. Thus much maintenance work within the team was required. The interesting aspect was that the co-ordinator, who was the most powerful within the team in terms of understanding the programme structure, management and experience, was the person who was most often split by the youth. A smaller, more cohesive team with greater similarity in training and experience would manage more effectively with taking in a new intake.

Similarly it is extremely important to have experienced and well-rested staff, as the youth does not forgive mistakes, conflict or perceived unfair treatment. The youth were quick to recognise inexperience and manipulate this against the person, the team and the programme. Considering the complexity of the day to day conflicts and issues in the hostel, an experienced person will need to listen, assess and react very carefully in order to 1) contain the youth, 2) prevent the youth acting in a dependent manner, and 3) promoting the needs of the hostel community. When the staff were under pressure, mistakes were made which the youth would not forgive – and would prefer not to forgive as it gives themselves an excuse for their own decisions e.g. A youth claims that he left the hostel when the acting careworker accused him of stealing sausages from the pantry. The issue was so small that it was not recorded in the critical incident book, and the careworker did not report it to the team. Yet the youth left because of the manner that the incident was handled.

There were some misunderstandings during the intake process. Whilst the long standing residents had been well prepared for the intake process, frequently their efforts to draw in the new youth were misunderstood as protecting turf. The readjustment of authority so that the rules were negotiated and held as a community was a particular difficulty, as it was understood as bullying by the new cohort who wanted to place the staff in roles of authority and power. The intake had heard the promise of employment preparation as immediate work (an

example of misconception of the future) and so was disappointed when employment was not forthcoming. Yet the youth did not have the emotional capacity, even to sustain involvement in the skills training workshops.

#### **An assessment of the June 1998 cohort's achievement of the developmental tasks of adolescence**

The June 1999 cohort had clearly not begun to engage with the developmental tasks of the passage between adolescence and young adulthood. Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles was that this group was not allowed to become symbiotically engaged with the hostel because the hostel was "owned" by the older group who made the rules, set the tone and indicated their expectations. Certainly the seventy-four percent of the cohort who had stayed for less than 3 ½ months had not achieved a sense of real belonging or trust in the institution.

Without this trust they were unable to engage with the other tasks of gaining a stable identity, developing ego continuity through time references, mastery of residual trauma or engagement in the world of work. Indeed the youth had not engaged with tasks of developing an ego identity and they largely lived only in the moment they were currently experiencing, they struggled with planning, decision making or hope that things will get better. They also were not able to link with adults to get the help they needed to cope. The ambivalence around leaving the streets seemed to be constantly present, as was an awareness of past unspoken trauma.

Yet the three who stayed the longest, could be described as engaging around issues of identity – in fact one of the youth began to blossom into a fuller personality just before he was pushed out by the older group. The other had a more robust personality, which had assisted him to stay for the eleven months, further supported by his ongoing alliances with the stable youth. All three had bonded with the hostel and had given over a level of trust.

At the time of writing, the young man who had persisted in the hostel was struggling with the world of work – but beginning to quietly explore his options. He has completed a mainstream forklifting course, but is struggling to find employment in a difficult market. He also has a stable girlfriend and has re-established contact with his foster family of years past. He will be leaving the hostel in January 2000, and although currently very frightened of this prospect, is likely to flourish given sufficient support.

### **Changes in the hostel programme**

In considering the cohorts to follow, the staff realised that some changes were required to assist the youth in managing the pull of the streets. These were instituted at a number of levels including an orientation programme, recreation, relationships with staff and discipline structures.

There was much discussion between the workshops and the hostel as to how to engage the youth in the first few months, without pushing them further than they could manage. A two month orientation programme was designed where activities of the camp would be continued in different forms, the days would be filled with outings and learning experiences and a gradual, non-threatening entry into the skills workshops and a very slow entry into literacy classes. Linked to this, a fuller recreation programme was planned where the youth would be engaged in sports activities after the workshop programme – reducing the free time available.

The key worker system was also restructured to reduce the number of adults that the youth had to get to know. Three staff members were selected to work in depth with each cohort – supported by a partner staff member in the workshops. Thus a group of four youth were supported by a particular hostel staff member, and this whole group was then placed in the same workshop where there was additional support from the workshop instructor. Both workshop and hostel staff were involved in either the camp or hike, so that relationships between the staff and

youth had already been initiated before the youth were struggling with the challenges of the hostel.

A more cohesive, unified and structured discipline system, was implemented, which focused on holding the youth in the programme. Gradually as the youth settled and the pull of the streets became stronger it was agreed that for every night slept out of the hostel, they would be suspended for a week. This direct consequence was easily understood by the youth. For a number of reasons, particularly due to not having enough staff, the Bosco weekends were not held. Although a number of lifeskill workshops were run particularly during the orientation period.

#### **March 1999 intake – into a virtually empty hostel**

It was decided to wait until the January 1998 cohort graduated on the 31 March 1999, before taking in a new cohort. Again fourteen youth were selected by Sixteen Plus for a preparation/motivation process, the camp, followed by a decision making week on the streets after which 12 self-reported to go on the three day hike. The youth were drawn from a wide range of areas and cliques (four from Sea Point – one a loner, one from Cape Town, one from Claremont, three from District 6, one from Yizani Centre, three from the Grand Parade, one from Pollsmoor on parole who was previously from Cape Town.)

The group was culturally very mixed with eight being black and five coloured – and did not have a strong racial consciousness. There was high education level with two who had std 8 and a high level of literacy and intelligence. This was higher than the June 1998 group. Two had been part of the June 1998 cohort but had dropped out. Both these two and two others who had been given the challenge to prove their commitment before their selection, had previously attended the Learn to Live workshops. The group had a mature leader who was ready to manage the challenges – but again the girlfriends were an obstacle to particularly two of the youth. The group was described by the 16Plus co-

ordinator as bright, with a sincere desire to make changes in their lives, with a strong sense of the future and opportunities which needed to be grasped – far less dependent or attention seeking than June 1998 (Daniels pers.com. 1999). This motivation was increased on the camp.

Although the camp programme and venue was very similar to that of the June 1998 cohort, there were also some significant differences. Due to overbooking of the retreat centre the youth created their own campsite on the property, which was particularly useful in bonding. This camp was facilitated by the Sixteen Plus co-ordinator, whereas the previous one had been cofacilitated by an Australian with a background in team building activities and outdoor education. This camp took a much stronger reflective, spiritual focus and drew on rites of passage reflecting the process of commitment to a new life. Three female German social science students assisted as volunteers, as did one of the hostel careworkers and one of the workshop instructors. The women seemed increase the youth's access to emotional reflection and the involvement of staff members was designed to assist the move from the camp to the hostel. The rest of the hostel staff joined in on the hike.

This camp was evaluated as one of the most successful as well as the most challenging to facilitate. The camp staff required extensive debriefing and support as the camp closed due to the extent of emotional reflection and experience. The youth had made a firm commitment and were reluctant to return to the streets for their decision-making week. Although they came from different groups, they stayed together in Sea Point for the period. When visiting them on the street, the Sixteen Plus co-ordinator attempted to help the youth close their relationships with girlfriends and friends on the streets. After a week the youth reported at the Institute to attend the last phase of preparation, the hike. One youth did not return as he had gone home and has since settled with his family and is attending school. Another who had been taken on as part of his parole

agreement and who did not have the inner resources or commitment disappeared back onto the street.

The group of twelve entered the almost deserted hostel in June 1999. Two of the previous cohort remained, the new co-ordinator had just started and there was a strong sense of a new beginning... the real beginning of the new hostel.

This group of youth settled fairly quickly. A two month orientation programme assisted the youth to adapt to working days in the workshops by starting off by only being in the workshops for 3 mornings a week, with the other hours being supplemented by creative activities, lifeskill and employment lessons, outings and medical appointments. A strong soccer programme with frequent coaching sessions and matches against other hostels and significantly against a local school, kept the youth motivated and busy. The soccer kit was religiously looked after and even the boots regularly polished. This programme was supplemented by drama sessions twice a week co-ordinated by a volunteer and weekly rap sessions facilitated by one of the talented January 1998 youth (and making some money to support his own training sound engineering). The youth became hooked on beads and necklace making, and a business plan has been put in place to encourage entrepreneurship in this direction. Two of the youth are attending night school and the others are involved at Adult Basic Education through the workshops.

This cohort seemed to settle much more quickly and easily in the workshops, with fewer difficulties with concentration. Reasons for this could include that the leaders had been previously in the workshops and therefore settled more easily and assisted the others. The camp had allowed a level of debriefing which might have assisted youth to put past trauma in context. Also one of the workshop instructors had attended the camp so that not only had a relationship been established, but also he was more empathic and had a better understanding of the youth. The changed keyworker system, where the hostel and workshop staff

liased tightly, reduced splitting between the two programmes. And this cohort was easily able to own the hostel, as they were almost the only ones living there.

One of the youth that had been admitted for the second time left after a day and remains on the street. He seems to struggle to conform to the expectations and after the second camp through his active choice seems to have adopted street life as his identity.

Initially some of the youth struggled to sleep in every night and gradually; particularly two youth were being drawn out by two girls who seemed determined to get them out of the hostel. Although the girls were with other male street youth during the day, these two hostel youth felt compelled to protect their girls at night. As the hostel placed more pressure on the young men, the girls ran a scam about being pregnant. When finally the hostel staff approached one of the girl's mothers, one of the youth was able to settle and has since been really committed to the hostel. Incidentally, he had been one who had been part of the June 1998 cohort, who had left to look after the leaderless group in Sea Point. The other continued to struggle through to the time this report was written – with one foot in and one foot out.

The pull of the streets was very strong for this group. Drug addiction and substance abuse were severe problems. Most were addicted to thinners and solvents, had strong ties with the friends on the streets as well as drawn to the easy access to money and freedom of this lifestyle. All, baring one, had lived on the streets for over five years, some much longer. Yet in comparison to the June 1998 cohort, these youth settled more quickly, did not sleep out as much and if they did they would usually be back by Sunday. Gradually those youth with less deep bonds to the hostel began to be drawn out by the pulls of drugs, friends, girlfriends and money.

**Table 6.3 The length of stay of the April 1999 cohort – 6 months after intake**

| Length of Stay                                  | Number of Youth | Percentage  | Outcome                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Before the hike                                 | 2               | 14%         | Home (1), streets (1)                   |
| Less than 2 days                                | 1               | 7%          | Streets                                 |
| Less 1 month                                    | 1               | 7%          | Home                                    |
| Between 1 month – 2 months                      | 3               | 22%         | Streets – (1 went home for a month)     |
| Between 2 months – 5 months                     | 1               | 7%          | Streets – possibly too old for hostel   |
| More than 5 months & still resident at 6 months | 6               | 43%         | looking very stable (4), struggling (2) |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>14</b>       | <b>100%</b> |                                         |

The characteristics shared amongst those who left prior to the first five months included an addiction to thinners and closer connections to the groups in Cape Town. The shared characteristics of those who stayed for over six months included not coming from groups living on the streets surrounding the hostel. Those from the Sea Point clique were advantaged by being a little removed from their friends. Three had been in the workshops before the camp, with one having been part of the June 1998 intake. A fourth had been very friendly with the June 1998 intake and had been on the first camp in September 1997 and so was very familiar with the expectations. One of the three in the workshops had only been on the streets for less than a year. Five of those who had stayed over five months also had either some high school education or were notably bright and it was the sixth youth that was illiterate who at the six-month point was struggling the most. At least three of these six use mandrax occasionally, but were not using thinners as regularly. Two of these six youth have re-established contact with their families. One was greeted with great celebration – with the whole street coming out to greet him. He had been away for many years and had not met some of his siblings. The other family was more difficult, with a high level of dysfunction.

Interestingly, the hostel accommodated one of the least mature youth of the June 1998 cohort for a month of emergency care whilst he underwent surgery. It had been hoped that he might have settled sufficiently to rejoin the hostel, but his thinners addiction pulled him out after one month. The staff reports that on this occasion he was much more settled and less attention seeking yet did not currently have the commitment or insight to sustain the programme.

The hostel community seemed to bond particularly well, with relationships moving beyond the previous area cliques and racial groupings. There was very little violence or conflict, and whilst there was petty theft between youth, hostel equipment did not go missing. Equipment such as the iron did not have to be constantly monitored or locked up. There was particularly one leader in the group who encouraged, strengthened and outlined expectations. Discipline and expectations were brought through from the camp and into the hostel. Cleaning and chores were respected and not challenged. The hostel staff was respected and the youth accepted the community norms, so that when they have for instance not slept in, they accept the consequence of suspension which is owned by the community rather than by the staff. The staff members are seen as containers and holders of community norms, rather than distant authority figures. The atmosphere in the hostel is particularly happy, inclusive and jovial, with the youth spending a great deal of time in the building and together.

#### **Assessment of the April 1999 cohort in terms of the tasks of adolescence**

Staff has noted that initially in the first three months, the youth were struggling with issues of security, trust and bonding. There was a level of regression as well as a strong tension between the desire to belong and be contained, and the fear of losing freedom and dependency. At this point there was much attention seeking. During the fifth and sixth months the youth have attached to the hostel and begun to explore more issues around identity, self concept and self image as seen in their new awareness around clothing, image, contact with people outside of the hostel and a sense of testing different roles and facets of personality. As a group this cohort has battled with their relationships with a group of women with whom they had lived on the streets. It is interesting to see that it was an obstacle which the youth had to battle with, confront and work through, and having moved through this seemed to be a step closer to renegotiating relationships with women on their own terms. One of the youth is still struggling with this process, and may yet be drawn out of the hostel through this challenge. It seems very difficult for the

youth to turn their backs on these girls both due to the loyalties involved, but also due to the fact that they are moving through a transition where they are not meeting women from the community.

The youth that have remained have a strong sense of industry in terms of completing chores and are coping well in the workshops. This will assist in their move into the employment sector, as will their interest in setting up a small bead working industry. These youth are also developing an awareness of their past, particularly as they reengage with their families. Although they are not yet planning their future goals or direction, there is an awareness that they will be leaving in due course. There is little scope in the current hostel programme to work through residual trauma, although there was some opportunity for youth during the camp. The hostel programme however, does seem to develop the youths skills in managing the trauma that they have experienced, through engaging them in a supportive programme, through teaching skills to manage feelings, through developing trust in others and through regaining a sense of control over their lives. This aspect remains to be tested.

There is no way of assessing whether this group of six remaining youth will develop sufficient confidence, skill and mastery to move from the hostel into the mainstream community in September 2000. It was however very interesting to note that these six seemed to have consolidated some of their gains and learning's after 2 ½ months in the hostel, when the June 1999 cohort entered. The April cohort encouraged, motivated, supported and guided the new group. Although with some there was a brief regression, most of the youth took a very small step maturity at this point as they welcomed the new group. There is a definite dynamic of hope, confidence in the future and strength amongst this cohort.

#### **July 1999 cohort**

At the time of writing, this cohort had been in the hostel for 2 ½ months. Hence assessments and observations are very limited. Again fourteen young men were

selected, motivated and then invited on the camp experience. This cohort included youth from a much wider range of areas, as those living in the city centre did not appear to be sufficiently motivated and it seemed important to involve youth from a range of backgrounds. Thus the cohort involved a young man referred from Homestead Shelter for street children who had not actually lived on the streets, one from Yizani Centre who was living on the streets of central Cape Town, four from Phillipi who had been attending the Learn to Live workshops and who were living in the bush, and the others were from Claremont, Woodstock, Parow and District 6.

The group's average education was lower than the previous group, with the highest being standard 4 and 5. Again it was a mixed group with six coloured and eight black young men. Their ages were similar to the other groups, ranging from seventeen to twenty-two. The group mixed well immediately, strong leaders did not emerge which resulted in a reduced sense of hierarchy amongst the youth. There was great respect for adults and authority within this group – held particularly by the youth from Phillipi who initially formed a core.

The camp had quite a different quality to the previous camp, despite the fact that a very similar programme was used. As it was held in mid-winter the youth slept in the retreat centre's dormitories, except for an experience where they slept alone under a shelter they made in the adjoining forest. This camp tended to be much more masculine, where few tears were shed and man to man talks were the order the day. This seemed to be due to the facilitators all being male. Yet strong bonds developed, with high levels of trust. The energy in the camp was much more consistent, respectful and quiet. The spiritual reflections focused both on commitment, but also a reflection on the youth's past, present and future.

Whilst the camp was in progress, the youngest participant moved away from the campfire, took a sleeping bag and some money and returned to the city. It seemed

that he was struggling with the challenges. Another did not return for the hike after the week on the streets.

Another who had missed the camp but seemed to have the resources joined the twelve. These youth settled quickly into the hostel, particularly in the workshops. This seemed to be helped by the fact that four of the youth had had experience in the workshops prior to the camps, along with the settled attitudes of the April 1999 cohort. Yet, the pull of the streets again drew youth out of the hostel. Three left before they had stayed 1 ½ months. These three shared characteristics in that they had the lowest levels of education and intelligence in the group, and they were the most “mixed up”. All three were heavily addicted to thinners, although the eldest was marked for his leadership skills both on the streets and during the camp. He had spent several years in prison and had tears tattooed on his face. This seemed to reflect his perspective on his life, despite his leadership ability.

