

# FOOTSTEPS

No.28 SEPTEMBER 1996

STREET CHILDREN 

## Children at risk

by James Beauniaux

IT IS ALMOST MIDNIGHT. The streets of downtown Bogotá, Colombia, are deserted except for a number of military policemen. Automatic weapons at the ready, they guard every road junction in this capital city because the president of neighbouring Venezuela is in town.

Five year old Wilson sits on the roadside, crying. His father will beat him again tonight if he returns home without 1,000 pesos (US \$1.50). He shivers in the cold of the Andean night; he is barefoot and wears only a light-weight running suit. On the other side of the street, his sister, seven year old Daisey, is begging. Daisey needs money for shoes, and she can't go home until she has 1,500 pesos.

For a growing number of children on city streets around the world, this scene is all too typical. There must be greater awareness of the situations of these children at risk.

### The size of the problem

We need to understand what a huge problem we face, especially in Latin America. It is difficult to picture the number of children living in the world's streets, many unattached to any family at all. The standard reference figure quoted

for street children around the world today is a staggering 100 million (UN).

Almost a third of the world's population is under 15 years old. In Colombia there are 11 million children under 15 years of age. More and more of these are finding their way to the streets. Estimates of the number



Photo: Tear Fund

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## FOOTSTEPS

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*Footsteps* is a quarterly paper, linking health and development workers worldwide. Tear Fund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

*Footsteps* is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

Readers are invited to contribute views, articles, letters and photos.

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**TEAR FUND**   
CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN A WORLD OF NEED

of street children in Bogotá swing wildly from a conservative 2,500 to a huge 110,000 (UNICEF).

It is difficult to estimate numbers of street children because they move around so much. A child or even a gang (*parche*, a 'patch') of kids may start out in the far south of Bogotá in the morning, be in central Bogotá in the early afternoon, and in Parque Lourdes (north Bogotá) by late afternoon. Another reason is that some children are 'latch-key kids'; they live on the streets during the day, but return home at night.

### Who are these children?

Four groups of 'street children' can be identified:

**Totally abandoned children** These are the *gamín* in Colombia, the *menino de rua* in Brazil, the *pelón* in Mexico. These children live in the streets and have no family contact. They typically use drugs, preferring inhalants – usually shoe-makers' glue. These children don't work.

**Partially abandoned children** These children live in the streets but have some contact with their families. Drug use is common, and typically, they won't work.

**Latch-key children** They roam the streets but are careful to maintain contact with their families. They do not usually use drugs and they don't work.

**Working children** These children are in the streets while carrying out their work. They may shine shoes, wash car windows, sell sweets and cigarettes. They live most of the time with their families. They don't usually take drugs.

In Latin America, both boys and girls live on the streets. Generally speaking, however, girls are more sheltered than boys. The boy/girl ratio of street children may be as high as nine to one. Girls, considered more 'useful', stay at home while boys are considered stronger and less susceptible to a life of threat on the street.

Most street children are not abandoned by their families. Instead they leave home to escape abuse, poverty, or ordinary parental authority. Lack of stability in family life is the main reason for losing a child to the streets. In the streets they find other children who have come from equally difficult backgrounds. However the child also soon finds that in the world of the street they are abused as much as they were at home. This disillusionment is a tremendous shock – the child realises that he can have no confidence either in his parents or in any other authority figure. Mental escape, usually through inhaling drugs, becomes part of the child's survival strategy.

Children on the streets have experienced violence at home at the hands of their parents. As a result they become 'hunters' looking to inflict pain and violence on others. Being on drugs lessens the sense of reality.

### Disposable children

Imagine calling children *desechables* – 'throw-away' or 'disposable'. But that's what they are known as on the streets of Bogotá. The term recently came into sharp focus for me when a young boy I





had been working with, was killed one night, his body thrown into a ditch. I know of other children, too, who have been killed either by the police, by drug gangs, by death squads put together by merchants who want to clean the streets of 'dirty kids', or even by other street people.

Recent reports provide chilling evidence that there are groups in Latin American cities using street children to help satisfy the world's demand for body parts. The 'fortunate' children who survive these on-the-spot surgeries wake in the streets to find that they have lost a kidney, a testicle, or an eye during the night. Usually, however, such surgery means death for the child.

## Are there any solutions?

Many agencies claim to help children on the streets. However, UNICEF in Bogotá reports that many 'social concern' agencies are selling the misery of the children to raise funds for their agencies.

The Colombian government does all it can with its limited resources. The national welfare agency (Instituto Colombiano Bienestar Familiar) looks for outside groups, both Christian and secular, to work with. They try to encourage more resources to help street children.

Yet governments and social agencies do not own this world problem. We all do. God's word to us is full of commands to watch out for orphans. These words to us are as fresh today as when they were first spoken:

- *'Change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, do not oppress... the orphan...'* (Jeremiah 7: 5-6)
- *'This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right... do no wrong or violence to the... orphan...'* (Jeremiah 22:3)
- *'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans... in their distress and to keep from being polluted by the world.'* (James 1:27)

There must be an answer to the problem of children at risk on the streets. It is clear that so far we are losing the battle.

## Steps in progress...

### STEP 1: LOVE

The first step towards a solution is for the Christian world community to recognise that all of us can have a part. If only we would respond to the word of God, then we would reach out to these youngsters, believing that it is our responsibility to do so. Sharing the love of Christ with these children is the most important part of any solution.

The national Christian church must also decide to face the problem of the children on its own city streets. The church has been unusually slow to act in this area. Yet the national church must be involved in designing a strategy to solve the problem. In Colombia, the national church, with very few exceptions, is not ready to address social issues in the name of Jesus. Local congregations are not taught that they have a responsibility to the widows, the orphans, and other social outcasts.

The only programme for deprived children in Bogotá which is entirely endorsed and funded by a local church is that of the Iglesia Casa Roca (Church of the Rock). In this unique ministry, both boys and girls are cared for at a ranch-like setting north of the city.

Other Christian ministries do exist in Bogotá, however, including Futuro Juvenil, which focuses on orphans and tries to educate Colombians on adoption, a foreign idea in Colombia; Hogar Vida en Cristo, a programme for ex-drug offenders; and La Bergerie, a French

medical team which goes into the streets to help the physical needs of children.

The largest programme for street children in Bogotá, with about 700 children, is operated by Father Nicolo, a Roman Catholic. He does a good job of getting kids off the streets, though many run away.

Although not a Christian ministry, perhaps the best known programme in Latin America is the 'Children of the Andes'. Its director, Jamie Jaramillo, a man of genuine compassion, has received much media coverage for his rescue of children from the sewers of Bogotá.

