



substitute

families

for abandoned children

Issue 5 Summer/Autumn 2005

Welcome to the fifth edition of SFAC's newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading more about our work.

Prior to last December I couldn't have told you what a Tsunami was. I suspect I was not on my own. Nine months on we know a great deal more about this phenomenon as hundreds and thousands of people across a dozen countries continue to be affected by this major disaster. Whole communities have been lost; homes and livelihoods literally washed away in moments. The response from home and abroad was spontaneous and generous. It has been estimated that it could take between 10-15 years for the affected areas to return to life pre-December 26th 2004. The reconstruction will be long and arduous, however one day homes will be rebuilt, roads re-laid, industry re-established and services resumed. If only the cost in human life could be restored in the same manner as infrastructure. Alas, the tragic loss in human terms is permanent and sometimes irreplaceable.

As in all tragedies the most vulnerable are children. Undoubtedly, one of the greatest costs in this particular tragedy has been the thousands of children left without a family. Aid agencies have been rightly concerned for the welfare of such children who are vulnerable and exposed to those who trade on the back of misery.

Throughout the world on a daily basis children are being orphaned, abandoned, abused and neglected through no fault of their own. Such stories rarely reach the front pages of our newspapers but each one is a personal tragedy for that child. This is where SFAC plans to make a difference. By helping agencies develop foster care projects many children separated from their families could be cared for within their own communities and once again experience a family life. Developing such projects takes time, skillful planning, understanding and commitment. SFAC brings knowledge, experience and training in how to achieve this.

John Ellerington (SFAC Secretary)

1st SFAC Training in Brazil



In May Mick travelled to Brazil to deliver training for potential foster carers and other children's workers. He worked with project ABBA for 3 days where the translator Thomas Smoakes captured the full meaning of foster care. Mick also gave a presentation in Sao Paulo to a social work conference about the experience of foster care in the UK.

In another city he gave 5 days training to a small group from the YWAM and Happy Child projects both of whom plan to initiate fostering in Belo Horizonte in the near future. Says Mick, "Although I've done the training many times before, this time it was a steep learning curve for me because everything was done through translation." One social worker told him the material was "rich in content" and realised how little Brazilian families and workers were prepared to look after abandoned children. A children's worker who is an orphan brought up in an institution explained that he could identify with 80% of the issues discussed. Such comments confirm that although people are from different cultures they still have the same desire to be valued and need to 'belong.'

This is SFAC's passion; abandoned children belong in families. It is our specific task to share knowledge and experience with projects in developing countries that may otherwise never have the opportunity to develop foster care.

Fostering in Nepal?

In 1999 Diane Bell a former Social Work colleague with Mick spent 9 months working in Nepal. She returned with a similar vision as SFAC, to help establish foster care in Nepal. She and another Social Worker are due to visit in Sept/Oct 05 to establish contacts and do some initial training. Here's what Diane has to say...

Nepal is a beautiful Himalayan country, desperately poor, ravaged by Maoist conflict and political corruption. In some areas, 60% of children do not live beyond 5 years. The plight of orphaned or abandoned children was compounded when King Gyanandra seized power in February sacking the democratic government. The situation for the people and therefore the children of Nepal is dire!

We travel to Nepal on 28th September, returning on October 20th. Just three short weeks in which to achieve the following:

- Meet Nepalis and their projects.
- Provide fostering 'training' and counter confusion with adoption.
- Encourage networking and recruitment.
- Learn cultural issues and future sharing of skills / experience.
- Travel to Siliguri, in India, with a Nepali who has foster carers.
- Visit her feeding kitchens and homes in Pokhara/Kathmandu.
- Find out about limited child-care legislation and social work training in Nepal.

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine'. *Ephesians 3:20a*

News on Casa Lar Novo Rumo

Casa Lar Novo Rumo continues to provide an excellent resource looking after children from the City of Sao Paulo who cannot live with their families. Caring for these children is not without its continuous challenges yet Pedrinho & Noemi remain undaunted by the task ahead of them and the commitments they make to the children. Without the support of partners who, through SFAC, support Casa Lar the children in this photograph and many others would not be experiencing safe, happy and stimulating childhoods.

An Opportunity to Develop the Work

This would bring a more professional approach to the service Casa Lar offers. SFAC wishes to support the team at Casa Lar in this new direction. It involves moving home, possibly closer to the centre of Sao Paulo and work with fewer

numbers of children. There will be a stronger emphasis on individual work with children and involvement with their birth families when appropriate. SFAC envisage better opportunities for the development of foster care within this structure whilst workers at Casa Lar would continue to promote best practice for the children they care for.

How can SFAC help?

On a practical level, by raising awareness of the need to cover costs involved in moving location and general expenses. You can help the work at Casa Lar either by giving a one-off gift, an interest free loan over a number of years or by monthly donations. If you would like to be involved or know more about this project please contact the trustees - John Swift, John Ellerington, Andrew Grimshaw, Mick Pease.



On a professional level, SFAC can assist by sending UK social workers to deliver training in specialist areas of children's work. We could also use Casa Lar as a base for increasing the awareness of fostering by developing a pilot scheme, training local families and enable some children to move into foster homes for respite or longer periods with agreement from Social Services.

If these were your children...



and they were not able to live with your family, what would you want to happen to them?

There are thousands of children throughout the world, just like these who urgently need to be placed into families.

Will you help us take the message of foster care to developing countries by financially supporting SFAC?

Speak up on behalf of the Poor & Needy

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy'. *Proverbs 31: 8 & 9*

Education is at the heart of successful development – vital not just for creating a highly skilled and flexible workforce but also for reducing vulnerability to ill health and poverty.

DFID – 'Rough Guide to a Better World'

SFAC Information

Registered charity no: 1095091

31 Gotts Park Avenue, Armley, Leeds LS12 2RW

Account name: Substitute Families for Abandoned Children

Bank: HSBC **Sort code:** 40-27-10 **Account number:** 81246216

On line donations can be made at: www.sfac.org.uk

As a registered charity we benefit from Gift Aid on donations from UK taxpayers. Please contact mickpease@sfac.org.uk with changes to your details or for further information.

SFAC News



Mick & John had a productive meeting this year with CEO of Toybox Charity and Herbert, project manager in Guatemala Central America. They are optimistic about developing foster care in Guatemala.

Plans for visiting Bolivia have been in abeyance due to Roger Hulford being out of the country. He returned in August and we hope to be visiting Bolivia soon to integrate foster care into an already well established and successful project.

SFAC has developed a 10 part modular training package called 'How to get there.' This is aimed at taking agencies step by step through the process of operating a fostering project. The series sits alongside the existing 'Challenge to Care,' 'Family Placement' and Portfolio training packages.

As mentioned in the last newsletter Mick has now terminated his employment and is self-employed as a Social Work Consultant. He works on a limited sessional basis with Local Authorities and Independent Organisations which gives him the flexibility he needs to develop the work of SFAC.

In September Mick & John will attend Viva Network Cutting Edge Conference for leaders of Christian Organisations working with children at risk. This will be an excellent time for making new contacts and planning future developments.

On behalf of all at SFAC we would like to thank our supporters and partners who enable this valuable work to continue.

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito in your room!"