**Table 6.4 The length of stay of the July 1999 cohort – after 2 ½ months**

| <b>Length of Stay</b>                    | <b>Number of Youth</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Outcome</b>   |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Left before hostel intake                | 2                      | 13%               | Streets          |
| Less than 1 month                        | 1                      | 7%                | Home             |
| Less than 2 months                       | 2                      | 13%               | Streets          |
| More than 2 months & still in the hostel | 10                     | 67%               | 9 looking stable |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>14+1 = 15</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |                  |

The staff has commented that substance dependence is the most significant problem in the work with the youth, and that the use of thinners seems to make it difficult for the youth to conform, participate or respect others. Dagga on the other hand, makes the youth lazy, but they would still work. The staff believes that the addiction to specifically to thinners makes rehabilitation extremely difficult. A combination of alcoholism and thinners is particularly difficult to move. This is a very different practice experience. Conventional wisdom when working with children who abuse solvents is that they will stop when they receive sufficient attention, warmth and food – as indicated in the literature review

The April and July 1999 cohorts mixed very easily, with very little resistance or conflict. The first cohort enjoyed showing the newer youth the ropes and motivated them to keep trying. There are very few physical fights and there has been no physical violence. The youth tend not to go out at night, and there is a lovely feeling of family in the hostel during the evenings with youth playing pool, watching TV, listening to music and talking. There is a respect of the community's norms, so that when they are broken the youth involved accepts and even nominates the consequence. This group has found the home visits very difficult, but they have been offered as an opportunity for taking stock as to what has happened in one's life.

This cohort is bonding well both with the hostel and with the hostel community. The two cohorts have mixed well and there are no racial tensions. All participate easily in completing the daily chores, without too much reminding from the staff. There is an easy ownership of the space, with an understanding that they are responsible for keeping their space in order. This second cohort has been well supported by the earlier one who was able to encourage, motivate and interpret the roles for them.

#### **Assessment according to the tasks of adolescence**

Although it is still very early, there is energy around this and some of the youth are beginning to talk about attending external courses. These youth still have a journey ahead in terms of personal identities and security about their roles; achieving independence; ego continuity; mastery of trauma; forming a mature sexual identity and engaging in the world of work. There is a sense of growing security, and a tentative awareness of their pasts and their future. The youth realise that they will need to plan, as the programme is time limited.

This cohort has coped particularly well in the workshops, not needing a full orientation programme. This could be due to the fact that four had already had contact in the workshops, and that the older cohort was modelling the process of

adjustment effectively. Concentration and a sense of personal defeat have not been as great a difficulty, perhaps due to greater containment from the workshop instructors within the adjusted keywork system. At this point there seem to be fewer connections with girlfriends as they come from a much broader community and their friends are not living on the streets outside of the hostel. This group is particularly involved with the soccer team and sport has been a stabilising and bonding agent. At the time of writing in September 1999 it appears that nine or ten of this cohort will succeed in graduating in January 2001.

The next intake is planned in January 2000 and a number of youth have already asked to be considered.

### **In conclusion**

Abstracting a complex set of dynamics, norms and practices into an artificial system of philosophy and principle, is difficult and inevitably reduces issues to their most basic form. A myriad variety of applications, relationships and interpretations go unacknowledged in this process. It is difficult to identify those aspects, which create a different system. One is also tempted to reflect on the axiom –“The more things change, the more things stay the same.” However, the observations contained in chapter 6 indicate the depth of change and the impact of these changes on the youth.

In January 2000 Daniels returned to the Salesian Institute after a month away. He met a youth from the April 1999 cohort at the gate. After some greeting and chatting the young man admitted that he had again been suspended from the hostel for a week. He commented “It’s a man’s own fault – I stayed out one night – now I’m out for a week.” Daniels commented that this youth was still so bonded to the programme that he was sleeping at the gates, maintaining contact and looking forward to returning. His taking responsibility for matters was remarkable as was his respect for the limits. Daniels said that although this youth is struggling – he will never return to the streets (Daniels pers. com. 2000).

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions and recommendations

The changes in Don Bosco Hostel between 1997 and 1999 have offered a golden opportunity for learning about residential intervention with street youth. While wanting to bear witness to an extraordinary journey with a group of youth and a courageous staff team the writer has also endeavored to organise the complex experience in a manner, which will allow the analysis of selected suppositions. From these descriptions and themes she has then come to conclusions, which in turn have led to a set of recommendations for residential intervention with street youth.

This closing chapter will briefly discuss the broad philosophy, operating principles and response of the youth to both the custodial programme and the developmental programme. This will be followed by examining each of the suppositions of this study in turn, in terms of the practice experience of the hostel between 1997 and 1999, as discussed in chapters five and six, with consideration of the literature reviewed in chapter two. The chapter will finally list a series of conclusions and recommendations. Through this process the writer believes that she will contribute to developing intervention strategies for street youth that are appropriate, effective and efficient.

#### **A summary of the philosophy, operating principles and response of the youth within the custodial approach used between 1993 and 1997**

Don Bosco Hostel's philosophy between 1994 to 1997 falls squarely within the rehabilitative approach discussed by Lusk (1989). The hostel focused on rescuing 'children' between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four from the dangers of the streets -- understanding these youth to be victims of poverty and disorganised families. It was believed that a stable, caring and loving home-like environment, where their basic needs were met, would stabilise the youth to enable them to leave the streets and the street lifestyle.

The operating principles of the hostel during this period focused on being available to the youth through an accessible intake process, informal and trusting relationships between staff and youth, and through weaning the youth from the street lifestyle by gradually expecting mainstream standards of behaviour whilst understanding the pull of the streets. Support and containment were seen as the crucial components of the programme, so authority and discipline were vested in the staff, and particularly in the director. As the hostel recognised that the youth's experiences may have led to emotional and lifeskill difficulties, a therapeutic programme involving individual contracting, support and counselling was developed -- with family intervention to assist the youth to return 'home'. The staff focused on each individual youth in turn, viewing the needs, issues and plans of each as separate. Hostel issues, business and requests were discussed in the hostel group meetings facilitated by a volunteer psychologist. Youth were encouraged to develop their personal, social, life and vocational skills through the day to day activities of life in the hostel and through participating in recreation and education. School attendance was strongly supported as a space where the youth could develop their: sense of stability, understanding of the mainstream expectations, social skills; as well as compensate for their lost childhood and opportunities.

At the end of 1997 it was noted that the hostel community had a very low energy level, with limited planning or focus, a poor sense of goals, yet high levels of violence, unpredictable behaviour, theft and conflict. There was not a strong sense of community. At this stage forty per cent of the residents had stayed in the hostel for over three years. Yet these youth were not ready to cope with the demands of independent living in the mainstream community. In fact fifty-five per cent were attending school -- most in the lower standards of high school -- and all expected the hostel to support them until their schooling was completed. These residents have been described as immature, institutionalised, dependent, unmotivated, entitled, passive, manipulative and avoidant of responsibility. The

cohort was assessed as having low social and life skills, rigid defence mechanisms, blunted affect, regressed patterns of behaviour, poor concentration, low frustration tolerance, poor interpersonal skills and poor reality testing. This same cohort was stable, having left the ways and culture of the street life and moved to associate with peers in the townships. It was noted that the youth had a very high level of trust and attachment towards both of the hostel and of the hostel staff. None of the youth were abusing solvents, although most had entered the hostel with some reliance on thinners and glue. Many were using dagga regularly and a few were abusing mandrax.

The majority of this cohort were struggling to achieve the tasks and skills of late adolescence. The youth's behaviour tended to be unpredictable with motivation wavering in different directions. They had not yet consolidated their sense of self, their values, identities or interests. Their attachment to the hostel as a substitute primary caregiver had a symbiotic quality, indicating that they were not yet ready to give up distorted images of parents and therefore unable to identify themselves as young adults. They were clearly as dependent on the hostel for containment, discipline, locus of energy/control, management of anxiety and aggression; as they were for material support. Therefore they had not yet reached a stage of object love – as clearly demonstrated in their immature sexual identities where women were used to meet personal needs for power, macho-ness and self-esteem. This cohort was struggling with entry into employment for a range of reasons including that they lack of life skills, poor concentration, low frustration tolerance and difficulties with authority.

The three who were able to leave had stayed in the hostel for less than eighteen months, had not attended school but rather had learned a trade and had attitudes which were less entitled or dependent than the other youth. These youth each moved through their own process of beginning to complain about the hostel, seeking approval from staff, rebelling and then separating.

In essence at the end of 1997 the hostel had achieved its goal of assisting the youth to stabilise i.e. leave the streets and street life, yet found that something more was needed as the youth were far from independent. It seemed that allowing youth to remain in childhood activities and roles such as attending school, had led to further dependency. The youth had not achieved the tasks of late adolescence which would allow them to move into independent living. As youth were not able to step into mainstream living, places became blocked and the hostel-community became more and more socially distanced from the streets. The focus on the individual need and level may have led to a reduced sense of community boundary and group norms.

The review of literature in chapter two reflects a concern about the use of residential approaches with street children and street youth. Unfortunately, these critiques do not offer a definition or description of what is meant by residential care. Williams (1996), Strathadee (1992), Jacobson (1989), Keen (1990) and Ennew (1996) warn of protecting and rescuing the child or youth within residential settings, which are believed to cause the child or youth to become dependent, institutionalised, to lose "survival skills" and consequently, to struggle to move into independent mainstream living. Jacobson's writings (1989) about Twilight Shelter for Boys, which works with a very similar client group to that of Don Bosco Hostel, demonstrates just these concerns where youth were unable to move onto independence as they lacked social skills, were overly dependent, struggled to maintain employment, were immature and had a low level of motivation.

Yet, other writers (Kneffler 1988, Boyer 1988, Bronstein 1996, Bass 1996, Richter 1988) advocate for intensive intervention with youth that have lived on the streets for years. Intensive intervention with this client group, usually involves accommodating them. Boyer's study (1988), tracking American street youth as they attempted to move from the streets, indicates that those who were successful in this transition had access to accommodation.

**A summary of the philosophy, operating principles and response of the youth within the developmental approach used between 1998 and 1999**

The philosophical shift made in 1998 remained within Lusk's rehabilitative approach (1989), but engaged with young men to offer them an opportunity of a programme that they may use to move out of street life. The staff were aware that living on the streets involves a conceptual understanding of the world which assists the youth to cope with personal needs and issues, rather than a simply a lack of accommodation. This awareness informed the staff in terms of the philosophical position and interventions of choice. Within this shift, the youth's age, experience and developmental tasks were recognised.

The operational principles of the developmental programme include:

- the selection and preparation of youth so that not only is the candidate chosen for his potential to transition, but he has also made a well considered choice;
- a time limited intervention;
- a programme divided into three six-month phases, with rites of passage facilitating entry and exit to the phases;
- a focus on employment preparation;
- structured intervention through lifeskill workshops, group work, counselling and key work
- peer responsibility and accountability

Within this, the dynamics of the hostel community were used to develop the culture, mores and rules of the hostel.

By March 1999 a group of youth who had experienced at least a year of the custodial programme, the change process in the hostel and then had moved through the developmental programme known as "The School of Life". At the end of 1998, just prior to their graduation, these youth were described as stable, hopeful, motivated and engaged with both their futures and their past. They were able to participate in decision making, took some responsibility for chores and

tasks, and were becoming autonomous in their actions, behaviours, discipline and lifestyle. Each youth was consolidating his sense of identity, personality, values and sexual identity. What was most remarkable was that each youth found his own way out of the hostel. Each found his own accommodation and source of income with the minimum of guidance from the staff. Their expectations and goals had become realistic, concrete and achievable – and they reached them. In this way they proved that they had achieved the tasks of late adolescence and were ready for independence.

In the hostel community the level of violence decreased to negligible levels, and theft was dramatically reduced so that there was little need for security within the building. The youth became aware of their cultural identities and celebrated traditions. Above this, they respected each other's diverse approaches to tradition.

In assessing this cohort of youth in terms of the tasks of adolescence, it was clear that by graduation the cohort had moved into the issues and experiences of young adulthood. Much of the growth seemed to be consolidated at the time when the next cohort moved into the hostel, after months of gradual growth and learning. The youth had gained a stronger sense of self, of their own personality and their choice of values. Their personalities became more robust and focused, along with a stronger sense of personal integrity and coherence. The energy level was much higher. Patterns of defence moved away from passive-aggressive behaviours and there was less projection. Moods and behaviours stabilised and the locus of discipline shifted to within themselves. With the strengthening of self-image and ego identity, the youth became psychologically and emotionally independent of the hostel. They were able to put their own plans in place and act on their own initiative. Along with a sense of the future, the youth began to engage with their pasts, which again allowed them to integrate their sense of experience and life. All of the young men were regarding women in general with more respect and willingness to engage. Their relationships with young women their own age

seemed to settle to less abusive or need driven and characterised by a more 'normal' chauvinist response – and the majority were able to sustain relationships. It seemed for most object dependence had moved to object love. Similarly their relationships with adults, both in their past and in their present, seemed less characterised by anxiety or aggression. Whilst much of the youth's trauma was unresolved, they had developed coping skills with allowed them to function. They were also now more able to trust people, circumstances and the process of life, as they had had one good experience. Whilst one youth continued to battle with alcoholism, he gradually became aware of this and reduced his drinking. Many youth continued to smoke dagga in the evenings, but the impact on their functioning seemed to decrease – possibly as they began to cope with their lives more effectively or due to reduced doses. There was concern that the youth did not have much resilience against the difficulties of life, in that some became paralysed with depression when hopes were not realised. Yet many were willing to face difficult challenges. Similarly, they were now able to tackle the challenges of employment head on and were ready to take up the discipline and responsibility of work. These youth had moved from being passive recipients, to active participants in life. They had clearly achieved the parallel transitions of the move from the street lifestyle and from adolescence to independent young adulthood.

#### **The June 1998 cohort**

As the first cohort who entered this new programme directly from the streets, this group really struggled with the transition from street life and street concepts to a more mainstream pattern of life. This cohort was characterised by overwhelming ambivalence – where the youth wanted a foot in both worlds. All these youth entered with many difficulties, no sense of the future or the past, poor social skills, poor reality testing and most were abusing solvents and other drugs. On entry the youth regressed displaying behaviour patterns of young children, where there was clearly a lack internal resources to allow a tolerance of frustration, an innate expectation of rejection, abandonment and poor achievement. The youth

struggled with issues of trust, control and acceptance of nurturance. They battled with their memories of their pasts. Yet they bonded with the hostel and the hostel staff. Even so, the pull of freedom, alcohol, drugs and girlfriends gradually drew youth out of the hostel. The push factors of sharing the hostel with very stable and sometimes territorial, older youth and inexperienced staff were also real factors. It is worth noting that this cohort was drawn from youth living in close proximity to the hostel, who tended to have severe addiction problems, lower intellectual ability, low social skill, with particularly poor reality testing. They were very immature.

The majority of the June 1998 cohort left the hostel before really engaging with tasks of independence or young adulthood. Those who stayed a little longer did engage with issues of identity, developed significant trust in the hostel and the hostel staff and gradually matured. The three who stayed over 8 months made significant gains in self-esteem, social skill, life skill development and managing their past traumas.

#### **The April 1999 cohort**

The April 1999 cohort moved into an empty hostel and was significantly more mature, motivated and able than the previous cohort. Fewer of this cohort were seriously addicted, there was a higher level of education, two of this cohort had had previous experiences of the Salesian Institute. The majority was drawn from geographical areas slightly removed from the hostel. After a very intense and emotional camp, the group struggled for a short time with issues around security, trust and boundaries – with their behaviour patterns regressing in maturity for a short period after entry. They struggled with a tension to be contained and belong, whilst being fearful of losing their freedom and becoming dependent. By the fifth and sixth months they had settled and began to explore issues of identity, self-concept and self-image. There was a new awareness of clothes, image, contact with people outside of the hostel, testing different roles and facets of their personalities. This group entered the workshops fairly easily, but battled with the

pull of drugs and girlfriends still on the streets. The hostel community was a peaceful, relatively harmonious community, where the youth spent the evenings and weekends in the hostel in good spirit. They were very aware that they were moving to independence within a short period, and engaged with this – in the process developing a sense of future and past. The April 1999 cohort engaged with the hostel programme with a sense of honesty and genuine motivation. They appreciated the efforts of staff and took responsibility for their own behaviour within the programme. This is not to say there were not many difficulties, periods of testing, suspensions and adaptations. However, there is a strong sense that the youth are growing a little more every day.

### **The July 1999 cohort**

The July cohort were drawn from a wider area and included four who had already started in the workshops. Their level of education was a little lower, but their ages very similar to the last two cohorts. This group also seemed to settle quickly, joining easily with the April 1999 cohort and in fact gaining from the maturity and stability of this group. There were three who left within the first month and a half. These three were heavily addicted to thinners, had lower levels of education than the others and were the most “mixed up”. As the group had only been in the hostel for two and a half months at the time of writing, it is too early to make a full assessment, except to note the positive indications that the group will settle well and engage with the programme. There is a growing security, engagement with the future, concern with families, and a positive energy amongst the group. There is also a remarkable responsibility and accountability around the care of the building and their engagement in the programme.

### **A discussion of the five suppositions made in this study**

After working in the hostel for a year, the writer took a range of decisions based on suppositions developed through her and through her colleagues’ practice experiences. Some of these suppositions form the focus of this study, as she used the subsequent changes and further practice experiences to consider the validity of

these suppositions. Each of these suppositions will be examined in turn, reflecting on the material discussed in the literature review and in the descriptions of the philosophies, principles and responses of the custodial and developmental programmes. It is not possible to prove or disprove any of these suppositions as each is quite broad, is not defined in measurable terms, and as any changes may be due to a range of uncontrolled variables. However it is worth discussing the trends observed during these three years.