### STEP 2: PROVIDING CHOICES

The second most important step is preventing children from arriving on the streets. Potential street children should have choices available to them **before** they enter street life.

The Hogar Infantil (Infant's Home) is an alternative home for children. It is one example of what can be offered to

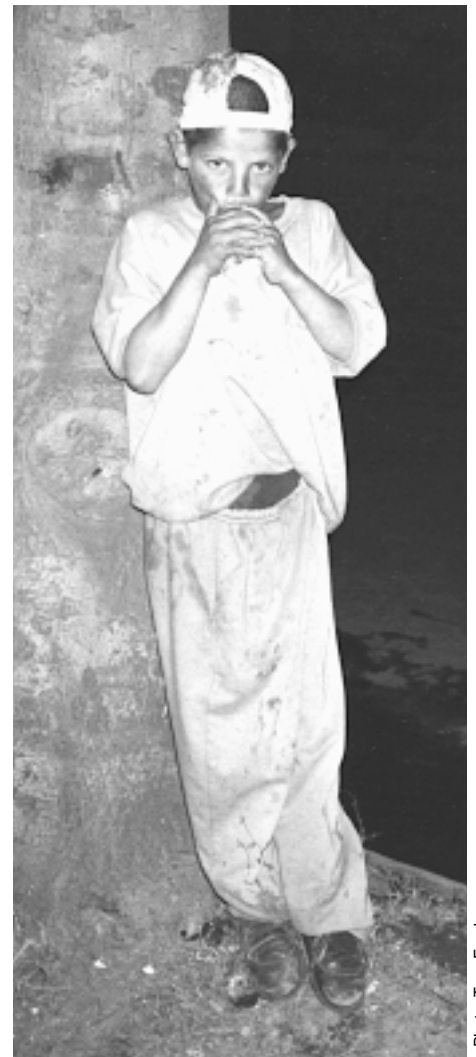


Photo: Tear Fund

Work (left) and solvent abuse (right) – regular features of life for millions of the world's street children.

# STREET CHILDREN

threatened children. In Colombia the 'In Ministry to Children' Group works with 16 children at this home in Sasaima, a small farming town one and a half hours west of Bogotá. This ranch provides children at risk with a positive and caring experience of life in an atmosphere of Christian love.

Youth With A Mission (YWAM) has one safe house in Bogotá, as well as a ranch programme for children up to age 12.

### STEP 3: PROVIDING MORE SUPPORT

A third step is for agencies to re-evaluate their work and give much more support and funding to meet the needs of children at risk.

Urban streets can expose children to much that is evil. It is essential for Christians to work together to

understand the needs of street children and their surroundings and then work out ways to reach these children on the streets of this dark world. We need more soldiers on the Lord's side, standing in the gap in this battle.

Working with children on the street may help a great deal, but still allows children to remain in a negative life style. They need to have a choice so they can leave the street scene if they choose. Over time, a child can recover from the tragedy of his experiences. This recovery varies directly with the degree of stability in the new life. It also varies depending on the length of time the child has needed to survive on the streets. The longer the time on the streets, the longer the recovery time needed.

Meeting this need for

appropriate support and accommodation is vital.

Gonzalo Arango, in a meditation in his book, *A Lament for Disquiet*, asks a very relevant question: 'I asked over his grave dug in the side of the mountain, "Isn't there some way that Colombia, instead of killing her children, can make them worthy of living?"'

To help allow street children become 'worthy of living' is the focus of all of us working with children at risk.

*James Beauniaux is founder and director of the In Ministry to Children Group, Apdo 077099, 114 Bogotá, Colombia, S America.*



Photo: Tear Fund

*Signs of hope – this former street boy is now in a new place of stability.*



### FROM THE EDITOR

UNDER UNITED NATIONS DEFINITIONS anyone under the age of 18 is a child and not regarded as a full citizen. Some children in stable loving families have many years in which to develop and reach maturity. But others may have to begin work and learn independence at just a few years of age. Our societies have always had children whose lives are at risk. But as towns and cities grow, as families face more and more pressures, as job opportunities become fewer and societies become less able to cope with the consequences, so more and more children take to life on the streets. Few countries today do not share this growing problem. In South America the problem is enormous.

There are no easy answers. No practical *Footsteps* articles to tell you what to do! But this issue shares the experiences of several groups, in the hope that ideas may help other groups. If you live in an isolated rural area you may feel this issue has little relevance. But consider your young people. What is their future? **How many drift to the cities because there is no work in the village? What part can you play in building a future for them?**

Recent visits to several groups who have received *Footsteps* for many years have proved a great encouragement to me. They have copies kept over many years. It has been interesting to listen to what people have enjoyed and learnt from *Footsteps* and to observe all the different ideas tried out. Many groups miss out the Resources page because they have no money to buy books. But don't forget that in nearly every issue some of the items are free!

Future issues look at participation and learning, waterborne diseases and grain storage.

*Isabel Carter*

# Abandoned families

by Gilda Liane da Cruz

'AN ABANDONED CHILD COMES FROM AN ABANDONED FAMILY.' This is the concern of the Reconciliation of the Minor programme in São Paulo, Brazil. It began in 1986 as an attempt to respond to the breakdown of social life in our country. We began by providing a meal of thick soup for about 30 children and a few hours care from volunteer workers. We met on a piece of land owned by the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Vila São Jose, a district on the edge of the city of São Paulo. Now we look after about 300 children and teenagers offering three meals a day, various activities and a wide educational service from pre-school to professional courses.

There is a real need to support needy children from low income families on the edge of society – because many abandoned and street children come from such families. Our workers are mainly the mothers of children who are cared for and teenagers who belonged to our first group.

## Paper-making

About 15 teenagers are involved and they work together as a team, dividing up the different tasks. We get scrap paper from printing works, cardboard of different

colours and use a lot of newspaper in the drying process.

The paper and cardboard are placed in buckets of water. The colour of the cardboard used determines the final colour of the paper. After soaking for several hours in water, the material is liquidised in a machine. The result is a liquid paste that is poured into a large flat container. A square sieve is then used to collect a thin layer of the paste-like substance. At this stage we add special effects such as a design or message. The

excess water is removed from this thin layer of paste by pressing it with dry cloths. Then the thin layer is carefully removed from the mesh and placed between sheets of newspaper to dry. We pass a wooden roller over the sheets of newspaper to smooth the paper. For the final drying the newspaper is removed and the paper is left on a flat surface. Now we only have to trim the edges and we have a pretty and practical hand-made product to sell.

