



Newsletter

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Editorial

Corporate donations: Cute kids get money

More and more companies are donating funds to social projects. This should be good news, but despite the best of intentions, things are going increasingly wrong.

The criteria for selecting which social projects will benefit from company donations are partly determined by the company's own interests. There is nothing wrong with this as long as the company's interests do not interfere with the goals of the social project that the company should be benefiting. Unfortunately, such interference often occurs.

There has been a shift in what companies want in return for donations. In the past, companies mainly searched for visibility. Today, managers often see charity as a tool that will enhance corporate unity and culture. Staff is involved in the selection of projects, employee visits are organized to the project site and the charity deeds are promoted internally so that positive feelings of belonging to the company get strengthened. This implies that the social project a company chooses to support has to be something visible and something one can visit. The project must be "beautiful".

Regrettably, beauty is not all that matters in child care and protection. The point of working for children is to create an environment in which children are safe and can develop to their full potential. An orphanage is not this ideal environment. There is a vast body of research that demonstrates that foster care or similar placement programs are far better for children than institutional care. However,

orphanages can be visited; they contain large groups of cute kids just waiting to be seen and adored by company visitors. With an orphanage, a company can show a visible and tangible project to its employees and to the world. Perhaps for this reason, foster care and placement programs seem less able than orphanages to attract corporate donations. The conflict between institutional care, which is often promoted by image-oriented companies, and placement programs, which are in children's best interest yet receive less company support, is just one example of how good will does not always translate into a good outcome. There are more factors that must be considered.

Most companies have only the best of intentions. We know this. Therefore, Morning Tears offers to provide companies with free documentation and training on how to distinguish good child care practices from those that are mislead. Employee involvement is a good thing in corporate responsibility programs, but as in any other field, employees should receive more support as they take on more responsibility. We offer them this support regardless of where their company's donations go (whether to Morning Tears or elsewhere). Our motivation is to reverse the trend of companies making – with the very best of intentions – the wrong choices for those same children they wish to help.

Contact us if you are interested in our support to your corporate responsibility program.

Koen Sevenants,

on behalf of the children and Morning Tears

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No Newsletter in May

No, there was nothing wrong with your e-mail inbox. Publication of the May newsletter was cancelled. All of our volunteers were involved in earthquake-related work. Now we are back in the normal rhythm. We apologize if you were waiting for us!

Haircuts for a Good Cause

Wilma Huijskes is my name and together with Cynthia, Priscilla and Linda I have come to China for a project to benefit Morning Tears.

This summer during the Olympic Games we are going to cut hair to raise money. In Holland we often cut people's hair for a good cause, and it always results in a big party. People who have their hair done look great, and what they pay us is transmitted in full to the charity!

In Beijing we want to stage a party in several different places and by cutting hair collect a total of € 88,888.88. We feel that this will become a great party and that everyone will help us. Remember, the smile on a child's face is priceless.

The project has every chance of success: everybody needs a haircut, and everybody wants to look fine. We are ready for you with comb and scissors – will you drop by for a good cause?

Greetings from Holland!



www.gekniptvoorgoud.nl

Morning Tears Signs a Cooperation Agreement with the China Legal Aid Foundation

Morning Tears works to assist children whose parents have been convicted of crimes. Consequently, Morning Tears needs to have cooperation agreements with the authorities responsible for child protection on the one hand, and with the justice system on the other. Morning Tears already had cooperation agreements with the Civil Affairs departments responsible for child protection. To this we have now proudly added a Memorandum of Understanding between Morning Tears and the China Legal Aid Foundation (CLAF). CLAF operates under the Chinese Ministry of Justice.

Morning Tears' Strategy

In the last Newsletter we explained that Morning Tears uses research-based minimum standards for child care and protection. Moreover, we advocate that other governmental and non-governmental bodies also use these standards. In our standards we differentiate seven quality areas, namely: planning for care, protective care, personal care, health, environment and safety, caregivers, management and administration.