### **The first supposition**

*The provision of shelter, basic needs and support as the primary intervention with street youth is not usually sufficient to facilitate a youth developing enough personal and social skill to be able to sustain independent living within the mainstream community.*

*In fact, meeting the youth's need for accommodation and food confuses the admission criteria and the intervention process as it allows the staff and youth to assume that the youth has adopted street life due to a lack of accommodation, rather than to meet personal and social needs.*

The provision of accommodation and support during the custodial programme does not appear to be sufficient to facilitate a youth leaving the hostel to sustained independent living in the mainstream community. Initially the staff had believed that the experience of the stable life in the hostel was sufficient to stabilise the youth to prepare them for mainstream life. The responses of the youth over time, and as observed during 1997 challenge this assumption where, as the youth stabilised they seemed to have less capacity to manage the requirements of independent living. Youth lacked the social, personal and life skills to achieve this shift, although many had been in the hostel for several years. At the end of 1997 the youth seemed stuck – unable to take the next step, with some regressing. The provision of accommodation – even with the additional parenting and lifeskill related tasks – seems insufficient to assist the youth to learn the multiple tasks of

independent living i.e. budgeting, the payment of rent, the buying of food etc. But more than this, it appears through assessing the 1997 cohort, that the achievement of independence requires a level of emotional and social skill which enable one to manage conflict, meet one's psychological needs, manage anxiety, develop positive self esteem, and be ready to take on adult roles and tasks. At the end of 1997, the January 1998 cohort lacked these skills. This will be discussed later when considering the second supposition. The youth were hiding from the realities of the world in their schoolbooks, in their focus on the present and on their avoidance of planning for the future.

Yet the fact that the same group achieved this step between six and fourteen months later, indicates that the youth had the potential all along. Whilst their success was possibly related to the extra thirteen months spent in the hostel, some of the youth were able to leave after six months of the new programme even though they had been in the hostel for years. It could be argued that the youth left the developmental programme because they were not happy – yet the participant observation notes indicate that the hostel community had one of its happiest periods during the last six months of 1998. This is also indicated in the decrease in theft, violence and conflict.

The fact that within a period of thirteen months, the same youth moved from being too immature to manage independent living to a point where they moved out indicates that aspects of the developmental programme assisted them. When declaring the key intervention to be the provision of accommodation and basic needs, the hostel implied to the youth and the staff that where one slept and how one ate were the most important areas of change in a young man leaving the streets. The system of individual contracting did mitigate against this to a degree, except that few staff remembered all twenty-four contacts at a time, and that the youth did not really engage with this type of planning as it required a sense of the future and direction.

The developmental programme's focus on skill building and learning seemed to energise the community as they had an active involvement in the process. It was much more immediate and drew attention to the fact that if they wanted to be independent they would have to learn those skills. This in itself was much more threatening, but meant that staff had to assess behaviour, level of skill and actively assist the youth to develop in their areas of weakness. The development programme also forced the staff to seek out those who had the potential to use the programme to move off the streets into the mainstream community. This requires assessment and selection, whereas the custodial model accepted anyone who needed accommodation, with the assumption that the person has the motivation and potential to transition from the streets. This is a crucial difference, as young people who leave either the custodial or the developmental programme without achieving independence will feel a sense of failure, which may reduce self-esteem/ self-confidence and hinder future attempts of leaving the streets. It is important that programmes do not promise more to their clients than they can deliver.

In contrast, the experiences with the June 1998 cohort indicate that some stability is essential for the group to stay long enough to benefit from the hostel. As hostel itself was not able to offer a sufficiently containing environment, the group did not stabilise and did not stay. Thus some offer of a stable experience where boundaries, expectations and lifestyle are very clear is required, to support the development of attachment and bonding with the hostel community and staff.

The experiences using the two approaches within Don Bosco Hostel, indicates that for sixteen to twenty-four year old street youth, the provision of accommodation and basic needs is not necessarily sufficient to assist the youth to move into independence and indeed may confuse entry requirements, client motivation, intervention and staff input.

### **The second supposition**

*Intervention needs to assist the youth to attain the developmental tasks of adolescence, which then allow them to move into young adulthood, thereby preparing the youth for independence. These include:*

- a) the achievement of ego-identity as opposed to role confusion (Erikson 1950),*
- b) the recapitulation of the separation-individuation process,*
- c) the achievement of ego continuity through the development of a personal view of past, present and future,*
- d) the mastery of residual trauma,*
- e) the formation of a sexual identity as the base for future stable relations (Blos 1962),*
- f) the engagement in the world of work (Piaget 1977).*

*Therefore the programme should encourage the development of links with family, but not aim to return the youth to the family as a central goal.*

The responses of the youth to the custodial programme and to the developmental programme certainly support an argument that the achievement of the developmental tasks of late adolescence is a parallel process for the development of the skills which may sustain independent living. The youth who achieved the tasks of late adolescence whilst engaging with the custodial programme were ready to move out. Each one of the three who left the custodial programme, had stable employment, had a sense of personal identity, was gradually disengaging from adults as caretakers, was coping with residual feelings and issues of the past traumas, and had developed a more stable sexual identity and relations with women as people. These youth were certainly not secure in all of these tasks, but had achieved these tasks sufficiently to move onto the next developmental stage that moves the focus from identity to intimacy as an issue. In contrast the youth who had not achieved the tasks of late adolescence were not able to move into independent living. In particular these youth had not yet consolidated their ego-

identity or sexual identity, were overly attached and dependent on the hostel, were defending against past experiences of trauma and were not able to prioritise or be accountable for their work.

Similarly, those who graduated from the developmental programme had achieved most of the tasks of late adolescence and were ready to move into the issues of young adulthood. As they left, they were beginning to struggle around issues of intimacy and committed relationships. In the developmental programme the youth were coached through these tasks more thoroughly, they matured quickly – and were therefore soon seeking independence.

A key element to achieving independence seems to be the development of a personal identity which is sufficiently cohesive and positive that the youth may gain the emotional maturity to manage conflict, anxiety, challenge, negative feelings and relationships. The most profound change amongst the April 1998 cohort was this development of well-rounded, coherent personalities where they found their idiosyncratic values, ideas and interests. The achievement of this growth seemed to be through the structured weekend interventions, the anxiety that they would have to leave and the hostel's confidence that they would be able to succeed. It also seems that the staff's development of the hostel community as a focus of assessment and intervention assisted this, as youth were not seen just as individuals but had to find a place within a social community and had to become more aware of others in the community.

Similarly the recapitulation of the separation-individuation phase is also crucial to allow the youth to rework a difficult past process. The passive response of the youth during the custodial programme prevented the youth from achieving independence – and seemed to attest to youth being stuck in the dependent, symbiotic phase with the absent primary caregiver.

While the youth need assistance to achieve the tasks of late adolescence, they also

need to be provided with a context which is conducive to this growth and separation. As such, the relationships between adult and youth need to be open, and cognisant of young people's resistance to authority figures. A residential programme needs to provide limit setting authority figures who understand testing teenagers, as well as a community system where youth are respected as responsible members, where rules/ issues are negotiated and discussed, and consequences clearly indicated. The relationship between staff members and residents was more open, trusting and clear within the developmental programme as youth were clearly told where they stood, responsibilities for the relationships were more clearly shared and the staff were real people. This facilitated deeper discussion, guidance and respect. Ironically in the developmental programme the staff had more control over the youth – even though they were partners in a community – as the staff were no longer undermined, tested and distrusted as authority figures.

Similarly, the programme needs to take cognisance of age-appropriate tasks. When the custodial programme attempted to return the residents to their families and encouraged them to attend school, this implied both to the staff and to the youth that they were seen as children and could therefore be dependent like children. This was very difficult as eighteen-year-olds with strong survival skills were asked to stand in line with twelve-year-olds at school. Inevitably there were difficulties in relationship between the youth, the teacher and the rest of the class. Families were very wary of taking back an eighteen year old, and the eighteen-year-old was even more wary of accepting family rules. Even more pertinent, was that by giving the youth the tasks of childhood, one was not necessarily giving him back his lost childhood as some writers would have us believe, but rather preventing him in moving into young adulthood.

The writer believes that of the six tasks, one of the most pertinent for street youth is that of resolving residual childhood trauma. Due to the level of trauma and the unsafe environment and circumstances, the youth will not be able to resolve these

experiences through a hostel programme or psychotherapy. Attempts to work with these issues may in fact further alienate the youth through threatening systems of trust and safety. Due to the continuous nature of their experience of trauma, the youth need to develop the life skills to manage this anxiety and learn to use functional coping skills. They particularly need to rebuild trusting relationships with a community, with themselves and with the structure of a way of life. The similarities between the responses to continuous trauma and street culture are remarkable, and future research in this area is recommended.

### **The third supposition**

*A programme that provides for needs without demanding the person to take up responsibility may encourage the development of dependency learned helplessness and institutionalisation. It may numb survival skills without replacing these with social and personal skills.*

*This process may be mitigated against by implementing time-orientated, behaviour targets for personal and social skill development, a time limit for the length of stay, social skill workshops and involving youth in the everyday running and chores of the hostel.*

Literature from developing countries (Williams 1996; Strathadee 1992), experiences in Twilight Boys' Shelter (Jacobson 1989) and the assessment of the youth's responses to the custodial programme indicate that the provision of accommodation and basic needs, without the demand that the person take responsibility for aspects of their life, may lead to dependency. When the youth entered the custodial programme it appeared as if they stopped fighting and gave over the anxieties around subsistence and safety to the hostel. In the process they became one with the hostel – attaching at a level of symbiosis. The youth participating in the custodial programme relied on the hostel for decision making, goal setting, planning, discipline and even energy. They gave over their locus of control to the hostel authority, rarely really rebelling or complaining. In addition

to this the youth processed the government's support for them by way of subsidies as a right for service and the provision of basic needs, as well as a message of ownership. The youth indicated frequently that they were doing the staff a favour by giving a reason for the staff to be employed. This level of entitlement mitigated against growth, against positive relations with staff and against the development of realistic expectations. It also made the move to the developmental programme particularly difficult, as some believed that they had a right to be supported whilst they complete their education.

The developmental programme targeted the youth's dependency by placing a limit on the youth's stay in the hostel. This principle was absolutely key in showing the staff's confidence in the youth's potential for independence and in providing the energy for change. The youth suddenly knew that the hostel would not be home forever, and they would be back on the streets if they did not actively ensure that this did not happen.

The April 1998 cohort experienced a useful level of anxiety about this, which forced them to start preparing, planning, making decisions, making contact with their families and exploring their own resources. The time limit also reduced their sense of ownership and entitlement – particularly as they witnessed the entry of the June 1998 cohort. There were times that this anxiety had to be very carefully managed and spilled into anger directed at the co-ordinator. The April 1999 and July 1999 cohorts entered the programme aware of the time limit. Initially their focus on the present and avoidance of the future meant that the time limit was largely ignored. Yet even in the first few months, the youth did not take ownership or permanent residence as their predecessors' had. There was always a sense that they would be moving on. This increased the energy in the hostel which sustained the youth's access to survival skills, increased their motivation to develop life skills and encouraged them to use the workshop opportunities.

Time orientated behaviour targets were planned as a principle of the

developmental programme to ensure that the youth would be ready and to place the responsibility for readiness on the shoulders of the staff. These were never implemented, so no comments may be made in this regard.

Within the custodial programme, employed youth were expected to pay board and save. The staff was generally unsuccessful at achieving this and suspension for non-payment was difficult as other youth had resources given to them. The developmental programme found it particularly helpful to have all the youth moving through similar programmes, so that there were fewer special cases and all could be acted against when required. Instead of providing needs, the developmental programme gave the youth an opportunity to undertake a chore on the grounds (not in the hostel) for cash. This reduced the sense of entitlement and dependency. It made a substantial difference in their attitudes. Similarly the developmental programme divided the day to day tasks so that different teams were held responsible for cooking, cleaning, maintenance etc. Again this improved the rate of task completion and taught responsibility and accountability. Because the youth were less likely to get away with the non-completion of tasks, dependency and entitlement decreased.

The structured weekend interventions used in the developmental programme also made the world of work more understandable, thereby making it accessible. Similarly, planning, goal setting and decision making workshops reduced the youth's dependency on the hostel as they gained confidence in their own abilities.

The youth that moved through the January 1997 to the April 1998 cohort showed a much reduced sense of entitlement and were engaging with independent behaviours, in response to the developmental programme. The growth within some of the youth was quite marked. Although it is really too early to assess for institutionalisation and dependency with the last two cohorts, symptoms of this have not yet been noticed and the energy remains high.

The practice experience of Don Bosco Hostel in the years between 1997 and 1999 indicates that time-limited intervention which, where possible demands the youth's involvement, responsibility and input, reduces institutionalisation, dependency and entitlement.

#### **The fourth supposition**

*The use of the group dynamics within the hostel community of youth and staff is a powerful tool of intervention. The emphasis on the group above a focus on the individual, assists the staff in decision making, guides intervention, develops the youths' social skills and supports staff in influencing the peer group. This model helps to develop a useful relationship between staff and youth in terms of authority, power and rules within the context and dynamics of adolescence, young adulthood and street culture.*

The custodial programme focused on the needs of the individual and the individuals' paths to independence. This in itself was problematic as it reduced systematic discipline, norms and standards. It also meant that the director held all the authority, but often the youth held the power as they had access to influencing the peer group. The staff did not reflect on the climate of the hostel, how the climate was affecting the youth, how this affecting the staff, or on how the dynamics impacted on the achievement of the hostel's goals. Small groups were used to discuss the business of the hostel and special issues such as substance abuse, where weekly group meetings were held.

The developmental programme moved away from the focus on the individual – leaving this task essentially to the key worker and at times the social worker. The staff complement engaged with the youth as a community. This allowed access to understanding each youth's role in the group, their level of social skill, the mood of the community and allowed the staff to influence the dynamics within the community. It immediately placed issues of discipline as an issue of the community, thereby teaching responsibility to others, the natural consequences of

actions and removed the staff from a hierarchy of authority, allowing them to engage more effectively with the youth.

It was noted that youth that had just moved from the streets often do not have the self-esteem or confidence to engage with the programme as an individual. It is far less threatening for the individual to undertake tasks within a small group – again making the small group a more effective unit of intervention. Yet youth that are battling with the pull of the streets are most likely to be drawn out in a small group, and therefore it is useful to have an adult engage at this level. It is clear that street youth who are in the developmental phase of adolescence will have difficulty with adult figures that represent power and authority. Whilst these figures and boundaries have uses, hierarchical power reduces the effective teaching and influence that the staff members may impart and sets up dynamics of testing and rebellion. Therefore using the hostel community as the authority and the staff as holders of boundaries and limits, assists youth in developing social skills and a conscience. As the community holds boundaries – the testing process is much easier to hold and is an effective tool for growth.

As mentioned earlier, the staff had greater control over the youth, as the youth viewed them as part of the community and they therefore had access to influencing the dynamics. The youth developed social skills through engaging with the group and the staff felt more contained as they were engaging with one dynamic instead of twenty-four. Group work and group assessments are indeed a useful tool in working with street youth in residential contexts.

#### **The fifth supposition**

*The youth need to progress through a process as they: leave the streets, move into the hostel, become used to hostel life and work on personal and social skills, and finally prepare for independence. Within this process the youth need to cope with the "pull of the streets" (ie. the attraction and temptation of returning to the street lifestyle), regression in a space of security and then a testing of maturity*

*before leaving. As such the hostel needs to prepare the youth for entry, assist in breaking the pull of the streets, hold the limits and expectations despite regression and the testing of independence. If the hostel is not able to hold these processes, many of the youth will leave. The hostel also needs to develop systems of maintenance to assist the youth in holding the changes.*

As youth left the custodial programme it was clear that they moved through a process of disengagement from symbiosis -- a regressive approach to reengage and then separation. The disengagement process seemed to be initiated as the youth's ego-identity strengthened, so that he could begin to see himself as separate. He then needed to test this boundary through a phase of rebellion, moodiness and challenges to authority. As separation becomes inevitable the youth unconsciously experiences regret and fear, leading to an approach reaction. If he is sufficiently held and contained through the approach, he consolidates enough energy to separate.

Not only did three youth in the custodial programme respond in this way, but also the April 1998 cohort responded in a similar manner. It seems important that the staff hold a stable boundary so that the youth can test themselves in relation to this boundary, prior to separation. This will facilitate a successful path to independent living with appropriate relationships with adult figures.

Yet, when the June 1998, the April 1999 and July 1999 cohorts moved into the hostel from the streets, the staff also noted a clear transition process from the streets. These youth began with a clear decision to move from the streets, which is quickly eroded by the ambivalence caused by the call or pull of the streets. They battle with peer pressure, choices, adult relationships and all the new expectations. They struggle with a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem; not to mention withdrawal symptoms at a time when they are confronted by the realities of their past, their current situations and themselves. This ambivalence lasts for three to four months while they have one foot inside of the hostel and one outside.