*Programa Comunitário Reconciliação do Menor  
Rua Hilário Ascabusi 25  
São Paulo – SP  
Brazil*



After the project grew we started to have courses with both paid and voluntary helpers. I learned various things like; typing, cookery, drama, dance and computing. Now my mother is in the team of educators and I help in a team of teenagers. We have sports, school support groups, woodwork and a workshop for recycling paper. The manufacture of promotional cards from recycled paper helps the project be better known and gives me the chance to earn a small income of my own. I hope this will help me get a job and have the prospect of a better future.

*Renata de Jesus Souza, 16*





## Monthly cycles?

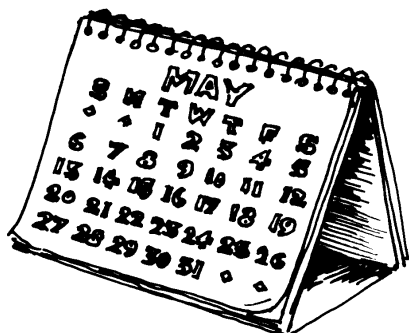
I APPRECIATED the stress given in *Footsteps 27* on population issues to recognising people's freedom of choice and the need to discern God's plan for humanity.

I'd like to make a few observations about the length of the female cycle. In the centre pages this is described as if it was equivalent to a month. This is far from being a general rule and causes problems for many women. Today the calendar is more and more often being used as a reference. 'Why a month without a period?' or 'Why two periods in one month?' are questions we were often asked in the Ivory Coast.

The diagram of the calendar beside the method of 'The Safe Period' reinforces this idea. This method is based on personal observations by the woman of her fertile times. The idea of a regular cycle of 28 days is very popular among college girls but has already caused countless disasters and academic failures.

I would also stress the need for medical supervision of all the methods of medical contraception, as many of these products are so accessible outside clinics and hospitals.

Jean-Daniel Peterschmitt  
SCAR  
CP 67  
1373 Chavornay  
Switzerland



## Treatment for epilepsy

*FOOTSTEPS* contains much useful and practical advice for development. It helps us in setting up income-generating activities. We want to translate *Footsteps* into our local languages – Ewe, Kabye and Adja. The aim of our group MECO is to promote self-development in health and agriculture and at the same time proclaim the gospel. We would like to hear from similar groups to share ideas. We also ask for advice from *Footsteps* readers on more efficient treatments for epilepsy.

Tchenawou Kossigan  
Pasteur MECO  
BP 84 Tohou  
Togo  
W Africa

## Local pharmacies

CAPA (Centre for Support for the Small Farmer) was formed in the area of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil. In this area farmers were in great difficulty. Their land was becoming more infertile and they were getting poorer and poorer. What could they do? Each family on its own could do nothing. But they started meeting together in groups and started to look for solutions to the agricultural problems they were facing, with the support of CAPA's technical team. They began introducing methods such as liquid manure, compost, green manures, seed banks, vegetable gardens and bee keeping.

Each day, groups cook lunch together using food from their own small farms. This way of working brings new enthusiasm to the community and shows the value of their own foods.

Because the poor health of the farmers was a great concern to them, we introduced the growing of medicinal plants and community pharmacies after careful research to discover the medicinal properties of each plant and their use. These pharmacies reduce the dependence of farmers on doctors who only work on curing illnesses. Some are in health centres, some in family homes. Each pharmacy has a list of useful herbs, a list of medicines and clear instructions for their preparation and uses. Each group chooses two or three people to train to serve in the pharmacy. New research into other plants which may have medicinal

benefits is carried out with the University of Pelotas and the small farmers.

The desire to understand the workings of their bodies better, led to training courses being developed for health workers who were democratically chosen by their groups. These health workers know their community, its habits and language and they live their lives in that community. They share their understanding with others while doctors do not share their understanding.

We'd like to describe other parts of our work, but it would make this letter too long! We leave you with this thought: 'It is only by starting from the priorities and needs of the people that we will have their active participation.'

Soeli Presser – CAPA – Núcleo Sul  
Caixa Postal No 87  
96170 S Lourenço do Sul  
Brazil

## Dangers of smoking

THE ARTICLE on 'Smoking – a deadly habit' in *Footsteps 23* has sparked a need for action against smoking in Zambezi district. Some friends and I tried to find out what other information was available



to warn people of the dangers of smoking – we could find none except in another Christian magazine, *Awake*. In this we came to discover that Third World countries have become the dumping ground for large quantities of high tar cigarettes by the big tobacco countries of the industrialised north. Demand there is falling (partly through awareness of the dangers of smoking) But in return, no literature, information and education is being given to Third World consumers, especially those in rural areas.

In this district many children, even of primary school age, are already smoking

heavily. Trucks loaded with cigarettes arrive every month delivering the poison to local traders.

Ten young Christian men and women have pledged to form a group to help fight this evil. We are seeking funds to help us spread information about smoking and health through a newsletter in the local language and we hope to give talks, show videos and encourage young people to form sports clubs instead.

*Richard Kayombo Kandonga*  
PO Box 150001  
Zambezi – NWP  
Zambia

### Co-operative society

YOUR ISSUE NO 26 on credit and loans was of great interest to me, especially the HEED credit and loan scheme. In May 1992 a small group sat down and thought out ways to obtain loans from commercial banks when they had no securities. They decided to form a co-operative society and seek registration from the Government.

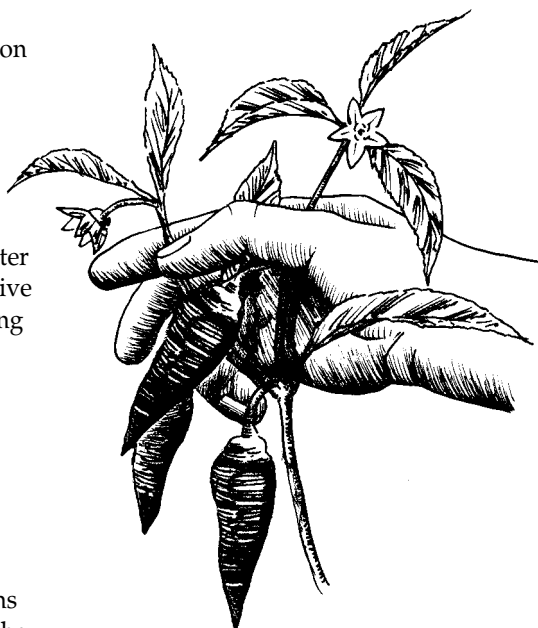
The Homa Bay Traders Savings and Credit Co-operative Society, as it is known, has grown from strength to strength in terms of membership and finance. We now have 800 members. These are our rules for lending:

- Applicants must be members of the society for at least 6 months.
- Applicants are loaned twice their savings.
- Applicants must be guaranteed by at least three other society members.
- If a person fails to repay a loan it is recovered from savings. The guarantors help to persuade the loanee to pay regularly.