Today we look at the first quality area: planning for care. For our care planning we use four standards:

Standard 1: Childcare programs have written aims and objectives

The program has a clearly stated philosophy. The children and youth are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home, how they will be cared for and how the home operates. Staff and caregivers understand and agree to work by the objectives. The best interests and rights of the child underpin this philosophy.

Standard 2: All children in the program have a placement plan

Children have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively. Written placement plans outline how these needs will be met and how such measures will be implemented. Children in the home are appropriately placed there. The placement plans also outline a strategy for long-term placement options for children.

Standard 3: All children's placements are reviewed regularly

Children's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home. These reviews involve all relevant people and agencies contributing to the child's care (including the child) and cover long-term and short-term plans.

Standard 4: Systems exist for rehabilitation, through-care and aftercare

Children are able to move in and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner. There are clear policies and agreed procedures related to the conclusion of the work with



children to ensure appropriate aftercare and/or follow-up. Caregivers ensure follow-up for an agreed period to minimize breakdown and provide a safety net. There are clear criteria for the nature and extent of the follow up. Within the program timetable and childcare plans, opportunities exist to gain life skills and receive comprehensive preparation for in-family living and/or independent living. Additionally, there is an orientation process for new children arriving at the projects.



Recovering from Trauma by Attachment

The ability of a child to successfully integrate a trauma with everyday life doesn't only depend on the kind or the gravity of the trauma, but also on the child's inner working scheme. The inner working scheme is a result of the attachment process. It's a kind of lens through which one looks at the world, a lens consisting of thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about the external world, others and oneself. It can be anywhere from shaky to steadfast. The level of security of a child's inner working scheme is an important contributing factor to the way that that child absorbs a traumatic event.

The impact of an abuse is in proportion to the child's kinship relationship with or psychological dependence on the abuser. It is obvious that children who are abused by their own father or mother are hurt more deeply than they would be if the same abuse were committed by a stranger. After all, the father and mother are a child's whole world. If parents are the cause of insecurity, anxiety and hurt, then by extension the world will be perceived as a dangerous place. The truth with which such children survive is often expressed in sayings such as: "I have to be strong," "I may never show my vulnerability," "I don't need anybody," or "I can't trust anyone."

Abused children often have an underdeveloped right cerebral hemisphere, which is the hemisphere primarily in control of emotions. The right hemisphere has an important role in the development of attachment and social relationships. This hemisphere is at the same time responsible for how we cope with stress. The left hemisphere, meanwhile, is the rational side that gives us the possibility of reflecting and thinking logically.

The right and left hemisphere are connected by numerous links within the corpus callosum. These connections are created during the interaction between mother and baby. When a mother talks quietly, lovingly and tenderly to her baby or when she caresses her baby while she is (breast)feeding, new links are forged. For the same reason, it is important that the mother makes eye contact with the child.

Abused children show considerably less connections between the right and the left hemisphere than children who have not faced abuse, and thus their cognitive skills are not yet fully developed. Talking with these children about their traumatic event can be re-traumatising: The children may go through the same abuse again and again without being able to give it a place or significance. They may not be able to step out of it or reflect on it, so instead they feel every time as if they are the victim of the same situation. We can say that this mostly happens with boys who have a history of abuse and misuse and with girls who have been sexually abused.

Anyhow, talking about the trauma doesn't usually lead to recovery for these children, and in many cases makes the situation worse. So what can or must be done? The answer is that caregivers at Morning Tears must concentrate on what happens in the present, the here and now. A child should experience a relationship with one caregiver in which he or she feels accepted and safe in a warm and loving place. This will give the child the possibility of going through the attachment process and the attachment pyramid anew, this time with the caregiver instead of the abusive parent. Only after this process is complete will the child start to trust others and share his or her inner world. In a loving atmosphere of esteem, respect and support, surrounded of course by safe limits and correct containment, the child will discover little by little his or her own potential, and from there will grow into positive self-esteem. As a part of this process, the child will test the authenticity, reliability and solidity of the caregiver. Sturdiness and directness from the caregiver will create a safe atmosphere, but at the same time the caregiver mustn't avoid his or her own vulnerability.

