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## Editorial

### Acting locally, thinking globally

Zhang Cong, age 11, hangs her sheets up to dry. Since her mother was arrested last year in Beijing she began to wet the bed. Eduardo, age 9, cannot concentrate in school. He has frequent flashbacks of the violent arrest of his father in the north of Ecuador in an anti-narcotics operation. Cephu, age 7, has no interest in playing with friends. He has not seen his mother since she was arrested in the outskirts of Kinshasa four months ago.

In the world there are 9 million people in prison. Most of them are parents.

It would be impossible for Morning Tears to take care of all their children.

It is the duty of all governments to safeguard the interests and well being of their people. In particular they should protect one of the weakest groups: the children of convicts. However, in most countries of the world – including several European countries – hardly any services exist that address the many specific needs of children who have a parent in prison. Morning Tears wants to change this. We need to convince governments to take action.

In order to achieve this we will need to develop three strengths: knowledge, moral authority and awareness and support in society. We need to have knowledge about the life and difficulties of the children so that we can advocate the right actions. We need to have moral authority: government leaders need to be convinced that we can speak on behalf of the children. But governments will not listen to "one more" pressure group, unless there is awareness in society about the situation and needs of the

children and wide support for spending public money to improve their lives.

We will gain knowledge and moral authority through projects that help the children. For public awareness and support we count on you. There are so many little things that every one of us can do: stimulate your children to choose the needs of children with a parent in prison as a topic for a school project, talk about the problems these children face with your family and friends, bring up in a conversation the feelings of children when – again – a court or prison is used for entertainment in programs on television, choose the situation of children of imprisoned parents as a topic for your research thesis, etc. Morning Tears needs many volunteers and donations, but even if you do not have time or money there are many ways to contribute to the creation of public awareness and support for improving the life of children with a parent in prison. Act on a small-scale and locally. The consequences will be global.

Only together we can rebuild the world of Zhang Cong, Eduardo and Cephu.

Koen Sevenants,  
on behalf of the children and Morning Tears  
[koen.sevenants@morningtears.org](mailto:koen.sevenants@morningtears.org)

## Morning Tears Opens an Office in Beijing

Morning Tears has opened a small office in Beijing. This office will serve two functions: It will increase our efficiency in maintaining contact with and lobbying the Chinese central government, and will allow us to increase our fundraising in the wealthy region of greater Beijing. But establishing this office has even more benefits. We will be able to host interns and volunteers and will have a small exhibition room where we can show and explain to interested people what we are doing. Please visit us! Don't expect something fancy - it is a low-budget location, but know that you are very welcome. The formal opening date and address will be announced in November.

## Project “Coming Home”

The design of our new project in Chongqing and Henan is now completed. The program is titled: “Coming Home: After the Death Sentence of a Parent.” The children that Morning Tears intends to help deeply need a safe and caring environment where they can heal from their traumas and grow up in dignity. “Coming Home” tries to answer those needs.

The general objective of “Coming Home” is to provide home-based care for 160 Morning Tears children in China. 80 Morning Tears children from Henan province and 80 Morning Tears children from Chongqing municipality will be provided with homes where they can heal from their traumas, strengthen their resilience and fully develop their potential.

This general objective breaks down in five operational objectives:

1. To provide a safe and suitable living environment for the children
2. To ensure that basic needs for the children are met
3. To provide psychological support for children to overcome their traumas and strengthen their resilience
4. To prepare and assist the children for integration in society and to develop life skills

To help the children develop their full potential

The activities of “Coming Home” include: providing home-based care, offering art therapy to help children heal from their trauma, visits to parents in prison or farewell visits before executions take place, providing schooling and sports activities, celebrating birthdays, and providing medical care.

We invite you to get involved in the project “Coming Home.” Only together can we rebuild the world for children who lost their own.

The complete project description and budget can be requested in Dutch, English or Spanish at: [koen.sevenants@morningtears.org](mailto:koen.sevenants@morningtears.org)



## Silver Tears for Morning Tears



### Earrings

Size :

L : 18, W : 9mm

Price : € 90.00/set

Well-known Belgian jewellery designer Danielle Goffa has created a collection of silver jewels exclusively for Morning Tears. She designed two pendants and a set of earrings in the shape of stylized tears.



### Small pendant

Size :

L : 18.5, W : 15mm

Price : € 75.00

This is a great opportunity to help the children of Morning Tears and to give your wife, daughter, girlfriend or yourself a beautiful gift.

All the jewels come in a Chinese jewel pocket, and the pendants come with a Chinese pendant string.

Interested? Just send an e-mail to [jewels@morningtears.org](mailto:jewels@morningtears.org). Please state clearly how many of which jewels you want, as well as your complete mailing address. Add € 5.00 to each order for mailing charges.

As soon as we have received payment, the jewel will be sent to you. The mailing addresses will not be used for any other purposes.



### Larger pendant

Size :

L : 37, W : 17mm

Price: € 100.00

You can find our account numbers on the last page of this newsletter.