We collect savings daily through a field collector. So far we have managed to save about 10 million Kenyan shillings and have loaned out 16 million Kenyan shillings.

This self-help co-operative movement has really changed the economy of our region.

*Tom Cleopas Onyango Akuku (Treasurer)*  
The New Mbita Clinic  
PO Box 299  
Mbita, Suba District  
Kenya



### Spicy pesticide

MANY THANKS for *Footsteps 25* – ‘Experiments with neem’ and ‘Raising fish and crops together’ were of particular interest.

I would like to share with readers the idea of using pilipili (chilli) as an organic pesticide on crops. As well as being used as a spice, pilipili is very effective in preventing pest damage to vegetables and food crops and helps prevent stem infestation of mangoes and oranges.

Smash up half a kilo of pilipili (be very careful not to get it in your eyes or mouth). Add 1 litre of water, stir well and allow the mixture to settle. Then drain off the solution and add 10 litres of soapy water. Spray this mixture on to your crops.

*Beatrice A Obbo*  
PO Box 7009  
Kampala  
Uganda

### Eel farming

I AM A FISHERIES BIOLOGIST with IIRR in the Philippines. I saw your issue No 25 on fish farming and was amazed at how simply you put scientific information into simple language. Congratulations!

At present we have a project on eels and would like to contact others – either to share experiences on eel farming or to pass on information to those wishing to learn. We would also appreciate contact with other organisations interested in small scale fish farming in rural areas. Thank you!

*Dr S S Tabrez Nasar*  
Eel Project Leader  
IIRR  
Silang, Cavite 4118  
Philippines

## Dosage instructions

THE NEW *Child Health Dialogue* magazine (see page 15) recently gave the results of a competition held for their readers to design clear, simple dosage instructions for medicines.

The winning entry shows all the essential information, can be easily understood by someone unable to read, clearly shows the time of day medicine should be given (very important for antibiotics) and the number of days the treatment should last.

This design was sent in by Samir Ayar, Chief of the Health Education Unit Library in Ilam, Iran.

name <i>Bira, Ana M.</i>		<i>Cotrimoxazole</i>	
date <i>27-03-95</i>		<i>Syrup</i>	
1	X	X	
2	X	X	
3	X	X	
4	X	X	
5	X	X	
6			
7			

# Urban or rooftop gardening

*by Martin Price*

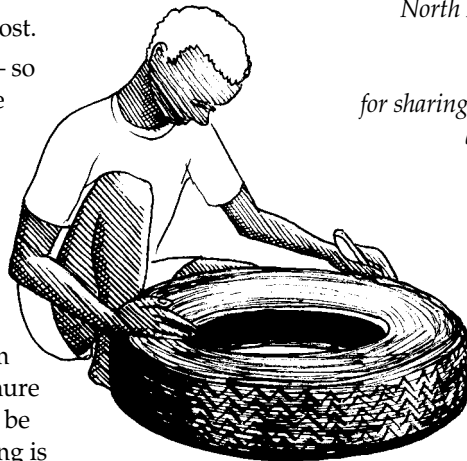
GARDENING IS POSSIBLE in small spaces as long as water (including waste water) is available. Grow vegetables that will add flavour and nutrients to the family diet. Herbs, onions, tomatoes, peppers and dark green leafy vegetables such as spinaches are ideal.

There are three essentials for roof top gardening:

- Gardens must be lightweight.
- Gardens should be low or no-cost.
- Methods must be dependable – so that people develop confidence in the method.

We have found that nearly anything can grow in a shallow bed. The depth of the bed determines how often it will need watering.

Fertiliser is a big problem in urban areas – there is unlikely to be manure available. Inorganic fertiliser may be more readily available. Composting is also more difficult on roofs – because of the smell, insect pests and rats.



*With thanks to...  
ECHO  
17430 Durrance Road  
North Fort Myers  
FL 33917  
USA  
for sharing these ideas  
and photos.*



## Tyre gardens

Tyre gardens are easy to make and move around. In most areas old tyres are easy to find. Lay a car tyre flat on the ground. With a sharp knife or machete, cut off the top rim. If you have some, place a piece of old chicken wire over the base (you can leave this out if not available). Cover with a piece of plastic large enough to cover the whole base and a little way up the tyre sides. Now turn the top rim (which you cut off) upside down. It will fit tightly over the bottom rim, holding the plastic firmly in place.



## Triple-T Technique

One major concern which people have is the effect of possible leaks on their roof structure. ECHO have experimented with various options to avoid leaks and direct contact with the roof. Tyres can be used and raised off the ground with sticks or rocks.

With the Triple Tyre Technique (or 'Triple-T' for short), three tyres are supported one above another with wooden poles. The tyres are spaced about 50cm apart and the poles pushed through them (see photo). Wire mesh and plastic are placed in the base and a few small holes are made in the base, for drainage and for water to trickle down. Coconut husks are added to the compost for water retention. Banana leaves are used as a mulch.

*A demonstration roof garden in Mexico City.*



## Planting medium

Any suitable soil or compost can be used for rooftop gardening. Soil is unlikely to be available. Compost is ideal but there will rarely be enough, so other alternatives are needed. Try using chopped up banana stem, covered with a layer of vegetable waste, weeds and a thin layer of compost. Cover it with banana leaves and this will decompose within just a few weeks in hot conditions. You can plant vegetables before the organic material has decomposed.

## Reducing the weight

Soft drink cans have the effect of doubling the volume of the planting medium without adding to the weight. Once added to the soil mix, they remain there and can be re-used many times. The cans hold water and air and the roots often grow into them. Make cuts along the sides of the cans.

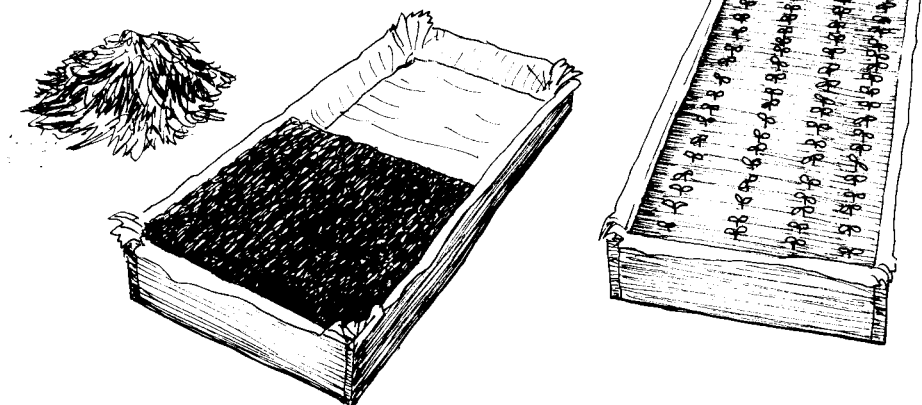
Instead of cans you can also use coconut husks, which are porous and lightweight.