Gradually they settle into the routine and expectations. At the same time the sense of bonding and trust develops, and it is those who have bonded to an adult figure who are more likely to sustain the transition. After six months there is a stabilising where the youth are no longer struggling with the pull of the streets in the same way. They focus more on the hostel life and opportunities. During this time they are very comfortable in their roles in the hostel and have bonded with the community. Although further observation of the current cohorts is required, it appears that this stable bond is unsettled about four months prior to leaving the hostel, with the preparation for independence.

It seems that the staff was unable to adequately respond to the needs of the June 1998 cohort in a manner which would facilitate entry. The staff needed to help the youth understand and manage their ambivalence, and develop the bond between the youth and the hostel staff. Particular areas of concern with this cohort were that the staff tried to wean the youth from the streets using flexible limit setting and boundary keeping. This increased testing out, decreased the sense of stability and safety, and made it impossible to set useful consequences for any moves towards street life. The staff struggled to manage the youth's demands for immediate attention, their low frustration tolerance and rejection seeking behaviours. A further problem seemed to lie in having too many staff members, most of who were inexperienced. This made it difficult for the youth to find a leader upon whom they could focus and test. At the same time the staff were trying to meet the needs of the youth that were rebelling as a part of their separation from the hostel. These youth held the power of territory and maturity in the hostel, which again made it difficult for the new youth to integrate and feel secure.

The entry of the April 1999 and July 1999 cohorts moved much more smoothly. In recognising the need for the youth to bond with staff members, there was increased contact between the staff and the youth prior to entry. The preparation process improved with experience. In the later camps youth were assisted

through the decision to leave the streets. The difference between the level of commitment between the cohort of June 1998 and the April and July 1999 cohorts indicates the importance of assessing the youth's readiness to change, and taking him through the decision making phases. By assisting the youth to work through some of his ambivalence as well as his choices, he is much closer to engaging with the action phase of change – which involves day to day life in the hostel. Prochaska and DiClemente's model (1994) assists in this regard.

Through learning from the lessons from the intake of the June 1998 cohort, staff members were allocated small groups of youth as keyworkers, so that strong relationships between individual staff and youth could be developed. Splitting between staff members was reduced through a keyworker's group of youth attending the same workshop—thereby strengthening the triangular relationship between youth, hostel staff and workshop staff. The youth needed active support to assist them to think through their relationships with girlfriends and friends on the streets, their drug habits and the draw of quick easy money. With this cohort, limits were set clearly by the hostel community and the youth understood the consequences to breaking these limits, allowing them to take responsibility for their actions. Above all, the youth in both these cohorts were able to have a sense of territorial ownership as they were entering a hostel with only one youth of the previous cohort. This meant that the social context was one that they understood and one in which they were welcomed. In turn, this reduced the push factors leading the youth to return to the streets. The bonding, security and fun environment all assisted the youth to win his battle of ambivalence – especially if progress is noted and success celebrated.

The hostel seems to have more success in engaging the youth from these latter two cohorts, than from the June 1998 cohort, due to the extra measures put in place for staff to work with issues of boundary, bonding, ambivalence, support, closer relationships and solid preparation. With experience the staff better understood the phases of the youth's transition into the hostel, and this guided

their interventions and support. These phases seem to reflect Prochaska and DiClemente's model of change (1994). The staff's appropriate support of the April 1999 and July 1999 cohorts significantly reduced the number of youth leaving the programme, as the staff were becoming more in tune with the youth's needs and were prepared to meet them. This support and understanding is required for a successful transition from the street. At the time of writing the hostel has not yet considered what support is needed to maintain the changes after the youth has left. This will need to be considered in the future.

### **Other areas of learning**

There are many lessons to be gained from the changes in the hostel. It seems appropriate to list a selection of the key lessons, which in turn guided the later practice.

- It is apparent that not all the youth living on the streets of Cape Town will benefit from the developmental programme. Selection needs to be guided by this, rather than by the desire to give each and any youth an opportunity, as further "failure" impacts on the youth's self-confidence and hope. Youth with severe addiction to alcohol or thinners struggle to move from street life whilst coping with the addictions. Similarly, those with a lower level of intelligence or who are illiterate seem to struggle more – apparently due to issues of self-esteem and self-confidence. Each cohort should share a similar level of maturity, to ease discipline, guidance and group cohesion. Those who have begun to engage with the issues of young adulthood are ideal candidates.
- The youth need to be kept occupied in activities during the day, rather than left with too much free time. The youth are far more settled when soccer practices are organised every evening after the workshops.
- The youth gain self-esteem and grow when asked to give of their time to the community e.g. When a group went to paint community soup kitchens.

- It is very important the hostel holds appropriate boundaries of caring and does not fall into the trap of symbiosis or "rescuing" by allowing a youth to stay in the hostel for longer than necessary or by accepting inappropriate behaviour. Due to the intense nature of the staff-youth relationships it is sometimes very difficult to set limits or hold boundaries. Sadly, if a youth stays longer or is not held accountable dependency is increased and the youth's chances of achieving independence are undermined. The staff needs to be very cautious of overprotecting the youth.
- Due to a different understanding of time, youth come into the hostel immediately expecting the fulfilment of all promises made whilst motivating them to move into the hostel, i.e. they expect to be employed immediately, forgetting that they first need to develop skills.
- The youth move into the hostel with expectations developed through contact with other children's institutions. They therefore struggle to understand the milieu, group negotiated rules and accountability. It is important to signal to the youth that this programme is different, to assist them to renegotiate relationships with authority, peers and discipline systems.
- It is very difficult to develop an appropriate system of discipline that may accommodate those who have just left these streets and those who are ready to move into independence. It is particularly difficult to hold the balance between containing to reduce insecurity and hold limits; and suffocate those who are used to freedom with no controls. It is essential that there are safe boundaries, which may be tested, may contain the community and keep the youth safe and engaged in the programme.
- It is very difficult to build a community with youth who have lived in the hostel for several years and are very stable, with youth that have just moved

from the streets and are still struggling to move from the streets. The needs, understanding and lifestyle of the stable and unstable youth are very different.

- It is extremely important to have an experienced and well-rested staff, as the youth do not forgive mistakes, tolerate perceived unfair treatment or conflict. Considering the complex day to day conflicts and issues in the hostel, an experienced person will need to listen, assess and react very carefully in order to 1) contain the youth, 2) prevent the youth from responding in a dependent manner and 3) promoting the needs of the hostel community. The staff need to bring energy into their interactions with individuals and the hostel community, to work against the passive climate which may develop. It is better to have a few good staff, than many less experienced staff.
- The youth struggle to develop trusting relationships with many adults. It is more effective to have one mentor working with a group of youth, supported by other staff members in the background.

The process of outlining the philosophy and operating principles of the custodial programme and of the developmental programme has made it apparent that ostensibly two different programmes actually share very similar operating principles. This then draws attention to the importance of the philosophy behind the operating principles, as the two philosophies framed these similar principles into two patterns – creating two very different programmes.

Through the process of identifying the philosophy, operating principles and the youth's response to the custodial and developmental programme as discussed earlier in this chapter, the writer found support for the five suppositions, which guided the changes in programme.

Therefore this writer suggests that:

- The provision of shelter, basic needs and support as the primary intervention with street youth is not usually sufficient to facilitate youth developing enough personal and social skill to be able to sustain independent living within the mainstream community. The meeting of the youth's need for accommodation and food may confuse admission criteria and intervention processes as it allows the staff and youth to assume that the youth has adopted street life due to a lack of accommodation, rather than to meet personal and social needs.
  
- Intervention needs to assist the youth to attain the developmental tasks of adolescence, which then allow them to move into young adulthood, thereby preparing the youth for independence. These include:
  - a) the achievement of ego-identity as opposed to role confusion (Erikson 1950),
  - b) the recapitulation of the separation-individuation process,
  - c) the development of ego continuity through the development of a personal view of the past, present and future,
  - d) the mastery of residual trauma
  - e) the formation of a sexual identity as the base for future stable relations (Blos 1962)
  - f) the engagement in the world of work (Piaget 1977).
  
- A programme that provides for needs without demanding the person to take up responsibility may encourage the development of dependency learned helplessness and institutionalisation. It may numb survival skills without replacing these with social and personal skills.

This process may be mitigated against by implementing a time limit for the length of stay, social skill workshops and involving the youth in the everyday running and chores of the hostel. The study did not look at implementing targets for personal and social skill development.

- The use of the group dynamics within the hostel community of youth and staff is a powerful intervention tool. The emphasis on the group above a focus on the individual assists the staff in decision making, guides intervention and supports staff in influencing the peer group. This model supports a useful relationship between staff and youth in terms of authority, power and rules within the context and dynamics of adolescence, young adulthood and street culture.
- The youth need to progress through a process as they leave the streets, move into the hostel, become used to hostel life and work on personal and social skills, and finally prepare for independence. Within this process the youth need to cope with the "pull of the streets", regression in a space of security and then a testing of maturity before leaving. As such the hostel needs to prepare the youth for entry, assist in breaking the pull of the streets, hold the limits and expectations despite regression and the testing of independence. If the hostel is not able to hold these processes, many of the youth will leave.

### **Further research**

In undertaking this study the writer has endeavoured to record an extraordinary journey with a group of youth and a courageous staff team and to organise the complex experience in a manner which will allow the analysis of selected suppositions. Through exploring the responses of the youth across the programmes, the suppositions have been supported. These suppositions now need to be further researched using more quantitative methodology in order to prove their merit. In particular, the writer recommends further research regarding the impact of continuous traumatisation upon street youth and whether the use of this syndrome develops the understanding of street youth. Similarly, Prochaska and DiClemente's (1994) model of change has much potential for guiding intervention with street youth. It is recommended that this be further investigated.

## **Final words**

The transition from late adolescence to young adulthood is an opportunity to intervene with a proportion of the youth living on the streets of Cape Town. Youth who have lived on the streets for 10 to 20 years cannot be dismissed as a lost cause. This study has indicated that any intervention aiming to assist street youth return to a mainstream lifestyle, must assist the youth to achieve two parallel tasks – that of the transition from the street lifestyle to independent living in the community AND that of achieving the developmental tasks of adolescence to allow growth into young adulthood. This writer has shown that a developmental programme may be effective in assisting these young people in making the shift from the culture of the streets to independent mainstream living. By recognising the specific tasks and needs of the youth, we may have the thrill of hearing them sing:

“I believe I can fly, I believe I can touch the sky... I believe I can  
soar... see me running through that open door... I believe I can fly.”



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## **Appendix A**

**The writer's experience of youth who had been resident in the hostel before 1995**

University of Cape Town

## **Appendix A**

### **The writer's experience of youth who had been resident in the hostel before 1995**

Whilst employed at the hostel the writer had numerous contacts with youth who had been resident prior to 1995, but who were living on the streets or who were in prison. These young men, now in their mid-twenties, would come into the hostel to demand access to showers, food or accommodation – usually with the refrain “ons het die hostel begin (we started the hostel)” or “die hostel is ons’sin, omdat ons dit begin het (the hostel is ours because we started it)”.

Whilst these comments were calculated to question the writer's authority and “ownership”, particularly as a new employee who was white and female, they also refer to the youth's understanding of the ownership of the hostel and a sense of entitlement. The youth were puzzled and angry when their demands were not met, and then abused the staff members who refused. Similarly, when previous residents telephoned the hostel staff from prison there were demands for bail, collusion and advocacy services as well as requests for prison visits and gifts. These previous residents continued a relationship with the hostel, particularly through the outreach programme and when they were in trouble this was their first port of call. Despite this relationship, file notes indicate that many of these youth had struggled to settle in the hostel. They had bounced in and out of the hostel and employment opportunities, as they struggled with the pull of the streets.

The youth's relationship with the hostel has an irrational quality where they believe the hostel is always “in their corner”, always supporting them and always there for them – despite frequent confrontations with hostel staff, which indicate a boundary. This sense that the hostel is one with them, the irrational level of ownership and entitlement, as well as their ascribing the hostel the role of an idealised parent figure who will always have the power to contain and look after them, have some of the characteristics of symbiosis (Mahler 1979:333) – where there is a sense that hostel and youth are one. These youth seemed unable to move into adult roles, remaining dependent and irresponsible on the streets or in prison. They have a sense that their lives are only in the present – nothing has changed either in them or in the hostel over the years and there is no sense of the future. Their sense of their personal history is jumbled, fragmented and dominated by painful memories. When the writer attempted to gain an understanding of an individual's history, the youth usually struggled to relate his experiences in a coherent, sequential manner and frequently their perspective seemed to be distorted – being overly egocentric and paranoid.

The youth remained within the frame that the previous director would have helped them, and did not recognise that they have left the hostel, as has he. These youth seemed to have struggled with the dual roles and identities of free and angry street youth, and more stable hostel youth. They struggled to take on the role of employee or worker, and on the whole have not taken on the roles of parent, as others care for their offspring.

These youth are characterised by very low levels of insight or self-reflection, high levels of substance abuse and involvement in low key criminal activities. Their relationships with women have a selfish quality marked by physical abuse and promiscuity, with the

peer group an important support either in prison or in the city. In essence, their lifestyle and life experience have changed little from when they moved to the streets at the age of nine, eleven or twelve. There are youth that lived in the hostel before 1995 who returned to their family, or community of origin – and have successfully engaged with the adult world. At this stage it would be difficult to estimate the size of the group who broke free from street life and made the transition back to the communities.

**An assessment of this group's achievement of the developmental tasks required moving from adolescence to young adulthood**

A superficial assessment indicates that this group of youth has not achieved a sense of personal identity or role, they have not been able to separate from the containing position of the hostel in order to become independent individuals. They have not developed a sense of continuity between their own past, present and future – in fact they only inhabit the present. Little is known about the traumas that these youth have experienced, as these are not spoken about, however the level and quality of substance abuse and anger may indicate that these issues have not been resolved or mastered satisfactorily. Similarly the youth's expectations of and relationships with women lack the maturity, loyalty and intimacy that one would expect amongst adults. These youth have struggled with employment experiences. It may be said that although most of this group is twenty-five year of age and older, they have not achieved the developmental tasks of adolescence and hence are struggling with society's expectations of them in terms of mainstream values and roles.

**Appendix B**  
**An example of participant observation notes used in this study**

University of Cape Town

## Appendix B

### A typed copy of observation notes made: 12 – 26 July 1998

Notes were made on A3 sheets, photocopied with the headings below. The writer had the sheets on her desk, and made notes of the events in the hostel. These notes were recorded over two week intervals, as she reflected on these at her bi-weekly consultation sessions.

#### Events during this period

- both old and new youth are refusing to take food to the workshops – they insist that the kitchen is opened at lunch—come upstairs, insist that the dormitory is unlocked so that they can get this or that – very manipulative and difficult for the staff to manage. Tried to work this out by holding kitchen closed, and packing a lunch which we took down for the first week. This hasn't worked. Awkward as S always needs food to take his pills – so we can't refuse him easily – even though he hasn't packed lunch. He also refuses to take his pills down to the workshop – so he is the first to demand that the dormitory be opened.
- several of the new youth are refusing to get up in the morning – maybe still too drunk – or issues of control – its really difficult to deal with.
- B- old youth – has got a job as an autotrimmer – did it himself with my encouragement – through looking through the newspaper, phoning and going for the interview – three days later, now talking with me about moving out. Yet only two weeks ago there were all the dramas where he was accused of stealing from his foster parents' home... now he is talking of repaying money on installments
- Z (Old youth) approached me while I was in the kitchen for a lesson on ATMs and grocery shopping – says he doesn't know how to buy food – he's looking at the future!
- X (old) is demanding help to trace his mother – I don't understand it the complications of his family and get a sense of manipulation – asked Phumla to investigate
- L (old) came in boasting about 2 girlfriends – I think there's truth in it, but I think he's trying to wind me up.
- G (old youth, mentally handicapped) has been drinking heavily and therefore having seizures – seems to be reacting to the changes, esp. that fewer people are speaking Afrikaans and his clique have left the hostel. He doesn't fit in with the old or the new – but the older youth are definitely more supportive of him, do not tease the way they used to and are helping him when he has seizures – Much more care.
- S (old youth) has joined a running club and is going to practice 3 times a week – no seizures, very happy, leatherwork going well – his sister is visiting frequently – He is really struggling with the idea of moving, not realistic, and trying to find a flat in Sea Point, has asked Gillian if he can build a hokkie in her backyard in Obs, because if he moves to the townships he won't be able to practice. S seems at one level to be developing in maturity, at another trying to hold onto the supportive relationships – not ready to let go. Since he has always been the most dependent of all, it is not surprising that he is struggling. He is still very focused on the staff and doesn't relate as well with the youth. Tries to play up a special relationship with the staff to get privilege or bully other old and especially new youth.
- B (old youth) has requested that the hostel buy him traditional medicine for pubic lice – and he has to stay in traditional area to use it... I asked Phumla to sort it out (comment – actually positive, that he is now taking responsibility for own health, not just expecting hostel to make all the arrangements and is doing his own problem solving. I don't know how we put traditional medicine into the budget. Also positive that there is a stronger bonding with cultural roots – I think this is progress).
- Three or four of older youth are refusing to do their cooking duties, as the person before hasn't done theirs. There is also an issue that this is woman's work.
- Four of the eight who are supposed to be attending night school, are receiving the taxi fares but not bothering to go – not even bothering to pretend – testing out limits and authority.
- L (old youth) is organising regular prayer groups. Last Sunday at hostel gathering he prayed for the staff!
- This week I had to go to the workshops everyday to work through conflict or difficulties between the new youth and the workshops/workshop staff. B says that he can't concentrate whilst sanding his bat due to the memories of the past that flood back. He usually does not come back after the lunch break

or if he does he is usually high on dagga. A goes with him – A can't seem to sit still for more than 10 minutes – very poor concentration. He's been moved to leatherwork, with the thought that Elizabeth is more patient than the other instructors are. An refusing to go back saying that his instructor owes him money. W says he can't do the leatherwork and has had a number of temper tantrums as his expectations are far above his level. He is also very angry as he says the hostel promised him a job – not 3 months of workshops first. I suggested that Elizabeth try a group task, where individuals are not as clearly evaluated – seems to be working better – more comfortable in this context.