In their relationship with the caregiver, children are presented with a new lens through which they can view the world, others and themselves. That's the aim which has to be achieved. The old, painful, dangerous history is never wiped out or replaced, but rather we offer a constructive, positive experience as an alternative.

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An Uncoordinated Coordinator

Earlier this year I was asked if I would go on Friday the 29 of February, 2008 (leap-year) to a meeting about Morning Tears (MT). For ages, I had been looking for a useful way to spend my time doing something other than shopping, getting massages and going to lunches with fellow countrymen and partners in distress. So, right away and with enthusiasm, I decided that my answer was yes. On the day of the meeting, I rode my bike to the Coffee Tree where a number of ladies and Koen were already waiting.

As I recall from that morning of Dutch coffee, Koen told fascinating stories about MT and their projects. For someone who until then had only transmitted money on a monthly basis via Plan Nederland to support a little kid in Zimbabwe, his stories were at times hard to bear. For us Dutch (and probably many Westerners), it is almost unbelievable to see the conditions in which children here sometimes live. Nor can I imagine, having two loving parents and always enough money, the factors that led these children to a life in institutional care or foster homes. I very much appreciated how Koen was able to talk about MT so soberly but at the same time be so very concerned. It can't always be easy to see the kids, often mentally deformed by their circumstances, suffer.

The purpose that day was to set up a team in Shanghai with a number of people who can lend a hand in different fields.

That is easier said than done, but at the moment we are working hard on various projects to assist MT in whatever way we can.

Though my official job after this meeting is coordinator, at the moment I am looking very hard to find a suitable way to support MT. In the meantime, I'm having fun, but I still have a lot to learn.

Because I involve myself with the refurbishing of a project in San Yuan (Xian), last week I, together with Nel Brouwers, visited the company Trespa, which for various projects and without any strings attached has already let MT use materials for cupboards, tables, and the like. I was really surprised to find how easy it is to obtain all sorts of materials! Hopefully we have shown enough gratitude that they will continue to let us use their furniture in future projects.

In view of getting more involved with the project, we plan to visit San Yuan, but a) logistical arrangements need to be made at home (2 small kids) and b) this has to be done together and in cooperation with other people at MT. We also hope for a construction company to collaborate by taking care of the raw building/refurbishing.

Tonight another consultation about MT, so another massage missed ;-))

Jacqueline Krowinkel

Shanghai, April 2008

Feedback

This is the third issue of the third 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.

If you want to get our previous newsletters, visit our website at www.morningtears.org. You can download them from the site.

The Story of Ling Ling

Ling Ling is 10 years old. She was sent to Children Village by the police two years ago. For quite a long time, Ling Ling did not make any friends here, because many kids thought she was selfish because she always tried to take all the best things for herself. Sometimes she fought fiercely to get something from another child even if it did not belong to her. The other kids banded together, and whenever or wherever Ling Ling appeared they would run away, refusing to talk to her or let her get involved in any game they were playing.

Because none of the other kids got along with her, Ling Ling had to stay alone. But her 'selfishness' did not seem to affect her making friends with the adults: she would always help the teachers out and do nice things for them. She made a beautiful card with nice messages for the teachers' birthdays, she gave them shoulder massages when she saw that the teachers were tired, and she always treated adults warmly, holding their hand and talking in a very nice and sweet way when anyone came to visit Children Village. Ling Ling always got praise from the teachers, and also got more gifts from the visitors. She was a big success with the adults.

Until she was eight years old, Ling Ling was not like a kid – she was too grown up. If you spent enough time with her, you would become uncomfortable with her sweet actions and words, because you could tell it was all an act. The teachers did not know what would make an eight-year-old kid live in such a complaisant yet at the same time hard way. They tried to find out the situation and help Ling Ling to act her age.