Vegetables grow well in a mixture of soil and soft drink cans.

## Shallow beds

These beds are built on plastic sheeting with a piece of wood 5–6cm in depth around the edges. Mulching with dried grass or leaves is very important in rooftop gardening to reduce the frequency of watering. Watering has to be done very regularly with shallow beds.



## Door frame beds

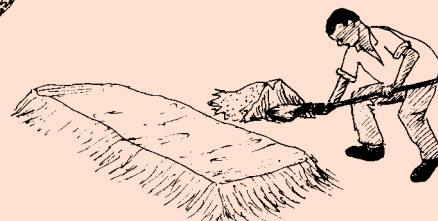
Many homes in urban areas have no room for gardens. The soil may be hard and infertile. But here is a practical idea which nearly every family could find space for. It works best if a number of families work together and build one garden each day or week.

**1** Find a space the size of a door frame. Mark out a plot which is roughly the same shape as a door frame (about 1 metre wide and 2 metres long). Dig out the soil until it is nearly knee deep. Lots of people working together will manage this quickly, even if the soil is very hard and dry. Be careful to keep separate the top soil (darker colour) from the subsoil (lighter colour and more stones) by making two heaps.



**2** All the families bring their organic household waste for that day and tip it into the hole – vegetable peelings and waste, waste paper, animal bones, egg shells. Also use any grass or weed cuttings.

**3** When the pit is half full pour on water to soak the waste. Then add the subsoil, followed by the topsoil.



**4** Plant rows of vegetable seeds and cover with grass clippings or banana leaves as a mulch. Keep well watered.

*The editor isn't sure who to thank for this good idea but it comes from South Africa.*

**5** Now decide whose home will have the next door frame garden! If you have space you may be able to build several door frame gardens in succession.

# Guidelines

## FOR WORKING WITH STREET CHILDREN

by Judith Ennew

THERE ARE TWO BASIC RULES for work with any children:

- The main barrier to successful programmes is our own attitude.
- The main resource in any project is the children themselves.

Adults tend to assume they know what is best for children. But street children who have been taking a good deal of responsibility for themselves often have very definite ideas about what is best for them. The problem is that few people listen to them or use their skills and abilities.

### Gathering information

Before beginning plans for any project, information should be gathered.

- Which groups of children are most at risk?
- Which groups of children are receiving least help?
- Which of these groups are you best able to help?
- What further information is needed about these children before starting to plan a project?

Some people argue that there is no need for research – the important thing is to act immediately and rescue these children.

**However, children deserve help that is appropriate to their own individual surroundings and situation. They deserve solutions that will be long-lasting, that will not end if funding fails.**

Research should be based on observing street children and their activities and spending time with them. Most

children are rightly wary of anyone with a survey or clipboard – what will they get out of answering a lot of questions? A simple toy such as a yo-yo is a good way of attracting attention. Just hanging around with children over a period of time, joining in their games or quietly talking with them, without a camera or notebook, is the best way to make contact.

### Provide a service

Providing a simple service can be an important way of building up contacts with street children. SABANA (in the Philippines) noticed that children had to buy water by the glass. This meant that they drank less than they needed. So the project arranged for barrels of water daily. The children could drink and even wash their hands. Slowly they began to drift in and get to know the staff.

They discovered their first priority was a place to rest out of the sun and a flat space where they could play. Project workers cleared the area around their building and enclosed it with a

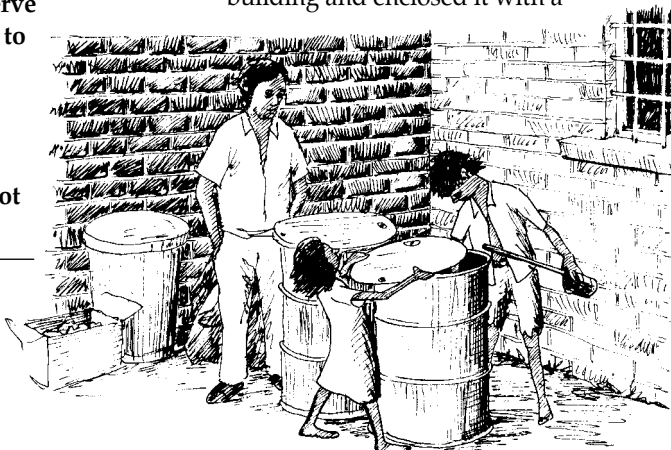


Photo: Tear Fund

fence of discarded bed springs. Attracted by footballs and simple games, the children began to flock in.

### Project options

There is a very important point to follow as a guide:

**The emphasis should not be on making children leave the streets or stop work, but on increasing the range of choices available to them and helping them make their own decisions.**

However, the desire to rescue children quickly and get them off the streets is common, especially among donors.

■ **SHELTERS AND DROP-IN CENTRES**  
Shelters are places where children can feel relaxed, safe and comfortable. They are places where children can talk to each other and to project workers, knowing they will be listened to and heard. They are not places where they should be talked at or preached to! A major decision is whether or not to provide night shelters. It is at night that children experience the greatest dangers and yet night shelter can only be provided for small numbers, and project workers have to provide care 24 hours a day.

There is usually no need to build special purpose buildings. Sometimes buildings can be 'borrowed' during night hours or there may be derelict buildings which can be repaired, rooms in health centres, churches, mosques or temples which can be used. Whatever is found, it should be in keeping with the way people in the surrounding community live. Simple accommodation sited where the street children live, is best.

Consider making small charges for providing food, rather than providing

free handouts. In Redd Barna's Sri Lanka project, food is charged at cost. Staff report that children are well aware of the cost of food and appreciate the need to buy in bulk to keep costs low. They advise staff to buy with care and also do some of the shopping themselves. They keep account of the cost, change and quality of the food. Everything can become a learning experience!

## ■ HEALTHCARE

Street children rarely have correct information about illness or their own bodies. Simple healthcare is best provided on the streets, free of charge. Preventive healthcare is important but it needs to be fun and relevant. Encourage the use of drama and puppets by the children to put over health messages themselves. Help the children to understand their own bodies and take responsibility for their health. Children's sexual experiences need to be discussed in a non-judgemental way. The fight against drug abuse will provide huge frustrations and may not be appropriate until a child is guaranteed future security.