- The new youth are very resistant to the ABET classes, concentration is low and they invariably disappear after lunch so they don't have to go.
- T (old youth) seems to be missing soccer practices with Seven Stars – I wish he could see just how important this opportunity could be for him. He loves soccer but either doesn't have the discipline or self-esteem to hold it together. He is so close to moving into a career... if only he could get it together.
- L (old youth) has been asked again to do his holiday job during school holidays.
- V (new youth) has been sitting on the stairs demanding to be taken home – but he hasn't slept in this whole week. He says he wants to go home for good.
- Serious conflict between S and L (old youth) – something about S selling a cellphone for L (we won't ask where it came from) in order to get L's hi-fi. Definitely goes against the rules concerning buying, swapping and stealing each other's property. S is extremely angry and difficult to contain. L is also not rational. Four or five meetings held to try and sort it out – in the end L stayed in the townships for the weekend as we couldn't keep him safe from angry S – L is being amazingly mature – understanding that S does not contain his feelings well, being assertive and actively trying to resolve the conflict. I am very impressed by L's maturity – he has grown up incredibly into a very fine young man. Same can't be said of S – but they started at very different points. S is incredibly stubborn.

### Hostel climate / group dynamics

- the older youth have settled and grown up in the last three weeks, since the new youth entered. They are quite aloof from the new group, barely talk to them except at from a far distance. They also seem quite jealous – demanding contact with the staff or avoiding the staff totally. With some there is an approach/avoid reaction.
- some tension between the two cohorts of youth. The old youth have been part of holding the norms and rules – new youth do not understand that these rules are owned by the community – not by the staff – it is making it harder for them to find their own niche in the hostel. Yesterday when T was wanting to smoke in the dorm – S explained why he couldn't – I remember giving the same explanation to S 3 months ago.
- the new youth do not seem to have bonded to the hostel – they spend all their spare time on the streets, do not sleep in if possible and seem quite distant from staff and older youth. They have not developed strong relationships with hostel staff – except for Coleridge who is now keeping his distance both due to exhaustion after the camp, but also to try to give space for the new relationships to develop. Their lack of attachment is worrying – possibly linked to the older youth's attitudes and ownership of the hostel – older youth are very disparaging of solvent abuse, sleeping out etc. – older youth distancing themselves – denying that part of their lives by saying that they can't relate. Yet some are being better mentors – I heard M sitting and chatting with three or four of the new ones – encouraging. M has just come back from the bush, therefore may have a stronger sense of responsibility.
- Also heard of some conflict within the older cohort between those who are now men and the boys. Especially the coloured youth but also those who have not gone for initiation are quite angry that they are being asked to do things for the "men" like buy cooldrink – but are excluded as the men refuse to share tables, social talk or showers with the boys. Problem to avoid in the future. Will ask Phumla to intervene – although this is largely happening behind staff's backs.
- There are divisions in the new cohort around racial issues – socialising in cliques – this also links to the geographical areas from which the youth were drawn – difficult to know if it is racism or clique – but racial comments are being made and youth are perceiving that advantages are being given to the other.
- Mood of hostel has shifted in last three days – difficult to say why. Older youth are becoming much less co-operative and demanding of staff's time – at the same time as distancing and not being in the hostel as much. They are very pleased to be saying that they are working and they are therefore not

available for this or that. Working youth – X & D are again refusing to pay board and lodgings. Strong comments about Nondima's cooking – yet the menus have not changed.

- New youth are becoming even more childish. Couldn't get several out of bed over the past few days. Much more distance between the two cohorts.
- Staff are becoming very tired at the frequent meetings, disciplinary hearings and having to be on the ball for the next weird occurrence. They are getting irritable and ratty.
- Great pleasure that we have finally got pap and sour milk on the menu – sure not to be as healthy as the department would like – but the youth are very happy that they have been heard. New youth are less happy and don't like it on the whole.
- struggled with the weekend – group testing out esp. in the hostel meeting on Friday evening – not co-operating, staff focused, refusing to take responsibility for tasks or to engage with process, low levels of energy, much underlying conflict with staff – much resistance e.g. youth refusing to talk, or blaming each other – seems to reflect the divisions in the hostel itself and the ambivalence and lack of trust amongst the youth.
- interesting, despite a good Saturday morning with the youth participating in outings around the city, suddenly when the three volunteers left the group unexpectedly (they had been told not to leave unannounced, but they in the end just jumped out the venture at a traffic light), the youth then really tested out, refusing to participate – also extremely embarrassed to have a picnic in the Cape Town Gardens with the staff – refused to – despite wonderful food.
- yet the youth also really engaged and developed some cohesion through the group activities on the weekend. The theme was developing ownership of one's own city – in part there was a sense that we needed to get out of the hostel, but we used the city to develop self-esteem, belonging and reduce marginalisation. Going to the District 6 museum had meaning, particularly for the new youth who engaged with where their families had lived – but they got bored after 30 minutes. The clue hunt around the Cape Town Gardens was particularly successful – esp. as there was a wonderful person at the reception of the National Gallery who helped each one with the clue “ Who is the famous SA'n in the picture at the front of the National gallery? – Arch Desmond. This man welcomed each one, assisted them to look themselves and showed them around very briefly. L (old youth) said it meant a lot to be welcomed like that – similarly – going into St Georges Cathedral was important for self-respect and then looking over the city from Signal Hill (even though I got lost looking for the noon day gun and we missed it) was a bonding moment. Belonging to the city is a very important issue. As they found a niche in the city, relationships within the hostel community and between staff and youth seemed to settle significantly, and we came home to play soccer in a very positive mood. The Big Clean worked well on Sunday with everyone happy cleaning to very loud music – the new guys got up on time –possibly due to the smell of bacon and eggs.
- Energy dipped during the middle of the week – picked up during the weekend.

#### Stability ie. managing the pull of the street

- seventy percent of the new youth are struggling with drugs – the old youth are seeming to use more dagga – and increasingly on the property – new youth are using solvents – those who use solvents are the more difficult to work with. – although T's alcohol use is totally unmanageable – seems to be in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> phase of alcoholism – tolerance decreasing and can't function without drinking
- new youth are really struggling with ambivalence – they seem to want to be on the streets and unable to give up the street lifestyle – especially those on solvents. Still regressing in behaviour, refusing to take responsibility for anything, no accountability – feels like they are using the hostel for its benefits but not contributing to their own change. Totally present orientated – can't tell you what they will be doing in an hour's time – can't plan for a weekend – as they don't have a sense of time, it is difficult to know what to excuse and what to demand. Since they operate totally in terms of spontaneity – it is difficult to hold them within hostel's frame of discipline. If there is no frame, we won't get anywhere.
- In contrast, the old youth have totally rejected the street lifestyle, moved to township friends and lifestyle, do not associate, except sometimes with the youth under the bridge – they've become very stable
- new youth seem unable to be sufficiently stable to get through a full morning at the workshops – they disappear at lunch if not before, and don't come back. The unsupervised lunch hour is a real problem

- LiL refuses to supervise that time, and we don't have the staff. Maybe we should open the kitchen so at least we are supervising them up in the hostel.

- Friday is a particularly bad time - even if there is a weekend programme - as the drugs on the streets are much more readily available and the youth are pulled out over the weekends
- W is still struggling with his role with the Sea Point group - keeps going there for an evening or two and takes a couple of other youth with him
- The bonds between the new youth are quite strong - can easily pull each other out
- Ang is really working hard at his ambivalence - I think he will stay, even though he is not very bright.
- B seems to be using heavier drugs - crack? or mandrax? but unsure how he can pay for them
- X is very stable as he has already come from a shelter, yet is also being drawn into these activities on the streets

### Behaviour

- Last night B (new group) climbed into the building on the outside of the building, using the drainpipes - even though it was before curfew. He let himself into the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor ladies toilets, locked the door from inside before proceeding to the hostel on the third floor. This morning he had no explanation - just shrugged.
- A (new group) is very demanding of attention - just looks at one with big eyes - very adult focused - doesn't relate as much to the peers. A demands attention by constant requests which he expects to be immediately filled - laundry, milk, iron, soccer ball, by refusing to get up, and by hiding under the bed when there is an activity. A has really regressed - childish behaviour expected for a 12 year old - not 18. A told me that a volunteer needed the venture keys to have it washed. I gave him the keys - but was horrified to see him driving the car a few minutes later. I went down and shouted at A - he disappeared till the next morning - I shouldn't have shouted.
- A group of 4 have not slept in for three days. We don't know what to do. Gillian drove over to Sea Point - and they all climbed into the Venture to come back with her. Said that had gone to a party in Sea Point at KFC, but want to come back.
- J left in a huff - muttering that the careworker was wrong. Refused to come back - seems that careworker said J had stolen sausages. Seems to be hanging with a nasty, older crowd on the streets
- 4 duvets have gone - youth steal each others - not their own
- T got drunk again on his pocket money - when refused entry into the hostel, I had to go down to calm him - tried to stab me with a bottle neck in front of the funders - eventually had him sleep it off downstairs in front of the security guard - he has a severe problem with alcohol - we are not going to be able to contain

### Developmental progress (ie. ego identity, separation-individuation, ego continuity, residual trauma, sexual identity, work)

- old youth seem to be gradually opening up more about their pasts - chatting particularly to the child care worker late at night over a cigarette. They are also asking more questions, asking for the social worker to make contact with their families and visiting their families much more regularly. M met his mother for the first time this week - great fear, trepidation and emotion. Coped very well with it - asked social worker to accompany him at the first meeting. Asking pertinent questions, trying to understand why mother left him in Cape Town - handling it extremely maturely and understanding why a pregnant fourteen year old would return to Transkei - leaving him with his aunt. Quite amazing. He is still reserved around her, but coping well.
- M came to chat to me about bringing his two younger brothers to Cape Town to give them a better future. Also talked about his girlfriend of 4 years and how he would like to marry her in due course.
- Youth seem to be beginning to relate to the staff as real live adults - rather than authority figures. Still much transference towards me as the top authority figure - but much more realistic relationships - also much less demanding, much more appreciation - even walk Nondima down to the station on a Friday evening to keep her safe! Also receiving Nondima's motherly advice much better. Calling her Mama more respectfully and helping with cooking. I haven't heard accusations about staff stealing for a very long time (I don't think the staff were stealing - but the youth were trying to split and damage).
- L has stopped trying to shock me with rap music and is respecting my limits.

- M, V, B and D are coping well with work environments – settled, haven't heard any complaints.
- Difficult to describe, but the individual personalities and interests are becoming more and more apparent, I think this is also happening as the youth have greater spending power and maturity. T has become a much stronger person – has filled out physically and personally. M's character is much stronger has chosen what he wants, L is a little too headstrong for me to cope with but he has developed in confidence. D remains a worry – he's too attached to the hostel, too dependent, and is transferring his sense of belonging to a gangster element – again in trouble this week came back from the townships with a badly beaten face – poor self-esteem seems linked to illiteracy and also not belonging to a family – feel like he needs a father figure or a male role model to draw him out of the hostel into the community – will try to find his uncle or someone. He's too dependent and very passive – yet a controlling bully. He has not engaged with the new kids at all – and is the one guy who has not grown in maturity or as a mentor with their arrival – if anything he has regressed, become more passive and distanced himself from the staff – he is inaccessible.—I think very threatened by having to leave.
- N is very frustrated that he is not working – he slouches around the hostel, disappears as soon as I come near him with job ads and is really discouraged – I think depressed – he is determined to be a shelf packer in a man's clothing store – will not consider a grocery store – yet he only has std 6. He is also threatened by the deadline – but I think it is giving him some reason to be anxious – I think he will pull through if he gets the right opportunity. But currently very moody, certainly becoming much more sure of his identity – very protective over what work he will or will not do – becoming much more attached to his cultural heritage and chatting with P about circumcision -- quite angry with me, copes better with Gillian
- Lx is really engaging with his parents divorce and trying to make sense of it
- Very few youth talking much about the past – yet much stronger sense of reality and acceptance of their past, present and future. There is a definite recognition that the past has been filled with painful events, a strong empathy with the new youth and the new youth's experiences, yet still a reluctance to think through these things. Yet the recognition is a big step forward – and probably the right way to go – -The youth are not secure enough to really come to terms with past trauma.
- Interesting request this week – L came to me to say that the youth wanted the condoms out of the bathroom – too confrontational – when I asked the bigger group – they agreed and M said sex was a private matter between a man and a woman – we shouldn't assume they are all having sex and we shouldn't advertise it – condoms to be kept in the bottom drawer of the child care worker's desk in future – accessible but not advertised. I also asked about whether it was important for us to keep the condoms, youth affirmed that this was important, as they needed to take responsibility for their own lives and that of their partners! This was an informal discussion with about eight older youth – but there seems to be greater responsibility.

### The phases of youth moving in and out of the hostel.

- old youth have had an emotional growth spurt. Can be seen in the way they are beginning to take responsibility for allocated hostel tasks – cooking, cleaning, reminding each other of smoking areas and the way they are relating to staff. Old youth are asking questions about accommodation and employment, and how to work through problems. Developing skills – some are talking of graduating in December.
- L refuses to talk honestly with me about his future – very angry that the hostel is not supporting his schooling –determined to become a lawyer – refuses to consider my suggestions of paralegal work or translations – determined that he can become a lawyer – despite being in std 6 at 21 years. Refuses to see the possible emotional, personal and financial costs involved – just very angry and bitter. Has drawn in another organisation to advocate on his behalf. L is holding strong control issues – gets esp. co-ordinator at a point and then dumps her – like at the opening of the hostel where he was difficult in consenting to read the lesson – when he did he first gave a speech about how one cannot read a set lesson one must be inspired – and then read half the Bible – way beyond set passage. Also is angry about co-ordinator's concern about his prayers which force all youth and staff to listen to him pray aloud for up to 20 mins. L will be a great union leader one day.
- V is making arrangements to buy a shack

- Lx is visiting with his separated parents – really struggling to come to terms with the divorce – wants to bring them back together – yet, amazing change in his energy levels, interests and planning – last year he wasn't interested in anything but falling asleep in front of tv.
- through bad timing or an Act of God, we admitted the new youth one week before Learn to Live is to go on holiday. This led us to plan a 3 week orientation programme for the new youth where we held an activity from 9am-1pm everyday with the purpose of preparation and ongoing motivation. These activities ranged from ice-skating, to dentists, TB checks and drivers involving lessons from the scenery. Youth particularly valued an opportunity do voluntary work – it seems to have enhanced self-esteem – worth doing again. Orientation was absolutely essential in order to help the youth with their battle against the pull. Next time 2 weeks – 3 weeks was too long.
- new youth are really struggling to settle. Seem to get bored very quickly, respond only in terms of what they are feeling of a moment, unable to handle any frustration or cope with being told to wait, hold on or benefit through learning something that takes time. Everything must happen now. Have regressed in behaviour to latency aged behaviour – if not toddlerhood. Frequently it feels like the new youth have to exercise control by saying “No” just to see if we will hold or reject, and to show control.
- Great ambivalence – one foot on the streets and half a foot in the hostel.
- The new youth are longing to go home – great frustration that home is not where they want to be. L, A and An have all returned home to see what its like, but come back. L seems reluctant, unsure of whether to go back home (homevisit has indicated that this is a really impossible home environment with five other children, parents abusing mandrax, spouse abuse and extreme poverty and overcrowding) he goes home for a week and then comes back The new youth keep referring to how they were brought up to indicate the standard for making beds, cleaning dishes etc.

#### Readiness for independent living

- took D and Z down for an interview as a cleaner – D got the job, after 3 days there are complaints that he's not working hard enough – 4<sup>th</sup> day he didn't go to work – 5<sup>th</sup> day fired. Z is frustrated as he thinks he would have kept the job (probably would have)
- impressed with S's behaviour when ice-skating – kept trying, even when struggling, got on with the neighbourhood kids, helped others who were struggling – he had fun even though he has absolutely no co-ordination – good sportsman
- old youth are beginning to manage their money better – about four or five have got bank accounts recently, and they often come for explanations.—yet we are a long way from budgeting – M has spent his month's salary on about 3 items of clothes, L is insistent on getting a designer backpack – I think I may have shown them that gambling is not worth while.
- interesting discussion with M about his getting a permanent job at Wimpy – very clear that he understands his employer's predicament, the realities of the working world and that things take time. A good understanding of what he can expect and how he will be promoted if he is loyal, and a good worker.
- New youth are angry that they have not been given jobs – thought that this would happen on entry – despite clear discussion (also indicates level of time distortion). It is clear that they are struggling with the expectations of the workshops and will not cope on the open labour market.
- The old youth are beginning to use the hostel staff as consultants to answer questions.