Ling Ling's father is in prison because of theft. He was caught when Ling Ling was four years old, and Ling Ling's mother left her because of poverty. After that, Ling Ling lived with her grandmother, but her grandmother died only one year later, and Ling Ling did not have any relatives left. So, at the age of five, Ling Ling started to live by herself, begging food and clothes from the villagers in her hometown. About 10 months later she was sent to a rest home by the director of her village to live with the senior citizens there. She spent only two years there before the rest home closed, leaving her once again without a home. From these experiences, she learned when she was very little that if she wanted anything, she had to pay something, and for her, a kid without any resources, the only things she could pay with were her sweet actions and nice words. She had to try her best to make adults happy in order to survive.

Nobody knows how frightened the heart of a five-year-old kid must be when she suddenly has to survive by herself in the world. We know now why Ling Ling always tried to hoard things for herself. We know why she always tried to make the teachers happy, why her smile was so heavy, and why we cannot see a kid in her eyes. What had the world taken away from her? What had the world given in return?

Ling Ling has lived in Children Village for almost two years now. The other kids have started to play with her, with a little help from the teachers. Sometimes she can be seen chasing happily with the other kids, and she has also started to show her true colors in front of the teachers. Now she expresses her bad feelings instead of just pushing them down and covering them with a sweet smile. Ling Ling is back to being a kid. We cannot promise her that nothing bad will ever happen again, but at least we can let her know that she can find love and support in this world. At least we can give her the knowledge that she can safely be who she is: a kid.

Kou Wei

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News Briefs

The U.S. Has the Most Prisoners in the World

Tough sentencing laws, record numbers of drug offenders and high crime rates have all contributed to the United States having the largest prison population and the highest rate of incarceration in the world, according to criminal justice experts.

A recently released U.S. Justice Department report showed that a record seven million Americans – that's one in every 32 American adults – were behind bars, on probation or on parole at the end of last year. Of the total, 2.2 million were in prison or jail.

According to the International Centre for Prison Studies at King's College in London, more people are behind bars in the United States than in any other country. China ranks second with 1.5 million prisoners, followed by Russia with 870,000.

Source: ABC news

Publication of International Profile of Women's Prisons

A new research report from the International Centre for Prison Studies offers the following conclusions:

The perennial dilemma of how to deal with women prisoners' young children is resolved in various ways. Those countries that allow children to stay with their mothers have very different ages at which it is felt desirable to take the child away (compare six years old in one state in Germany to three years old in Spain, to four in one prison in Western Australia, to only 12 months in Sweden).

There are also different ideas about how the imprisoned mother should be treated, varying from the arrangement that allows the child and the mother to stay together all day to the system in which the child goes to an outside nursery so that the mother can work (Germany). The most child-centered system we found is in a prison in Frondenberg, Germany, where 16 mothers live with their children until they reach the age of six in self-contained flats with balconies and staff that do not wear prison uniforms.

Visiting arrangements reflect the cultural differences found in prisons all around the world about attitudes to family life. In some countries private family visits (including conjugal visits) are accepted as normal and are rights that cannot be taken away. Women in this respect are treated in the same way as men.

Some countries make special visiting arrangements for imprisoned women who have children outside the prison. In New South Wales, for example, Sundays are family visiting days and the family stays the whole day through, with only a break for lunch. Another example is Hinseberg in Sweden, where there is a special flat where children can stay overnight with their mothers.

Source: the full report can be downloaded at:

http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/assets/documents/10003BB3womens_prisons_int_review_final_report.pdf





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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

Some things are going well, others not as much...

- The cost of all hardware in the Henan 'Coming Home' Project is now totally covered thanks to rather large donations from the 'Oranje Daad,' made up of the Dutch community in Shanghai, and also to donations from associations of families who adopted a Chinese child in Spain.
- Fundraising with companies is hard these days. Most companies have spent the entire budget that they had foreseen on the Sichuan earthquake. Most of the money went to the China Charity Foundation and to the China Red Cross. There seems to be little money left over. The Olympic year 2008 will therefore not be as fruitful as expected in terms of corporate funding.
- For the Morning Tears Sichuan project – our answer to the earthquake – we estimated that we need at least € 50,000 to be able to take up responsibility for children. We still miss about € 12,000 to start.
- As of two weeks ago, you can use your credit card to donate online. Several donations have already come in!