## ■ EDUCATION

Children are expected to be in schools, so education is usually an important part of projects for street children. Older children cannot be expected to fit into a formal school system using books and lessons designed for five year olds. More participatory methods of learning are needed, especially at the beginning. Education does not need a classroom or even a building – pavement schools are common in India. Teaching needs to be sited where the children are and timetables need to be really flexible. Drama, song, puppets, mime, drawing and modelling can all be used. Let children make their own books – starting with pictures cut out of magazines, explaining to each other why they have chosen them. Use the discussions to help the children understand why they live the lives they do. This is the first step towards changing their lives.

Build up links with Ministry of Education staff and local teachers. You will need to find ways to help children eventually re-enter the formal system.

## ■ VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Many training schemes are not linked to the job market and do not provide employment placements or follow up.

## Questions to ask:

### Of yourself...

- What do you think childhood should be like?
- What sort of work should children do and at what ages?
- What is your image of street children?
- Why are children employed rather than adults?

### About the children you will work with...

- What is childhood like for poor children in the area you hope to work in?
- What is the local image of street children?
- What facts do you have about the children you want to work with? What are these facts based on?

### About the area where you will start a project...

- What work do children do?
- What numbers of street children and child workers are available for the area?
- Are there examples of child participation in projects locally? What kind of participation is involved?

Before introducing such training or using a government training programme ask these questions:

- What skills are really needed on the local job market?
- What courses are already available in the local area? Could your students attend these if they were helped to upgrade their reading and writing skills first?
- What can be done to help students find employment?

## ■ PROTECTING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

In different parts of the world, projects have helped self-employed children improve their working conditions by:

- providing a space where the work can take place, such as a car wash scheme or shoe shine shop where the children will not have to pay adults for such space.

- providing secure places where tools and goods can be kept overnight
- improving skills so that goods are better made
- help and training with business skills and credit and loan schemes
- providing savings schemes. (In Colombo, children sleep with their money in their mouths.)

## Dealing with theft and damage

It hurts when children steal or damage property that was provided to help them. It is a frequent problem. First you need to assess the damage, and then think about why the damage occurred. Was it really the children themselves or was it outsiders, older youth or the public trying to destroy the project? If it was the children, try and find out why and then involve the children in the process of justice and repairing the damage. Such damage occurs in all projects. Deal with it, then pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again.

When bad things happen it is all too easy to feel the work is not worthwhile. But when you reach low points there are often reminders of success, usually from the children – a small gift, a friendly gesture from a kid who notices you are feeling low, a wave from a girl who left last year and is doing well in school. It is worth carrying on!

*This article summarises some of the valuable information contained in the book, Street and Working Children written by Judith Ennew and published by Save the Children Fund. This book is highly recommended for anyone working with street children (reviewed on page 15).*



*A simple toy such as a yo-yo is a good way of attracting attention.*



# The Sunflower Centre

SCRIPTURE UNION LIMA



SCRIPTURE UNION PERU have recently put up a new office building sited right in the heart of Lima's commercial district, an area 'worked' by street kids. At the back of these offices they have built the Sunflower Centre – a drop-in centre for street children.

Entrance is by a narrow flight of stairs – completely separate from the main office entrance. There is a large tarmac area, marked out as a football pitch with benches around the sides. There is room for up to 60 children in basic accommodation with good washing facilities. There are also three large workrooms for use as a bakery, electrical workshop and craft room. The centre is named after Jesus – the light of the world. Just as sunflowers turn to the light during the day, the hope is that the street kids will become as sunflowers – looking to the light of Jesus.

*The football pitch at the Sunflower Centre – a safe haven for some of Lima's street children.*

## Day and night

There are two main areas of work:

- The street children who stay in the centre at nights. They generally have no family links.
- Children who come to the centre during the day but who do not stay overnight.

The project began in August 1993 with the Director, Pablo Lavado, and two other full-time workers and a number of volunteers – mostly young folk from Pablo's church. The work is very demanding – the boys are very difficult to cope with. More volunteers are needed and Pablo hopes to visit other churches and share the vision of the work with them.

There are few rules – they must have a shower each day and are free to come and go in the afternoons but if they want to stay the night they must be back by 9.30 pm with no drugs or money. The punishment for breaking these rules is exclusion from the centre for 1–2 weeks.

## Four stages in the work...

Pablo sees the first stage as providing children with exposure to the work of the centre. They can come and go for meals, to play football etc. After several months they will be asked to choose if they want to stay in the centre and agree to the simple rules – only boys are able to stay. They will be asked if they want to stay on and begin attending school with plenty of extra support from the centre. During these second and third stages, boys will be given practical skills training in the afternoons. Income will be raised from the work done in all three areas; electrical repair work, craft and basket work and, in particular, from the bakery. This will be fully equipped as a commercial bakery and a baker will be employed full time – using the boys as labour and providing training at the same time.

Photo: Isabel Carter

## Cesar's story

When Cesar (not his real name) was two and half years old, his mother decided to kill him and commit suicide. They lived in a small straw mat hut. She put kerosene all around, held her little boy and set it all on fire. But people nearby saw the fire and rushed in and were able to rescue Cesar. He was taken to the police who tracked down his father who was living with another woman. They put him in a government institution where he stayed until the age of eight. They put him out onto the street because of his bad conduct. He went to the infamous Plaza San Martin and slept with other street boys. He learned how to get drugged to avoid cold and hunger. He became part of a group known as *pirañas* (man-eating fish). They are boys who attack people in groups of six or eight, robbing them of everything they have. Sometimes they even leave them without their clothes in the street.

Then he came to the Sunflower Centre. He is an aggressive boy with violent reactions and cannot bear to lose. Previously he had been interned in a government reformatory from which he escaped. With us he is not a prisoner. He can come and go at will. He comes more and more, goes out less and less. It is the first time in his life that someone has really loved him. He does not know what love is. He is just beginning to learn. Sexually his life has been just terrible – 90% of Lima street children are 'used' by men, for a plate of food.

Cesar is now 14. The other day we convinced him of the need to look for his father and talk to him. Finally he agreed and Pablo took him. Cesar faced his father and his father's woman and was obviously very nervous. The first thing he said, which really surprised Pablo was, 'Before we talk, could we not pray to God?'

For several months he has not stolen in the streets and has stopped taking drugs. We hope for great things for this boy...