#### Areas of progress

- very clear progress with the old youth, they have matured, are making solid use of the weekend activities, are beginning to think and their level of energy has increased very dramatically. Their trust of the staff has improved and they are supporting each other rather than in conflict with each other. The racism within the community has all but vanished. Better gender relationships and respect for women has improved. Much more cooperative.

#### Areas of concern / difficulty

- really struggling to contain the new youth – struggling to find an appropriate level of containment and discipline without suffocating them.
- difficult to find jobs for youth who are ready for employment
- very difficult to meet the needs of the new youth with out alienating the older youth or making jealous – the needs are incredibly different
- difficult to use a group process to discipline when maturity levels are so different

#### Observer's hypotheses / notes

- the orientation programme has been a helpful way of holding the new youth before introducing them to an even more difficult environment, yet it takes enormous energy to run this type of programme – it also prepares the youth for the structured weekends
- structured weekends have been very helpful in teaching very basic things – even taking youth into the city and assisting them to engage with parts that they have never used before has been very helpful in reducing the sense of marginalisation and increasing self esteem
- the pull of the streets is a real problem but also the youth that we have drawn in should have gone through even more stringent selection criteria – the level of drug abuse is unmanageable, at least three did not have the potential for managing the programme, and the different levels of maturity within this group also makes it extremely difficult. In future a much more homogenous group must be chosen where at least level of maturity are more or less the same.
- Having the very very stable old youth and the very very unstable new youth has been impossible – hopefully in the future there will not be as much distance between the groups. The new youth can't even model the old ones because the distance is too great.
- old youth are getting depressed easily when things don't go their way – resilience is too low for survival.
- the programme is working – but the strain on the staff is a problem

**Appendix C**  
**A copy of a key document used in the analysis**

**Working Document on Don Bosco Seminar**  
**February 1994**

University of Cape Town

**Working Document on Don Bosco Seminar**

**February 1994**

**Forward Planning Seminar By Jane Keen**

University of Cape Town

Based on Group Input from:

Fr. Declan Collins  
Fr. Robert Gore  
Luann Scott  
James Davids  
Reggie Michaels  
Jonathan Daniels  
Miles Britton  
Shane Halpin  
Howard Grassow  
Joerg Jacinski

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## 1. Introduction

This report is a follow-up on last year's seminar. In setting out the present situation within Don Bosco Hostel, this document aims to provide a framework for the future direction of the hostel, in terms of residents, staffing and volunteers. It is not meant as a definitive document but rather as a working document which should help to put in place a cohesive plan for the future. The Residents

### 1.1 Situation

Don Bosco hostel personnel consists of a Director, a social worker, a development officer, four key workers, two volunteer hostel advisors and a number of volunteers. There are, at present, 21 residents between the ages of 16 and 22. Of these 10 attend formal schooling, six youth are on the Learn-to-Live programme at Salesian Institute and the remaining are at works skills training or at some form of paid work.

To operate any organisation a set of principles and values must be agreed upon on which to base the objectives and goals for the organisation. From the feedback at the seminar the following principles were agreed upon:

### 1.2 Principles and Values of Operation for Don Bosco Hostel

- a) That the hostel would provide an environment for the residents and staff that is based on trust, respect and acceptance for self and others, is non judgemental, non discriminatory, by race and/or sex, is underlined by unconditional love for the individual.
- b) That it is an evolving living hostel that must aspire to the freedom of the individual, in terms of self awareness, growth, understanding and spirituality, but maintain the accountability or discipline of group living.
- c) That the hostel routine and programme must compliment the progress and development of the individual allowing for empowerment wherever feasible to cope with life outside.

- d) That communication, loyalty, friendship and humour between all involved is important in creating a transparent and open working environment for all.

## **2. WHAT ARE THE NEEDS FOR DON BOSCO HOSTEL?**

### **2.1 The Residents**

The following points summarise the needs of the residents based on direct conversations with key workers. Most live for today and see the future as a vague blur.

- 1 Home / Family of origin / Security
- 2 Relationship / Wife / Girlfriend / boyfriend
- 3 Job
- 4 Children of their own
- 5 Money / Clothing etc...
- 6 Material / luxury goods / Excitement
- 7 Good education / mostly schooling

### **2.2 The Staff**

- 1 Good inter staff communication
- 2 Good staff residents interaction
- 3 Clear direction of Hostel
- 4 Clearly defined Hostel structure and individual role clarification
- 5 Regular evaluation meetings on agreed direction
- 6 A follow-up staff seminar to re-evaluate in June/July time-frame.

The seminar focused primarily on the needs of residents but it is noted here that for the efficient running of the Hostel all needs require evaluation. The group looked at the needs and the ideal situation for the residents both in two and ten years time. Much of this coincided with the residents own aspirations and can be summarised as follows;

## **The Vision**

In two years time, Don Bosco staff would like to see an efficient and well researched and organised hostel, perhaps with extra staff. Further down the line, in ten years time the group would like to see the residents living independent crime and drug-free lives. That they would be stable, educated, employed individuals capable and willing to play a role in the new South Africa. That they would have their own families, perhaps increasing contact with families of origin. That they would feel able to come back to Don Bosco for advice and some guidance or perhaps to be involved in the street rehab programme themselves.

Some of the group saw the introduction of women into the hostel as a future possibility while others hoped to see key workers at street and outreach level. Volunteer input to the running of the hostel received a positive response and it was thought should form a greater part of the future running of the hostel.

The following needs were raised in an attempt to answer some of the aspirations of the residents and the staff.

*Don Bosco staff realise the need;*

- 1 To reduce the pull of the streets
- 2 To continue to build up confidence in each resident helping him to cope with peer and other pressures.
- 3 To continue counselling for substance and alcohol abuse
- 4 To network with other concerned community organisations to the benefit of the residents.
- 5 To encourage empowerment and to develop life-skills.
- 6 To continue schooling and homework programme.
- 7 To investigate the possibilities of family contact
- 8 To investigate conflict and stress resolution
- 9 To evaluate skills training programme for work
- 10 To develop talents and skills through hobbies and recreational activities.
- 11 To foster an inner understanding or spirituality of self and others within the hostel.
- 12 To develop the embryonic volunteer programme

### 3. TACKLING THE NEEDS - A STRATEGY FOR DON BOSCO

To convert this theory into practical programmes, the group agreed to break down these needs into clearly defined goals for Don Bosco Hostel. To make sure these goals are put into action the group allocated staff names to each goal. The programmes will then be developed and monitored and evaluated on a monthly basis at team meetings.

#### 3.1 The Goals for Don Bosco Hostel

##### a) The Volunteer Programme

In order for any programmes to be developed it was felt that personnel need to be available to supplement and compliment Don Bosco staff. As a volunteer programme is presently being developed at Don Bosco, this was not discussed in depth.

The goal for the volunteer programme would be as follows;

*To develop and coordinate a group of volunteers with good references to compliment / supplement the full-time staff on individual projects running within Don Bosco Hostel.*

Luann responsible.

##### b) Life- skills Programme

It was agreed that for the residents to have a greater chance of surviving independently that an emphasis should be placed where ever practical on self reliance. It was agreed that the residents should become more involved in cooking, washing clothes, shopping etc...

As a result the following goal was set;

*That Don Bosco Hostel will put in place an integrated on-going Life Skills programme to enable residents to handle more effectively the idea of independent living.*

Shane and Fr. Declan responsible for Programme Development

**c) Schooling**

It was agreed that the schooling aspect of Don Bosco was working well with ten residents at full-time schooling and six at Learn-to-Live. It was felt that this was excellent for learning discipline and social interaction. One of the difficulties, however, appears to be the coordination and supervision of homework as well as the issue of appropriate schooling and age of resident.

It was also noted at the meeting that Learn-to-Live Programme is being under utilised at present and that perhaps it could be further extended to include life-skills training.

As a result the following goal was set;

*That Don Bosco Hostel maximise each residents educational potential by providing the opportunities to attend the most appropriate educational programme supported by an in-house homework programme.*

Luann and Jonathan are responsible for developing goal.

**d) Therapeutic Programme and Individual Plan Setting For Residents**

The whole area of therapy and counselling was discussed and it was agreed that the idea of 'wellness' should be dealt with on an individual basis. The group decided that individual goal setting should be put in place which would be deal with the residents personal goals, education and/or work, relationships and social interaction with girls/family, health and spirituality.

As a result the following goal was set:

*To develop the concept of wellness with the residents of Don Bosco by way of a written plan for each resident that has been discussed and agreed on to maximise his potential.*

Luann responsible.

**e) Interaction between Staff and Residents - Group Meetings**

It was agreed that the regular group discussions were working reasonably well with everyone accepting its usefulness. However, it was felt that they should be formalised and perhaps made more focused to encourage more participation.

As a result the following goal was developed;

To formalise a method and time for group discussions with residents and to investigate the development of focus groups.

Joerg responsible.

**f) Recreation**

There are a huge range of recreational activities available at Don Bosco Hostel, including football, swimming, snooker gym, basketball etc... as well as regular outings to the country and beach. It was suggested that the residents should be encouraged themselves to do voluntary work themselves during recreation, be that refereeing a football match or working in outreach activities.

It was felt that the major drawback for the development of recreation activities was personnel. It was thought that this could link in with the Volunteer programme.

As a result the goal was set;

*To facilitate the development of a supervised recreational programme for the personal growth and development of the residents using the volunteer programme.*

James responsible.

**g) Family contact**

In the group discussions it was felt that the idea of family contact should if at all feasible be encouraged and developed. It was noted that there are programmes operating at present like social worker reconstruction programmes for home visits. To improve family contact the group suggested networking with other organisations to assist in the contact process, and the encouragement of family visits to hostel or weekend outings together.

As a result the following goal was set:

*To facilitate and encourage meaningful family contact for the residents.*

Luann responsible

**4. Other Projects and operational procedure yet to be developed**

**a) Meetings**

The number, content, purpose and frequency of meetings has to be decided on.

**b) Individual Role clarification and Structure of Hostel**

The group required clarification of each individual role, and position within the overall hostel structure.

**c) Networking with other organisations**

It was acknowledged that the Hostel is quite proactive in networking with other street people organisation including CASP. However, it was felt that this could be re-evaluated to the benefit of all projects and financial wellbeing.

**d) Macro Planning**

A five to ten year plan needs to be developed on how the hostel envisages its future.

**e) Follow-up Seminar**

It was agreed that a follow-up seminar should take place in the June July time frame. Fr. Declan to organise dates and venue.

**Appendix D**  
**A copy of a key document used in the analysis**

**Working Document on Don Bosco Seminar**  
**July 1994**

University of Cape Town

**Working Document on Don Bosco Hostel  
July 1994**

Evaluation and forward planning,  
following seminar in February 1994.

University of Cape Town

Based on group input from:

Fr D. Collins  
L. Scott  
J. Davids  
R. Michaels  
Bro J. Daniels  
S. Halpin  
J. Jaschinski  
H. Grassow

Facilitation by: Jane Keen

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report follows the last seminar in February 1994. The purpose of this seminar was to evaluate and look at the way forward for the projects that were set up at the seminar in Feb of 1994.

The seminar also provided a forum to discuss the hostels involvement in putting a proposal forward for the new Don Bosco activity centre and to discuss how this can be implemented and carried forward.

All those participating in the seminar reflected on the changes in the hostel over the last six months. It was felt that many changes had occurred, the hostel had moved considerably away from purely crisis intervention, to more goal orientated work, there had been an increase in professionalism. The changes brought a lot more structure and clarity into the operation of the hostel, there had been an growth in staff development and it was felt we had been accurate to the goals we had set, while noting the importance to reflect and to find new ways to move forward in reaching the project goals that were set in the february seminar.

### PROJECTS TO BE EVALUATED:

- 1 Volunteer Project ( Luann )
- 2 Life Skills Project ( Fr Declan & Shane )
- 3 Education Project ( Luann and Jonathan )
- 4 Therapeutic: ( Luann )
  - \* Work with families.
  - \* Keyworker system.
- 5 Interaction between staff and residents, hostel meeting. ( Howard & Joerg )
- 6 Recreation ( James )

### FEEDBACK TO BE GIVEN ON:

- 1 Staff meetings ( Fr Declan )
- 2 Role clarification and structure. ( Fr Declan )
- 3 Networking ( Luann )
- 4 Macro Planning - Don Bosco activity centre.

## 1 VOLUNTEER PROJECT/PROGRAMME

Luann introduced the goal development form, briefly outlining the goal which was set in february of 1994, which was to recruit, screen, select and support a well co - ordinated volunteer group whom would compliment the full time staff on projects running in the hostel.

### Progress made:

- \* Volunteer forms were made, one for details and another for job description.
- \* A number of volunteers were screened and interviewed, yet only two were found to be suitable.
- \* Approached Universities and Teacher training colleges in the Cape Town area. Advertising posters were made and placed at the above as well as sent to a number of Churches.
- \* Recruitment was assisted by the Volunteer aid Bureau.

### Difficulties:

- \* Many applicants were unsuitable and it was often difficult to screen.
- \* A lot of energy and time is needed to recruit suitable volunteers.
- \* The difficulty of finding volunteers who can assist in the time period that is needed, ie when youth return from school or training.
- \* The difficulty of being able to get people together for regular meetings, as persons have different working hours and levels of commitment.
- \* Language is a problem, difficult to find Xhosa speaking volunteers.
- \* Expenses become a problem, when wanting to recruit volunteers from the communities the residents come from. People would need basic costs to be covered.

### Recommendations/ The way forward:

- \* It was felt that there will be a growing need for volunteers especially if the Don Bosco activity centre goes forward. Emphasis will have to be placed on recruitment. All staff to get more involved in this area. For now the hostel only needs another two to five volunteers.
- \* Approach youth groups, civic organizations and school leavers. eg CBC volunteer project, youth for Christ etc. Fr Declan to talk to churches.
- \* Make use of a variety of volunteers, not only ~~needed~~ for work with residents, but also admin work and fundraising. Need clear guidelines on the types of volunteers needed.
- \* In the future to look at the possibility of sponsored posts.
- \* Once a core group of volunteers is in existence and more are being recruited look at the professionalising of volunteers; ie training courses, orientation programmes and supervision.
- \* Ideally for one of the volunteers to take over the role as volunteer co - ordinator at some stage.

## 2 LIFE SKILLS PROJECT

Shane reaffirmed the aim being to prepare the residents for independent living, eg washing and cooking.

### Progress made:

- \* Cape Technikon drew up the plans for a new washing and ablution area. The plans were a bit problematic, will have to be passed by the council and will thus have to go to an architect. Finance for this project is still <sup>being</sup> ~~trying to~~ be raised.
- \* Lulu Roxo was employed, as a mother figure to teach and supervise in the kitchen and encourage the youth to actively participate in cooking and food preparation.
- \* Bro Jonathan assisted in drawing up a menu and assisted in the food management and nutritional aspect of meals.

### Difficulties:

- \* The lack of finance to change ablution and wash area.
- \* The logistic problem of not having all the residents available to help in the kitchen at the required time, as youth are still working, in training or at the homework programme.
- \* Due to the hostels food being bought in bulk by Mrs Cochlin, as part of the communities food, there are difficulties in trying to arrange for a separate food budget for the hostel so that residents can do their own shopping. It is felt that financial costs are cut through the system in operation currently. ?

### Recommendations:

- \* For the plan to go ahead.
- \* For Lulu's role to be more defined, not to cook but rather supervise. Fr Declan to negotiate with Lulu to attend seminars and monthly staff meetings.
- \* For residents who are unable to assist in the cooking in the week to take on a greater role over weekends.
- \* For life skills to include areas such as; sexuality, conflict management and assertiveness training. Need to introduce more group work.
- \* For the budget to become more transparent, residents need to be involved in this process.
- \* Accountability, receipts and money to be handed in at the office down stairs.
- \* Investigate the possibility of doing our own shopping for the hostel. Work towards independence.

### **3 EDUCATION PROJECT**

Luann introduced the goal development plan and gave feedback on the goal: To maximise each residents educational potential by providing the opportunities to attend the most appropriate educational programmes and to be supported by an in - house homework programme, run by volunteers.

#### 4 THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMME

Luann <sup>authored the</sup> ~~provided the~~ goal development plan form. This emphasises the goal of developing a concept of wellness in the hostel, through using goal orientated residents contracts, the key worker system and maintaining and encouraging family contact or reconstruction

##### Goal orientated contracts.

##### Progress Made:

- \* A contract form was drawn up, reflecting the residents long term and short term goals, means to reach these goals, behaviour changes, disciplinary measures etc.
- \* Contracts have started being drawn up by the residents, social worker and keyworkers.
- \* Provided more goal orientated service to clients, offering a lot more clarity, structure to the intervention being done
- \* Provided staff with increasing insight into the difficulties, needs and aspirations of the residents we work with.
- \* Empowerment of residents.

##### Difficulties:

- \* The issue of saturation was raised. If contracts were to be extended to emergency and refugee clients, saturation point will be reached.
- \* Lack of continuity, contracts need to be carried out.
- \* Sufficient time.

##### Recommendations:

- \* For contracts to become real living documents.
- \* For all residents to have a copy of their contract.
- \* For all staff to be acquainted with the contracts
- \* To regularly review the contracts
- \* In discussion around the refugee issue the staff spent some time looking at the positives and the negatives of having refugees in the project. It appeared that there were clearly positive motivations in working with the refugees. It was felt that there was no better place, that it was in line with our mission statement and that it was in accordance with Salesian thinking. However, at the same time we recognized that this client group was not our mandate and that they do tap our resources.