**All profits from the sale go entirely to Morning Tears.**

## Some Interesting Links

### A Morning Tears Screensaver

Steve, a Belgian photographer, has created a screensaver of the pictures he took during a visit to our project. Nice classical music accompanies the pictures. Download it at: <http://www.photoman.be/index-8%20ex.html>

### Spanish Morning Tears Blog

Be informed about the progress we are making with Morning Tears in Spain. Visit <http://www.mtspain.info>

### Nice Videos

Some nice videos about Morning Tears can be viewed at the following links:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQjCt2tu4TE>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3vwNW8v8z8>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeZgorio674>
- [http://www.eenvandaag.nl/index.php?module=PX\\_Story&func=view&cid=312&sid=31430&nav=31430.0](http://www.eenvandaag.nl/index.php?module=PX_Story&func=view&cid=312&sid=31430&nav=31430.0)

## A Message from Rosa, the Coordinator for Morning Tears in Spain

In Spain, a new group of volunteers has been working since last June.

One of our main goals is to spread word of Morning Tears in Spain. The more people who know the direction of the organization, along with our present and future projects, the more possibilities we can realize.

To this end, we have created a traveling exposition based on pictures of Tim Dirven on scenes of daily life in Children's Village. The exposition will premiere this December and will carry information about Morning Tears to several places in Spain.

Some of our goals include: establishing a flea market to raise funds, creating a CD with songs to strengthen the self esteem and resilience of the boys and girls in the care centers, acquiring a strong presence in the media, and organizing special events.

We work with enthusiasm, absolutely convinced that the children of Morning Tears are worth the effort. But we have one problem: we need more volunteers.

Many people develop a respect for our organization, and congratulate us for our work. But without volunteers that really support us, even if only with a small part of their time, it will be difficult to get as far as we want in advancing our mission in Spain.

To all of you, living in any part of Spain - you have no idea how important your help will be.

I send my love to all the volunteers

Rosa

[rosapou@morningtears.org](mailto:rosapou@morningtears.org)



## Good to Know: ATTACHMENT

Attachment refers to the durable, loving, mutual bond between a child and his parents or guardians. A good and safe sense of attachment allows a child to turn to his parents for help, security and care. Merely the physical proximity of a parent can help to reassure a child. In this way, the child develops the trust needed to explore his environment. Through this exploration a feeling of control and competence develops. When a child becomes scared or anxious, he can always return to the safety and security of his parents.

### The Attachment Pyramid

The Attachment Pyramid outlines five stages of attachment:

#### 0-3 months

During the first 3 months of life a child doesn't seem to be oriented to a certain person. The child is not choosy about being fed, consoled or changed. He or she is person-oriented and not that much object-oriented. When a baby finds that his needs are satisfied time after time in interactions with a caretaker, basic feelings of safety and "it's good to be here" can originate.

#### 3-8 months

Through the development of smell, voice and visual senses a baby develops a preference for one specific caretaker, mostly the mother. The baby now starts to differentiate between, and attach to, certain people. Bowlby uses the term "attachment in the making," which refers to a kind of attachment that is characterized by timidity or fear of strangers.

#### 8-18 months

From 8 months on the child exhibits active attachment behavior. It prefers to be with one certain person. Separation from that person results in separation anxiety. Towards the end of this phase object and person permanence develops. Through his previous sensorial perceptions the child has built up a mental picture of his caretaker. Even when that person is not around, children can call up this picture.

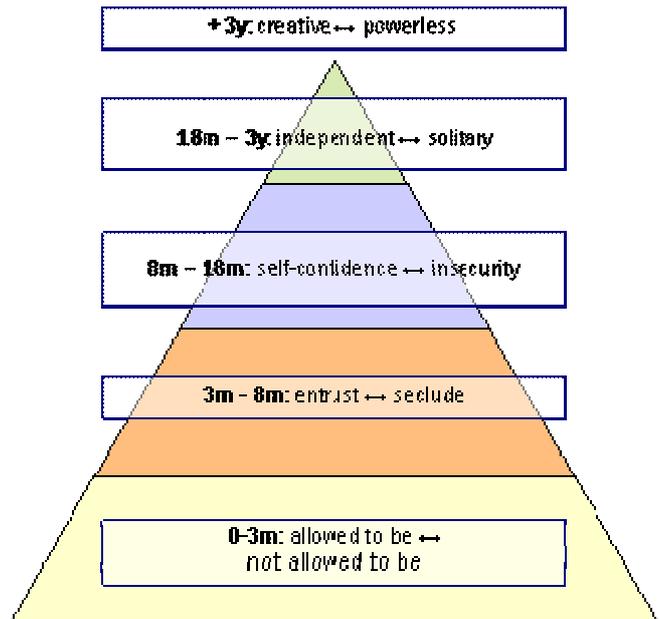
If the child has had positive experiences in the previous stages he or she will feel safe with the mother and will trust her. The child starts to crawl, walk, and discover his world.