## Involving local churches

Pablo's prayer is that a house will be made available to provide a family atmosphere for the boys after they have spent a year at school. Foster homes would be ideal, but they will be very hard to find initially. A change of heart in the churches of Lima will come slowly. Already he is seeing that through the volunteers, boys are being invited out to lunch or for tours of the city with different families.

*Pablo Lavado can be contacted at: Unión Bíblica del Peru, Apdo 3159, Lima 1, Peru.*

*Pablo, the Director at the Sunflower Centre, with some of the local children.*



Photo: Isabel Carter

# Uganda's street children

*By Beatrice Akoth Obbo*

KAMPALA is a city built on seven hills with areas of open space and trees in and around the city. But amidst all the beauty lives the problem of street children.

As the day breaks, while their counterparts prepare for school, street children shiver under the cardboard boxes they use for protection against the cold on the verandas where they spend their nights. For breakfast they meet at the large rubbish bins where they compete with cats, vultures and marabou storks for the day's share of food.

They begin their day by begging. They wait on Kampala's main street by the post office, to try their luck on passers-by. When peaceful means of begging fail, the children resort to harassment – running after pedestrians, holding onto their hands, clothes, bags until they are given something. When an opportunity comes, they pickpocket.

At the main Owino market the children walk around selling polythene bags for

shopping. The boys carry shopping for payment. Girls find it harder to sell their labour so they are usually only left with the option of offering their bodies for a living. They are exposed to the greed of men who take advantage of their circumstances to force them into sex (in most cases unprotected) in exchange for something to eat or somewhere to stay at night. Sometimes these men give them a little money which they invest in small businesses like selling roasted groundnuts, soyabeans, sweets and bananas.

Late at night the children make fires near the rubbish bins to help them keep warm while they eat opium, smoke marijuana

and sniff solvents in paints and glue. These practices help them endure the difficult conditions they have to live in.

Uganda has not yet begun to look seriously at the problems these children face. The traditional strong African family structure has meant that until recently there were no unwanted children. Most find themselves on the streets as a result of civil war and the AIDS scourge that hit Uganda leaving many orphans.

*Beatrice Obbo's address is PO Box 7009, Kampala, Uganda.*



Photo: Beatrice Obbo

## Wheat bread



Photo: Isabel Carter

*Their first successful bake – The Christian Friendly Association in Iganga, Uganda.*

*'Footsteps 21 showed us how to build a wood stove, but not how to make bread.'*

A RECENT READER'S COMMENT

### You will need...

- 1.5kg bag of wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons oil or margarine
- 4–5 cups warm water

### Method...

In a small bowl mix the sugar and 1 cup warm water and add the yeast. Make sure the water is

not too warm or you will kill the yeast and your bread will be like rock! After 5–10 minutes the yeast will begin bubbling.

Place the flour and salt in a large bowl, add the oil, yeast and most of the water. (For sweet bread add half a cup of sugar, 1 cup chopped fresh or dried fruit and 2 teaspoons of sweet spices like cinnamon). Mix well, adding more water if needed, and knead (fold the dough in and press down firmly with your hand) for 5 minutes. Cover with plastic or damp cloth and leave for an hour.

Knead again for 5 minutes and form into small rolls or loaves. Place on oiled tins, cover and leave to double in size – about an hour. Cook in a hot oven for about 20 minutes for rolls, 40 minutes for loaves.

Small scale bread making can be a useful source of income especially if people smell it cooking!

## BIBLE STUDY

### *A Small Act of Faith...*

### *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*

by Dr Isaac Zokove of FATEB

#### Read Mark 6:30–44

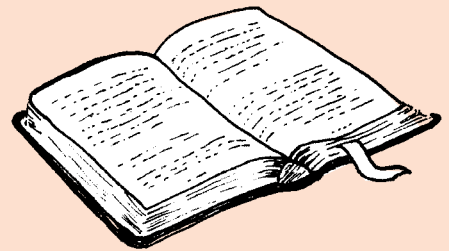
**Verses 30–32** The disciples have been busy teaching and sharing the good news, without the presence of Jesus. Now he gives them a chance to rest – and he takes over.

**Verses 33–34** The crowd was eager – too eager for spiritual teaching to be ignored. They had travelled a long distance to hear more of this new and challenging teaching. Jesus responds with compassion to their needs and teaches them for a long time.

**Verses 35–36** Though the disciples may have resented the crowd from preventing Jesus giving them some time alone, they were sensitive to the physical needs of the crowd. They were also realistic. They couldn't begin to find enough food. 'Send them away to find themselves food.' Can we sympathize with this feeling? How often do we feel quite unable to meet the needs of those around us? How often do we long for them to 'go away and look elsewhere'? Nowhere is this more likely to be the case than when faced with huge numbers of street children. How can we do anything of any use?

**Verse 37** Study the disciples' response to Jesus. What do you think they meant? How would you respond in a similar situation?

**Verses 38–44** See how Jesus encouraged them to respond. All the disciples were involved in searching to find a solution to this need. There were only a few of them working together, but from their struggling faith Jesus brought abundance. What do you think really happened? How do you respond to this story?



#### What can we learn from this?

- *It's not enough just to be aware of people's needs – Jesus asks us to take action.*
- *In the face of impossible problems, Jesus tells us, 'All things are possible for the person who believes.' Mark 9:23*
- *The development problems facing us as mountains should not be thought of as a crisis, rather as a challenge to our faith.*
- *The disciples had no choice but to find a solution to the problem. In the same way, the Church today has no choice but to find a solution to the development problems which face her. Christ who multiplied the bread is in the midst of this church.*



*Isaac Zokoue is the Principal of Bangui Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in the Central African Republic.*



## Street and Working Children

by Judith Ennew

*Development Manual 4*  
*Save the Children Fund*

This is a guide to planning work with street children. Many different kinds of projects are set up around the world to try and meet the needs of street children. However there are surprisingly few accounts of this work. This book tries to fill that gap. The author has 15 years of experience in working with children around the world. The book is full of practical guidelines, advice and examples, and written in an easy to read style. It is essential reading for anyone working with street children. Highly recommended. (Pages 10 and 11 of this issue are based on parts of this book.)