Thus in conclusion it was decided that only a certain percentage of beds will be available(5%). That Fr Declan would be involved in one to one counselling with them. Luann to possibly run a group and for them to be moved on as soon as possible, especially once they are earning money.

### **Keyworker programme.**

#### **Progress Made:**

- \* Weekly meetings have been taking place.
- \* Relationships and intervention has started between keyworker and key client.
- \* There has been an element of training and skills development.
- \* Keyworkers are submitting reports.

#### **Difficulties:**

- \* Time available to the keyworkers to do individual work is limited.
- \* The pressure of saturation.
- \* Motivate continual commitment to the programme.
- \* The loss of one of our key workers, Miles Britton.
- \* Reports not being submitted

#### **Recommendations:**

- \* Formal time will be made available for keyworkers to spend individual time with key clients
- \* Extra time is being given to keyworker meetings.
- \* Keyworker meetings to be restructured;  
all discussion surrounding client will be centred on goal directed contract.

A case study will be done at each key workers meeting.

One training session will take place monthly.

A report form will be drawn up for key workers, making reporting easier.

## **Family work/ Reconstruction.**

Contact has been made with all families, either telephonically, home visits, families making contact or writing letters. More families are visiting and maintaining contact. Lulu assisted in tracing and visiting families who were out of contact. Residents continue being encouraged to maintain contact and visit home. It is also hoped that with the past few months of disruptions coming to an end, access to certain areas will be easier.

## **General evaluation of the therapeutic programme:**

It was felt that the hostel had made a clear shift from being purely a shelter. This has been quite frightening and questions have been raised on whether the staff are able to cope with this and whether we are equipped to deal with the changes and changing needs of our client group. There was a concern that we could become too sophisticated, while we still want to be connected to the streets. However it was felt that the changes had been positive and the development of our residents and staff should continue, while still maintaining contact with the streets.

## **5 INTERACTION BETWEEN STAFF AND RESIDENTS ( Hostel meeting )**

### Progress made:

- \* These meetings have been going on weekly during the school term.
- \* There appears to be good commitment from residents to the meeting.
- \* Residents are talking about more serious issues.

### Difficulties:

- \* Howard is having to facilitate the meetings alone, as Joerg is no longer able to attend the meetings.
- \* Residents have felt that issues are not dealt with or followed through in the past.

### Recommendations:

- \* Look at group format, does this need to be changed
- \* A suggestion was to take minutes or keep a record book, which would assist in making certain that issues that are resolved are noted and that decisions undertaken in the meeting will be carried through.
- \* For the whole group to become more involved in the evaluative process.

## 6 RECREATION PROJECT

The goal was to facilitate the development of a supervised recreational programme for the growth and development of residents, through making use of the services of volunteers.

### Progress made:

- \* A number of soccer games had been arranged.
- \* Residents are becoming involved individually in sports in the local community.

### Difficulties:

- \* Seasonal restrictions.
- \* Not much time available or volunteer help in the area of sports.

### Recommendations:

- \* Need to utilize space and facilities.
- \* Encourage youth to make their own teams and to organize their own games.
- \* James to work with Luann in recruiting volunteers for the weekend.
- \* Encourage youth to join community clubs and teams.
- \* For youth to take on the responsibility of organising, while being provided with support and assistance from James.

## FEEDBACK TO BE GIVEN ON:

### 1 STAFF MEETINGS.

Meetings that take place;

- \* Domestic staff meetings - Mon, weekly. 11.15am - 12.30.
- \* Team staff meetings - monthly, 1st Thurs 6.30pm - 8pm
- \* Keyworker meetings - weekly, Thurs 10am -11.30a
- \* Keyworker feedback to Fr/Declan. Thurs afternoon.

Administration has been made more effective with minute taking, filing and the added benefit of the computer.

It was suggested that certain meetings look at the structuring of the meeting to provide maximum effectiveness in a limited time period.

## 2 ROLE AND JOB DESCRIPTION.

The only staff roles that <sup>it was</sup> ~~were~~ felt needed clarification were those of Shane and Bro Jonathan. Fr Declan is working on these.

Fr Declan will be assisted by Howard to draw up a job description for himself.

It was also suggested that Howard and Joerg have a clear job description. Fr Declan will clarify this in the team meeting.

## 3 NETWORKING.

Luann gave feedback on networking. Informal contact continues with other street shelters, state organisations and organisations working with youth. Through the new projects and staffs involvements in different areas ie, Refugee forum, National Council for the rights of children, etc relationships have been developed with numerous organisations. Networking is also supported by referrals that are made regarding particular clients or families. This will continue.

## 4 MACRO PLANNING.

Areas that were noted for discussion were:

- \* Fr Declan's future.
- \* Where Salesians are going as a whole.
- \* Importance needs to be placed on fund raising.
- \* Don Bosco activity centre: ( Fr Declan )

Discussion followed the proposal drawn up by Fr Declan and Shane.

## **Don Bosco activity centre:**

### **The concept:**

A centre for the over 16 year street youth ( girls and boys ). A place, which will welcome youth, provide a deterrent against crime and dangerous activities, while providing youth with support, training and creative activities.

It will be a means of establishing a outreach programme and will keep the hostel in touch with the streets.

There will be a paid co ordinator, who is supported by a committed and suitable group of volunteers.

### **Difficulties:**

- \* Who will be responsible for it?
- \* What will the centre's relationship be to the hostel and to learn to live.
- \* Staff in the hostel are already quite overburdened and their time is limited. Staffs levels of commitment are varied.
- \* A co ordinator will need to be appointed and volunteers will need to be recruited, selected and trained.
- \* When would the project operate, night or day and how often in a week.

### **Recommendations:**

A committee will need to be appointed. These persons will ideally be involved in fundraising and will be persons who have experience in other street peoples organisations, in order for them to assist in putting the programme together.

People/organisations that were thought to be possible candidates;

David Fourtune, Paul Hooper, People involved in the street childrens interest group, CPA, Trish van der Velde, Rotary and lions, reps from community forums, certain volunteers, rep from Learn to Live and Salesians and a social worker.

- \* Recruit suitable volunteers.  
Some will need to be skilled/ specialised, be able to relate to the youth, preferably will come from the communities the youth come from and will need to be able to work flexi time.  
Need to be streetwise, energetic and creative.  
Volunteers will need to be committed.
- \* A paid co ordinator will have to be appointed. This person will be answerable to the committee. Will need three languages. Eng, Afr and Xhosa. It was suggested that this role could initially be given to a fourth year social work student.

## **EVALUATION OF SEMINAR**

Staff felt happy with the outcome of the seminar, which clarified many issues, demonstrated the changes that had occurred since the last workshop, while looking to find new and helpful ideas in assisting us reach the goals set in February of 1994.

# DON BOSCO HOSTEL

**Part of the Salesian Institute's Programme of Human  
Enrichment for Street Children.**



Youth in Don Bosco Hostel.

## **Our Goal**

To empower street youth aged 16 years and over to improve their lives, enabling them to discover a sense of their own dignity and self respect, while helping them to prepare for eventual independent living in society.

## ***Your Goal...***

To realise that your talents, expertise and time can do so much to benefit these youth.

*- From everyone to whom much has been given much is required - Luke 12.48*

**Appendix E**  
**A pamphlet describing the early years in the hostel**

University of Cape Town

**"The youth of our country are the valued possession of the nation. Without them there can be no future."**

***President Nelson Mandela, 24th May 1994***



***A friendly chat with Fr Declan Collins, Director of Don Bosco Hostel***

### **DON BOSCO HOSTEL**

Opened in 1991, Don Bosco Hostel today offers shelter and care to needy youths who are too old for admittance into other children's shelters. This is the last stop for many - without this hostel, there is the inevitable life of drugs and crime on the street.

Forming part of the Salesian Institute's overall street youth programme, Don Bosco Hostel currently accommodates up to 26 former street youths who are all over the age of sixteen.

#### **Life on the street**

The youths who arrive at the hostel each have their own story to tell on how they ended up on the street. Some have escaped from violence in the home or in their community, others have been sexually abused, all, however, have experienced the hardships of poverty. Therefore, staff realise that each youth is different and has differing needs and problems that have to be continually assessed. Whenever possible, every effort is made to return these youths to their own families or communities. For many, however, this is not either practical or possible.

#### **Rehabilitation**

The hostel does not only provide accommodation that is essential for the stability of these youths, but a built-in rehabilitation programme ensures that individual counselling is carried out.

Each youth has a goal-orientated contract with the hostel. This focuses on the individual's goals and dreams for the future. This contract is supported by a 'keyworker' system. This is a means of befriending and working closely with the youths to provide the necessary guidance and support on a one-to-one basis.

Weekly hostel meetings are held where all the staff and youths plan and make decisions together for the smooth running of the hostel.

#### **Education**

As part of their contract, all youth at Don Bosco Hostel must be actively involved during the day. Many now attend formal school, having been through 'Learn-to-Live' - an alternate education and work skills programme which is also run at the Salesian Institute.

### **Employment**

Others have secured jobs, however menial, and have begun climbing the road to responsibility and independent living.

Those who find employment remain in the hostel and come to terms with the work ethos and the new experiences that it entails.

### **Outreach**

An outreach programme targets youth in the 16 plus age group who, for whatever reason, are still living on the street. The purpose of the programme is to help these youth where they are at, encouraging them to make considered choices and provide a listening ear. By keeping in touch with the realities of life on Cape Town's streets it enables staff to determine the current and future needs of these youth.

The aim of our work at all times is to help the youth to develop into responsible young adults, who will leave us with more confidence to cope with the road ahead.

### **Dedicated Team**

A full-time director coordinates a team of dedicated staff including a social worker, two care workers and a committed group of volunteers. The entire programme is ably supported by qualified external advisors.

### **Background**

The Salesian Institute is based in Somerset Road, Cape Town, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a centre for homeless and marginalised youth, who would otherwise be living on the city's streets.

The project maintains that the 'proper' care of the youth implies not only the basic social services of food, clothing, medical treatment, shelter, but also a range of other services. These include, counselling, education, moral and human formation, skills training, spiritual input, assistance with job placement or self employment and continuing support when they leave.

Salesian Institute has five facets providing:

- Accommodation and rehabilitation of adolescents (male) who are 16 and older.
- Remedial learning programme to prepare the youth for reintegration into the formal education/school system.

- Work skill's programme to teach youth basic metal work.

- Placement/support even after they have left the campus.

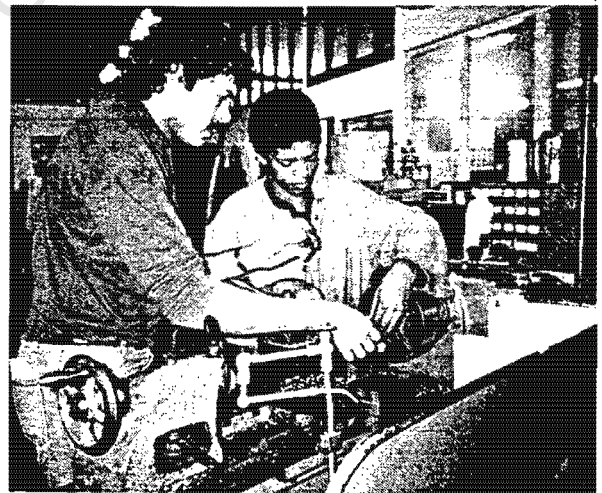
- Independent living programme to ensure that rehabilitation takes root outside the hostel programme.

### **How can you help?**

All the funding needed to feed, accommodate and educate these youth has to be found through donations and fundraising events. The hostel does not get any financial assistance from Government.

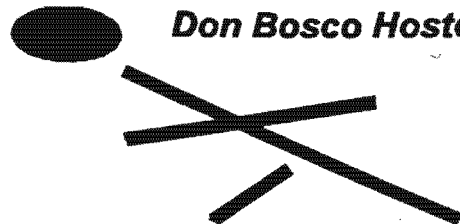
It often does more harm than good to give money to children begging at traffic lights. It may salve one's conscience but more often than not, this is spent on thinners, dagga, cheap wine and junk food.

Donations, offers of employment, sponsorship of youth through education and training, and volunteer work, are just some of the ways in which individuals and businesses can help improve the situation for these youth.



*Learning work skills at Learn-to-Live.*

**Don Bosco Hostel**



**2 Somerset Road**

**Cape Town 8001**

**Tel: 021-251 452**

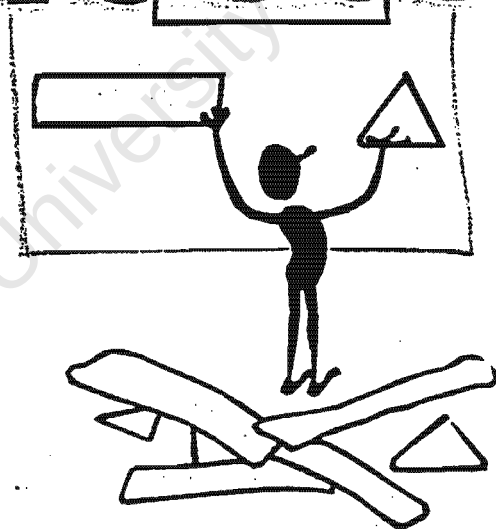
**Fax: 021-419 1312**

**Appendix F**  
**A copy of a key document used in the analysis**

**Don Bosco Hostel: a new vision**

University of Cape Town

# Don Bosco Hostel



## **Don Bosco Hostel: a new vision**

### **Introduction**

In September 1997, after 8 months as the hostel coordinator, I evaluated the programme and accomplishments of the hostel. This process confirmed my concerns about the quality of intervention and involvement with the youth, and the youth's consequent lack of sustained progress. In the subsequent months I have considered many options to address these concerns – from closing down or only providing accommodation, to developing a more therapeutic approach. I really believe that the hostel needs to move from its current custodial approach to care, to a structured intervention. I believe that this is possible to do, with a minimal increase in expense. And I believe that we will see the gains of this investment in very clear terms. After all, the provision of room and board is the most expensive element in care, and to use this outlay most expediently requires the introduction of other services.

The purpose of this report is to summarise my vision for the hostel, the steps which we will need to take to move the hostel to this point and the manner in which staff will need to be deployed in order to achieve this. This will provide a skeleton for further discussion, molding and debate amongst the Board of Management, Salesian community, Institute coordinators, hostel staff *and* the youth. I urge that this debate take place quickly, as it is difficult to hold both programmes in place, particularly at the start of a new year.

### **Concerns which were highlighted in September's evaluation:**

In the evaluation I listed my concerns about the hostel and the progress that the youth were making during their stays. This list included:

- “the hostel is struggling with both quality and quantity issues, in that we are reaching a small proportion of youth who need this type of service, and that the service we are offering is not sufficiently effective or concentrated
- the emotional problems of the youth are not being addressed
- we are not using the group dynamics or working to involve the youth in the running of the hostel – the youth are resistant to this, and the staff find it easier just to do the work rather than to fight the negative pressure
- the youth have learned to be helpless, and do not want to move away from this
- the level of alcohol and drug abuse is very high and we are not addressing this
- the youth come in and sit – we provide for the physical and educational needs and little else – they lack energy and commitment to participate in activities
- the aftercare of the youth who have left is insufficient to sustain gains

- there is limited real contact with families
- there is limited ongoing evaluation of the youth's goals and progress
- we turn away three or four youth every week – many of whom are motivated and ready to make real changes
- while some youth have been able to benefit from the hostel, a significant proportion have had to stay for three or four years because they have not been sufficiently equipped to move on
- youth who have been attending either school or work, frequently are unable to cope with these situations because they have not resolved other emotional issues”  
(Don Bosco Hostel: where to from here? Sept. 1997)

The purpose of the hostel has been:

- “to offer youth 16 years and over, who live on the streets and are not catered for by any other agency, a place to live.
- to give the individual of the streets a sense of love and of belonging, the dignity of work and a sense of independent living (other than the hostel)
- to re-integrate these youth back into society, connect them back with their families and/or refer them to other agencies.” (Planning workshop, October 1995)

### **My vision for Don Bosco Hostel (as a starting point for further discussion):**

**The purpose of the hostel is to:**

Give youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who have been living on the streets of Cape Town, an opportunity to develop the occupational, emotional, spiritual and social skills which will enable them to move from the streets into the mainstream community

**The goal of the hostel is to:**

Equip youth so that they can be an adequate spouse, father, employee and member of society.

**The clients of the hostel will be:**

Selected according to whether they will be able to benefit from the hostel programme – not according to whether the person needs accommodation. The clients of the hostel will be selected and prepared for the hostel experience through camps held by 16+.

**The hostel will offer:**

An eighteen month time-limited programme divided into 3 phases: orientation, lifeskills, preparation for independence.

The youth will be required to attend structured lifeskills training, sports and purposeful activities over weekends.

They will be prepared for employment through 6 months of work preparation at the Learn to Live workshops, followed by skill training courses and then employment in the open labour market. In addition the hostel will facilitate a cooperative where the youth will be assisted to earn their own pocket money through running a small business collectively (this will reduce the free lunch mentality).