#### 18 months – 3 years

Kohnstamm describes this period as a journey from dependence, through attachment, to independence. Attachment based on security and safety helps the child develop his sense of independence.

#### + 3 years

From three years on the child has developed certain elements that will determine his further attachment behavior. He can project himself in emotions, plans and ideas of his parent. The child has also gained experiences of separations and returns. By means of the acquainted concept of language he can comprehend given messages about this and put his own needs into words. The trust he gains in himself and his past interactions with others helps him to cope with separations. Now he can develop an attachment to others. From now on we speak about partnership in attachment.



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## News Briefs

### Europe has a new tool to protect children from sexual abuse

Every day across Europe children are being sexually abused. It is estimated that between 10% and 20% of children in Europe are sexually assaulted during their childhood. And in spite of the efforts by the authorities, response is not yet adequate. Tens of thousands of children suffer as victims of their tormentors, but also as victims of secrecy and denial. A new Council of Europe Convention to protect children against sexual exploitation and abuse aiming to change this is now open for signature.

The convention includes specific measures to reinforce prevention, provide assistance to the victims, prosecute offenders, and strengthen international cooperation. It was designed to close several existing loopholes. The treaty sets standards on how to assist child victims in their recovery and requires governments to introduce child-friendly investigative and judicial procedures to ensure that children are not traumatized twice. Also, the Convention stipulates that the time limitation for cases to be brought against sexual offenders against children should only start after the victim reaches the legal age of adulthood. Very often it is only when they are older that these children can face the facts and demand justice.

Source : *Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, October 2007*

### Growing controversy around the T. Don Hutto Residential Center – a prison for illegal immigrants and their children

The T. Don Hutto Residential Center is one of the two run-for-profit prisons in the US that can keep non-Mexican immigrants and their families on noncriminal charges, some of them while their applications for asylum are being considered. Located in Texas, it currently has 375 prisoners, approximately 200 of which are children, including babies. A groundbreaking lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of 26 children detained there with their parents has helped to gradually improve the situation in the past few months. Children are no longer required to wear prison uniforms and are allowed much more time outdoors. Educational programming has expanded and guards have been instructed not to discipline children by threatening to separate them from their parents. Many of the residents are from Central and South America, along with a significant number from Africa, Asia, and Europe.

In addition to making those improvements permanent, the settlement also requires ICE to allow children over the age of 12 to move freely about the facility, eliminate the count system which forces families to stay in their cells 12 hours a day, install privacy curtains around toilets, supply more toys and age- and language-appropriate books, and improve the nutritional value of food.

In spite of these improvements, the facility remains a medium security prison, and the ACLU has called for the US Congress to find humane alternatives for managing families whose immigration status is in limbo. None of them have committed any crimes.

Sources : *ACLU website, blogs and Wikipedia, September 2007*

### Family links are key for inmates, but children suffer most

The support family members give to prisoners often means the difference between making it or not when they are released, says Vivian Brake, assistant superintendent of programs for prisoners at Fountain Correctional Center for Women (North Carolina, US). "The family is a positive bridge, a support system for the inmate to transition back into the community," she adds.

This link is especially important because both the inmate and his/her family suffer from the situation. People often don't consider that the family members of prisoners can be victims too, especially the children. Children are the most affected by having a parent in prison. When a loved one comes to prison, that separation can be emotionally, spiritually and economically overwhelming from the beginning," says Mary Ward, a family services administrator with the N.C. Department of Correction. Even if daily phone calls and weekly visits are possible in most of the prisons of the US, they are often not enough. Their emotions go from anger to distrust, depression, abandonment, guilt and shame. The impact an inmate's incarceration has on those family members can be long and lasting.

Source : *Rocky Mount Telegram (US newspaper), October 2007*



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**morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.**

**morning tears** rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

**morning tears** has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 **morning tears** became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, **morning tears** has offices in Belgium, Spain and China.

**morning tears** is run entirely by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of **morning tears** are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.



## Financial Barometer

### A Big Challenge

Starting a new project is always very expensive - we need money for leasing the land, constructing the buildings, and building a wall around our premises. The project "Coming Home" is starting up at two locations, so we are currently making great efforts to find donors. We are grateful to AFAC, FAMUR and all the associations, people, private companies and provincial governments that contribute to us, but there is still money missing to pay for all of the initial investments needed to give the 160 children a new life. It is clear that we still need money to construct Family Units. In one unit, there are eight children and one caregiver living together. The cost of one Family Unit is about € 11,000, and we still need to finance 7 units.

## Feedback

This is the fourth issue of the second volume of our quarterly newsletter. Your feedback will help us to improve. Also, we will be happy to include your contributions or announcements. We look forward to hearing from you. Please mail to: [info@morningtears.org](mailto:info@morningtears.org).

If you want to get our previous newsletters, visit our website at [www.morningtears.org](http://www.morningtears.org). You can download them from the site.