This excellent book is available in English and Spanish. The English version costs £8.40 (£8 in Europe) or US \$13 including postage from:

*SCF Publications Sales*  
*17 Grove Lane*  
*London*  
*SE5 8RD.*

The new Spanish version costs US \$13 in Latin America (including postage) and is available from:

*SCF (UK)*  
*Apdo 3801*  
*Tegucigalpa MDC*  
*Honduras*  
*Central America.*

## Sueños Quebrados (Broken Dreams)

This is a video about drug abuse. It includes stories of people who used to be drug addicts and are now rehabilitated. It brings a drug prevention message for young people. It looks at the work of La Roca – one of the best known groups in the field of drug prevention and rehabilitation. It is available only in Spanish and can be obtained from :

*Corporación Comunidad La Roca*  
*Pasaje Anwandter 77*  
*Viña del Mar*  
*Chile.*

## Cuidemos la Creación

This booklet describes how forests have been destroyed, animals and birds have disappeared and how peoples' lives have



been made poorer. It looks at the role played by farmers and the impact of big business. Then it explores what the Bible has to say about all this and comes to some practical and spiritual solutions.

The use of cartoon drawing and simple language make it easy to read. Each short chapter ends with questions for discussion, making it very useful for community groups.

Though written for Nicaragua, it would be useful in other Spanish speaking countries. It costs US \$3 (local currency C\$15 plus p&p) and is available from:

*Distribuidora Vida*  
*Apdo 4829*  
*Managua*  
*Nicaragua.*

## Guardianes de la Tierra – Los Cristianos y el medio ambiente

This 138 page book is aimed at raising awareness among evangelical Christians about their responsibility to care for the environment. It discusses the different types of pollution and their consequences, population growth etc. and what Christians can do to meet these challenges. There are many Bible references to help reflect on what the Bible says about the environment and ecological issues. The book costs US \$10 (including postage) outside Peru (US \$8 in Peru) and can be ordered from:

*Puma (CENIP)*  
*Apdo 441*  
*Lima 100*  
*Peru.*  
*Fax 00 51 14 268266*  
*Email Puma@enlace.org.pe*

## Natural Medicine in the Tropics

by Dr Hans-Martin Hirt and Bindanda M'Pia

'In Africa and anywhere in the South, a whole library of information is buried with every old person who dies,' says the

introduction to this fascinating book. Most of the source materials for imported medicines come from the rich resources of Africa. Yet traditional ways of using these herbal drugs are being lost while clinics and hospitals struggle to buy expensive imported medicines.

This small book is packed full of useful information. It contains details and illustrations of 65 plants with medicinal properties and how to use them, treatments for numerous diseases and recipes for ointments, creams, teas and powders. In addition there is information on making soap, baby foods, shoe polish and running village pharmacies. Many recipes have been shared by traditional healers and carefully checked and researched.

If your clinic has few or no drugs you will find this book of huge benefit. Its message is radical but makes good sense. It is available in French, English and German. It costs US \$5 including postage (US\$ 3.50 within same country). Order the French version from:

*Centre de Vulgarisation Agricole*  
*BP 4008*  
*Kinshasa 2*  
*Zaire*

...and the English version from:

*UCBHCA*  
*PO Box 325*  
*Entebbe*  
*Uganda*

...or outside Africa:

*ANAMED*  
*Schafweide 77*  
*D-71364*  
*Germany.*



## Child Health Dialogue

This new publication from AHRTAG replaces the newsletters *Dialogue on Diarrhoea* and *ARI News*. It provides information on primary health care and is easy to read and well illustrated. Available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese free of charge for people working in health care in developing countries, from:

*AHRTAG*  
*Farringdon Point*  
*29-35 Farringdon Road*  
*London*  
*EC1M 3JB*  
*UK.*

A PREVIOUS ARTICLE (in *Footsteps 20*) described the many uses and products of the multi-purpose tree – *Moringa oleifera*. That article described the use of crushed seed to clean drinking water. This article looks at methods of extracting edible oil from moringa seed.

# Moringa oil

by Geoff Folkard and John Sutherland

Vegetable oil is an important part of our diet. It is a concentrated source of food energy. Small amounts added to the diet of young children can provide them with a more varied and nutritious diet. However, most cooking oil is expensive and produced by commercial companies.

The Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) in Zimbabwe have looked at machines appropriate for the small-scale processing of oil seed crops – mainly sunflower. The oil mills introduced have brought many benefits to the surrounding areas. Farmers have a good market for their seed, people benefit from cheaper, good quality cooking oil and the mills bring employment.

Moringa oil has been used in skin preparations and ointments since Egyptian times. The bright yellow oil with a pleasant taste has been compared in quality with olive oil. The kernel contains 35–40% by weight of oil. Recent studies in Ghana show that soap made with moringa oil was extremely good.

Trials on extracting oil from moringa were carried out with the enthusiastic assistance of Keith Machell.

## Extraction techniques

Moringa seed has a fairly soft kernel, so the oil can be extracted by hand using a screw press (also known as a 'spindle' or 'bridge' press). The seed is first crushed, 10% by volume of water is added, followed by gentle heating over a low fire for 10–15 minutes, taking care not to burn the seed. One such test yielded 2.6 litres of oil from 11kg of kernels. Once the best processing conditions are worked out, an extraction efficiency of 65% could probably be expected.

Further trials were carried out using a motor-driven screw-type oil expeller from India. During 2 hours of operation 52kg of seed yielded 12.5 litres of cold pressed oil. A further processing of the oil cake yielded a further 10 litres of oil.

Traditional methods of extracting oil from oil seed crops are often slow and not very efficient. They involve extracting



Winged seeds of *Moringa oleifera* (right), when crushed, give oil and (front) the presscake that can be used for water treatment.

the kernels, pounding them and boiling them for 5 minutes in water. After boiling, strain through a cloth into a clean container. Leave overnight to allow the oil to separate from the water. There may be some debris floating on the surface of the oil. Tribesmen in Oman use this technique to extract oil from *Moringa peregrina* seed with some success. If you don't have access to a machine, try out this method.

After the oil is extracted, the rather bitter-tasting presscake still has all the properties of fresh seed in treating and cleaning water. With a 60% protein content, it may be used as a soil fertiliser and further study is looking at how it could be used as part of animal and poultry feed.

*The authors are grateful for the support of the ODA, the EC Commission and Keith Machell. They would be pleased to hear from readers with queries about Moringa species. Write to them at:*

Department of Engineering  
University of Leicester  
LE1 7RH  
UK.

## Moringa seeds

Moringa is also known as 'horseradish tree', 'drumstick' and 'malunggay' and grows wild in many countries. If readers have difficulty in finding moringa seeds, small sample packets may be obtained from:

ECHO  
17430 Durrance Road  
North Fort Myers  
FL 33917-2200  
USA.



Photo: Isabel Carter

Patrick Okki obtained moringa seeds from ECHO. 18 months later the trees were covered in beans or ripe seed pods. Here is his first (successful) demonstration of the cleaning of muddy water from Lake Kyoga, Uganda.

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CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN A WORLD OF NEED

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