Social responsibility projects run by small groups of hostel youth will be used as compulsory learning activities and youth will be actively involved in the day to day running and discipline within the hostel. Positive peer pressure and group dynamics will be key aspects of intervention within the hostel programme, as well as using the hostel responsibilities and roles as teaching opportunities. (eg. Giving the person who is struggling most with conflict, the role of mediator for the week/month, assisting him with it and then evaluating his progress as a hostel community)

Other features will be a use of marking rites of passage to celebrate the youth's movement from the camp into the hostel, and then through each of the three phases of the hostel and finally out of the hostel. This could be done through certificates, badges and movement from group to group – but it would be ideal if clothing could be given at these times.

I would also like to involve Patrons in the hostel life. These would be either people who have achieved and could act as positive role models to the youth or those who could provide a specific service. Patrick Matanjana (one of the guides on Robben Island) and Warrant Officer Simpson come to mind as people I would like to invite to speak, chat, have supper and get to know the youth on a fortnightly basis. On negotiation the patrons would become involved according to their interest and skill. Mr Matanjana has a motivating manner and his experiences on Robben Island as a prisoner hold many messages for the youth. W/O Simpson may guide youth concerning careers on the sea.

**Key aspects of the new Don Bosco Hostel:**

Features of the new hostel will include:

- preparation and selection through involvement at 16+ or the Learn to Live workshops, and completion of a camp
- three 6 month phases of intervention during the youth's stay: orientation/assessment, lifeskills development, and preparing for independence

- changes in occupational task according phase: work preparation at Learn to Live, skills training at a community resource, and placement in a selected and supported employment opportunity
- weekend structured activities
- hostel community responsibility – a system of peer government which organises conflict resolution, discipline, cleaning, entertainment, management of equipment, cooking, and basic hostel correspondence within the hostel, using those in the last phase “preparing for independence” as the leadership committee with revolving portfolio’s
  - Key points: at every level everyone does all the chores (leaders must still clean toilets)
  - : portfolio’s and responsibilities are given in a preventative way so that it is a learning experience, where the person is held accountable for the task being done, and receives sufficient support from the staff members so it does not become overwhelming
  - : tasks will be delegated according to the lessons that the youth need to learn, rather than their ability to complete the task
  - : staff as well as youth will be held accountable by the hostel community for tasks and responsibilities
- social responsibility projects will be run
- some activities and chores will be run using the division into 3 groups according to phases, to develop group dynamics and workable identity, but this will be balanced so that the competition between the three groups does not become too strong
- key workers will be used to support the social worker who will focus on the individuals in the programme ie. Each staff member will be assigned 2 or 3 youth to track through the process, whilst the social worker also does this more fully as well
- after care needs to developed
- recruited, selected and supported employers will be involved to recruit and offer permanent employment to the hostel youth
- a stronger emphasis on celebrating and commiserating as a community around events such as birthdays, departures, certificates, and rites of passage – using rituals

### **An outline of the key elements of the phases of intervention in the hostel:**

#### **Preparation phase**

- Candidate youth should be involved in 16+ or Learn to Live



- 10 day camp to
  - prepare for an in depth programme
  - develop internal motivation for change
  - select those who are ready
  - initiate family contact if possible
- if possible to send 8 youth into the hostel programme at a time

- planning  
- orientation  
- outside member

### **Orientation/assessment phase:**

Theme: Personal responsibility

Goals: to assess the youth (with the youth) around ability, need, problems, level of personal skill, social skill and trauma  
To set goals for time in hostel  
To develop self understanding  
To teach person hygiene and personal care

Task: Work preparation – Learn to Live

Intervention: Weekend workshops

Weekly assessment group meetings with social worker and coordinator

Hostel roles: tend to be apprentices in chores and hostel community

Social responsibility project: those in assessment group start own project

Cooperative: involved in the cooperative

Key worker's tasks: help youth set up identity document and bank account

Substance abuse must be assessed and measured

### **Lifeskills development phase**

Theme: Responsibility towards others

Goals: practical tasks like ensuring identity book is received  
To develop a better understanding of living in a community  
To control substance use  
To have good relationships with others

Task: Skills course in the community – catering, building trade, panel beating etc

Intervention: Weekend workshops

Social work counseling as needed

Substance abuse group as needed

Hostel roles: working roles

Social responsibility project: active in project of their choice

Cooperative: active in cooperative

Key worker's task: monitor substance abuse

Monitor involvement in training course

\* Need to develop a list  
+ bursary system for  
community raised.

### **Preparing for independence phase**

Theme: Responsibility for the future

Goals: employment skills

Money management skills

Basic economics (run by Macro)

Relationships with women

Developing a support system

Occupational tasks: permanent employment with in a recruited, trained and supported employer

Intervention: involvement in weekend workshops depending on their areas of need and employment ie. Once a person is senior is able to negotiate this more easily

Use of the leadership roles in the hostel as a teaching medium

Hostel community responsibility: Leadership roles on the senior committee, which will

Include portfolios of conflict resolution, discipline, cleaning, cooking, equipment

Management, entertainment management – this committee will be given much

Authority in the hostel, although will be supported by the power of the staff

Social responsibility project: must continue involvement in a project

Cooperative: has a choice to continue in the cooperative as he now should be earning

Keyworker: preparing the plans for independent living

**Independent living phase**

Support in some manner, perhaps monthly meetings of the alumni, so that changes can be maintained and consolidated. ✕

The youth should be in permanent employment, ready for a responsible relationship with a partner of the opposite sex and able to sustain mainstream accommodation.

**Explanation of weekend workshops/structured activity**

- A four weekend cycle where workshops are run on the first three weekends of the months and on the fourth the youth are free
- Each weekend, in turn, will be coordinated by Sarah, Gillian and the social worker with help from the Salesian brothers
- Friday evening (6pm-8pm) is a planning meeting where the previous week will be discussed as well as the planning and theme of the upcoming weekend – end with a video
- Saturday will start with an icebreaker, physical game and lead into a lifeskills workshop according to the theme  
The groups may meet to discuss the social responsibility projects/cooperative
- Sunday will start with a devotion tailored to the theme, the youth and the dynamics in the hostel, also an opportunity to attend church  
This could offer opportunities for the Salesian community (including those in parishes) to be involved in offering a devotion, workshop or hike.  
Further lifeskills workshops will be held  
The weekend will end with a meeting to evaluate the progress of the weekend and the weekend activities, as well as to discuss the goals and activities of the week ahead.  
Perhaps the theme of the next weekend could then be chosen together.

End the weekend with a video.

Tools to be used in these workshops include:

Group work, life skills workshops, arts, crafts, adventure (hiking, orienteering, rock climbing, abseiling) discussion, team building challenges, solitary reflection, journal keeping, self understanding exercises, religious activities, cross cultural work, exposure to outside stimuli such as museums, newspapers, parliament, conflict resolution and community life, sports, tasks for becoming independent, eg. Bank accounts; environmental work such as recycling, information workshops around social issues etc.

All activities and tools need to be used with very clear goals, planning and understanding to develop the week's or weekend's theme.

### **Permanent employment placements**

This is going to require much hard work. A proposal marketing the skills and commitment of our youth will be developed, circulated and followed up with the human resource departments of food franchises, retail shops and others. Service clubs will also be asked for their support in this. Supervisors will be trained in aspects of managing a youth with clear guidance and limit setting, and ongoing support will be given to the employer and employee ie. We will be marketing a good employment recruitment process. The key worker will follow up each of his or her youth who are working so that any problems can be sorted out immediately. The goal is that the youth will have experience within their permanent employment for several months before leaving the hostel.

### **Concerns**

- We will no longer be offering accommodation, but a programme – this means that there is even more limited accommodation for this age group in the city. However, perhaps this concern is mediated by Edmund House.
- The programme offers insufficient time for recreation. This may deter youth, or lead to a high drop out rate.
- There are many youth who would not benefit from this type of programme and therefore would not be selected – there are no other projects supporting these youth. Eg. George Basson.
- This programme is idealistic – perhaps it is not realistic
- The selection process means that some youth who have just arrived on the streets may have to wait, and therefore may become streetwise during this period.

### **How do we make this transition?**

1. Discuss these ideas with the director and coordinators (22 January 1998)

2. Discuss these ideas with the hostel staff.
3. Discuss these ideas with the youth
4. Go away as a hostel community to CBC in Stellenbosch for a weekend to plan and design the hostel – the skeleton has been given, this needs to be reworked and negotiated with the youth so that they have a sense of ownership of the programme
5. Select a date for the new hostel to open.
6. Have a grand opening ceremony of to mark this day.
7. From this time weekend activities will start, at first including much relaxation and gradually bringing a stronger therapeutic focus. Ie. Start with lots of hikes, and gradually develop to having more and more workshops and purposeful activity.
8. The youth who have been in the hostel for some time and are actively working to improve their lives, will be invited to reapply for the new hostel. As this group of youths moves into the hostel, they will be seen as the seniors and in a combined 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phase. A new group of youth will be taken from a camp, and will go straight into the 1<sup>st</sup> phase. The new group will be orientated and lead by the old group.
9. We will evaluate the success of the hostel every six months and fully at the end of the first year.

University of Cape Town

**Appendix G**  
**A pamphlet describing the new hostel programme**

University of Cape Town

**Don Bosco Hostel**  
**Salesian Institute, Cape Town**

**Basic objectives, goals and principles**

Coordinator: Sarah Crawford-Browne  
Address: PO Box 870  
Cape Town, 8000  
South Africa  
Telephone number: 021 25 1452  
Fax number: 021 419 1312

## **A description of Don Bosco Hostel**

A residential programme catering for 24 youth who have lived on the streets of Cape Town, between the ages of 16 and 24 years. The hostel is located on the outskirts of the central business area of Cape Town.

## **The objective of the programme**

To prepare youth who have lived on the streets of Cape Town for life as a citizen in the mainstream community. Our goal is to develop young men who can function in this environment who will be adequate fathers, spouses, employees and neighbours.

## **The goal of the programme**

To give youth an opportunity to develop and learn work, social, emotional, life and spiritual skills with the goal of assisting them to live independently. The issues raised through living in a community are raised and used as learning experiences.

## **The principles which govern the programme**

### **1. Selection and preparation**

- Youth who are assessed as having internal motivation to change and who have the potential, are selected through their involvement in the 16+ outreach programme
- They are further prepared and selected through using challenge education techniques at a 10 day camp
- A group of 8 are finally selected and taken on a follow up 4 day camp and are then moved directly into the hostel for an further orientation programme
- There are two intakes a year in March and September, of 8-10 youth an intake – these cohorts then form a group of “juniors”, “middles” and “seniors” (names still to be decided)

### **2. Time limited**

- The hostel programme lasts 18 months
- This puts pressure on the youth and staff
- The youth must be ready for independence after this period

### **3. 3 phases**

- The programme is divided into 3, 6month phases with each phase having a different goal.
- The first phase focuses on learning to take responsibility for self, the second on responsibility for living with others and the third – responsibility for the future.
- During the earlier stages the staff play a stricter role in discipline, but this changes with time as the staff gradually help the youth develop self-discipline.
- Movement between the phases is marked by rites of passage and celebration

### **4. Work preparation**

- The full programme focuses on preparing the youth for employment
- During their first phase they participate in the Learn to Live workshops to learn work skills, frustration tolerance as well as leathercraft, woodcraft or metalcraft.

- In the second phase they are encouraged to attend an access course in the community eg. Catering, building
- In the third phase it is intended that they are placed at employment opportunities, with employers who have been recruited and prepared by the hostel.
- Those youth who wish to continue with formal education are encouraged to do this at a local night school, after hours.

#### **5. Structured intervention**

- The youth have to attend structured compulsory weekends every alternate weekend
- These are fun with lifeskill teaching, group projects and discussions
- The youth in the first phase also have to attend weekly group therapy sessions.
- There is also ongoing daily intervention offered through the relationship with a key worker – a staff member delegated to care for particular individuals, as well as contact with the careworkers and other staff members

#### **6. Youth authority**

- Youth participate in the everyday running of the hostel through participating in a youth governing body and through running 1 of 8 portfolios – laundry, food, cooking, cleaning, conflict resolution, treasurer, entertainment and equipment.
- These are seen as a learning experience which develops leadership and responsibility.
- This learning experience is reflected upon at the fortnightly hostel meetings
- The senior cohort of 8 youth lead the youth governing body and take responsibility for leading a portfolio, with the assistance of a staff member

#### **What is provided by the hostel?**

The basic food, clothing, transport costs and accommodation needs are provided. As soon as youth are earning, they are expected to contribute to this and where they are able to provide for their own needs, this is encouraged. On-site chores are offered as opportunities for youth to earn pocket money on a very limited basis, to those youth who have no other income.

We aim to provide only what is necessary, keeping in mind that the youth have come from and will need to return to homes of restricted resources.

**Appendix H**  
**A church newspaper article describing the School of Life**

University of Cape Town

# Hostel for homeless becomes a bridge to a new life

By Alex Economou

**W**ITH the launch of a new programme by the Salesian Institute, Cape Town's homeless youths face a shorter more challenging time in their transition from the streets to a more normal life of work and home.

The staff and residents of the Salesian Institute's Don Bosco Hostel re-evaluated the work of the past seven years and decided it was time to move the programme by developing a concentrated work preparation programme lasting 18 months.

In 1991 the hostel started as a shelter for 16-24-year-old youths who were too old to be accepted by the hostels for homeless children in the city. Gradually parenting took on a greater emphasis. And this process has grown, so that now a formal life skills programme is required to ensure that the youths will find their feet in society and employment.

"We learnt a lot over the past seven years. We started as a shelter for the youths, moved to be a children's home and now we are no longer offering only accommodation but an opportunity to attend a school of life," said the hostel coordinator, Sarah Crawford-Browne.

"The hostel worked well for those who needed a rest from the streets before moving on with their lives but many left the hostel before they were ready. Quite a few returned on a regular basis.

"It had become a destination, not a bridge to a new life," she said.

This programme was launched in April to offer a well-structured 18-month period of preparation to get the youths off the streets and teach them skills to find and keep employment.

It has been broken up into three phases to give the 24 youths taking part a sense of achievement. "By setting a time limit, staff and students know there is a lot of work to get through," said Ms Crawford-Browne.

In the first six months the youths who have committed themselves to the programme will attend group sessions at the hostel that will give them a chance to develop their life skills and deal with the traumas that took them to the streets.

"They will learn to look after themselves and acquire social skills: how to communicate with others, how to build up trust and loyalty.

"We encourage the youth who want to improve their education to attend night school. Every other weekend we work through discussions, exercises and activities designed to prepare youth for life and communal living," said Ms Crawford-Browne.

The youths will help in the running of the hostel to nurture initiative and a sense of responsibility in them. In the past the staff alone were responsible for the maintenance of the premises.

The second stage will provide the youths with the skills to earn a living through the Learn to Live programme's partnership with the National Access Consortium (NAC), an organisation created in 1996 to link a wide range of educational and tertiary facilities in the Western Cape.

"This stage features courses in practical work, from

catering, to security and waiting. We are also looking at the building trade," said Ms Crawford-Browne.

"After the first 12 months our youths will be ready for the work place. We are currently recruiting employers to offer the youths the opportunity to be part of work environment while still receiving direct support from the hostel over the last six months of the programme."

**'We are offering the chance to attend a school of life'**

The new approach was enthusiastically received by the youths living in the hostel. They played a big role in designing the programme and letting the staff know what they wanted to get out of it.

Fresh participants will come through the Salesian Institute's 16+ programme coordinated by Coleridge Daniels. Each youth will have to demonstrate a strong commitment to change to be part of the new programme.

"Each intake will be sent on a ten-day camp to the Christian Brothers Centre in Stellenbosch and during that time they will be evaluated by hostel staff for internal motivation. At the end of it they have to write a letter of motivation showing why they want to be part of the programme."

Of the 15 taking part in each camp we will choose eight to be part of the programme.

"We hope the camp will prepare those that don't make it for returning home, or trying other resources or for coming into the programme at a later stage," said Ms Crawford-Browne.

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- has primary school teaching experience
- is able to assume the post by July 1998

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The Superintendent  
Johannesburg Catholic Diocesan Schools  
PO Box 17054  
HILLBROW  
2038

Fax Number: (011) 402 6406

Applicants must submit with their written applications:

\* a detailed CV

\* the names and contact number/addresses of at least three referees.



**WALKING THE PLANK**, which emphasises group work, was one of many exercises used to evaluate the first intake of students who would participate in the 18-month programme by Don Bosco Hostel.



**NEW BEGINNINGS:** Winston Swartz and other homeless participants as the Salesian Provincial Fr Patrick Norton cuts the ribbon to symbolise the start of a new relationship between the Salesian homeless youth at Don Bosco hostel.



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**CONTRACTED:** Sarah Crawford-Browne shakes the hand of Winston Swartz who presented her with his contract of intent to complete the Learn to Live programme. He received a medalion from Edwin Vegas (centre), a Salesian lay volunteer from Kenya.

**Appendix I**

**The writer was awarded a graduation certificate  
-- along with the youth who graduated on 31 March 1999**

University of Cape Town

**DON BOSCO HOSTEL**

**SCHOOL OF LIFE**

*This is to certify that*

**SARAH CRAWFORD BROWNE**

*successfully completed the Don Bosco  
School of Life.*

*You are now capable of taking on life's  
challenges with courage and passion.*

**LIFE IS A JOURNEY.**

*May God be with you on your journey.*

ALL OUR LOVE  
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING

NONDIMA, PHUMLA, GILLIAN, KIZITO  
GEORGE ..... ZOULE

**Signature – Co ordinator**  
AND ALL THE GUYS

University of Cape Town