

Annual report 2008



Bernard van Leer Foundation Annual Report 2008

April 2009

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Cover: Arlette Mejay Flores's father left for work in the USA two years ago when she was 4 years old. Arlette now attends the Escuela Preescolar de Orizabita del Municipio de Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, Mexico, run by IMIFAP, the Mexican Institute for Family and Population Research.
Photo: Jon Spaul

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Photo: Jim Holmes

Boys struggling with a bicycle near Banda Aceh, Indonesia.



Foreword by the Chair of the Board of Trustees

I begin by placing on record the Board's gratitude to two servants of the foundation who moved on in 2008. Ivar Samrén retired after 27 years of service as a member of the board, including over two decades as chair of the Van Leer Group Foundation and four years as chair of the Board of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, from 1996 to 2000. Peter Laugharn, our executive director for the last six years, left behind a strong programmatic approach on which the foundation can build in the coming years.

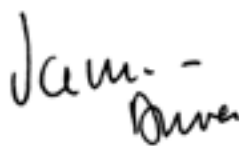
Those years will be challenging. The economic crisis, which began in 2008, demonstrated how truly and irrevocably global the world has become, and the Bernard van Leer Foundation has not been immune.

We are needing to take unpopular decisions. But we are doing so in line with our mandate, and an obligation to be very precise in defining our focus. Compared to the magnitude of the problems for young children we face, our budgets have always been small. Still we were able to make a difference.

These days our need to work smartly and strategically is even greater. Focusing on the countries where we can make the biggest difference, and always transferring responsibilities to local people from the outset, is our vision of sustainability. We will also learn from analysing the situations in countries where we no longer work, as we strive to generate momentum towards improvements in early childhood that allow us to reinvest our grantmaking in other countries with the same objective.

We decided long ago to have no representatives in the field, instead relying on our partner organisations to map their local situations. The thinking and knowledge of our partners has become ever more critical as we have embarked on our current quest to deepen our country strategies, approaching the situation of young children from the perspectives of our issue areas and a thorough analysis of civil society and local change agents.

It will not be easy, but I trust the strength of our staff and our partners. It is our fiduciary duty to the young children of this world to set ourselves the goal of emerging from this crisis stronger than we were before.



Trude Maas-de Brouwer
Chair, Board of Trustees

Children in Athens, Greece, in a kindergarten where an educator trained and paid by the EADAP environmental programme teaches children about water.

Photo: Jon Spaul



The report of the Interim Executive Director

I joined the Bernard van Leer Foundation as Interim Executive Director in May 2008, and expect to hand over to my permanent successor in the summer of 2009. My role has primarily been to provide continuity while the Board of Trustees took the time necessary to identify the right person to take the foundation forward in the longer term. But I was also tasked with looking through a fresh pair of eyes at the foundation's position and direction.

What did I find? An organisation with a beautiful mandate, innovative and inspiring programmes, and a way of working that adroitly combines practical work rooted in communities with publishing that aims to influence national and international agendas. This way of working can enable bright ideas to be taken up far beyond the localities in which they arise.

In fact, without realising it I had already been familiar with one example of this. When I lived and worked for eleven years in Colombia, I got to know the 'community kindergarten' model, which enables mothers to combine their working lives with providing high-quality childcare for their children. It was only when I joined the Bernard van Leer Foundation that I discovered it had, many years ago, had a role in sowing the seeds of this state-supported programme.

In 2008 I had the opportunity to visit all the Colombian projects the foundation currently supports, and found similarly fertile terrain for ideas to germinate and grow. Our programme there brings together a carefully chosen

network of partners who work on behalf of disadvantaged young children, from practical grassroots NGOs to university research departments. I met a range of foundation partners who were all entrepreneurial in their approach and dedicated in their professionalism, and I clearly saw the foundation's role in listening, convening, and creating synergy amongst diversely knowledgeable local partners.

It's an approach we seek to emulate in all the countries in which we work. In line with the programmatic mindset put in place by my predecessor, during the period of the current strategic plan (2007 to 2009) the foundation's programme officers have thought deeply about the challenges and potentials in each country and developed, in close collaboration with our partners, detailed country strategy documents. It has not been a quick process, as we have taken pains to get the format right. Strategies for eight of our current countries were finalised in 2008, with the rest to follow in 2009. Three representative examples are summarised on pages 13–25 of this report.

It will be up to the next executive director to finalise the next strategic plan, which will run from 2010 to 2012. Discussions I have held with programme staff will provide a solid basis from which to work. Much has been learned since we adopted a thematic approach to our programming and publishing, with the focus on our three 'issue areas'. For the coming period, a priority will be to ensure that the issue areas are defined in a way that best serves the needs of the early childhood community, and, consequently, of disadvantaged young children.

Opportunities

Unfortunately, the next strategic plan will unfold in a significantly more difficult environment. My period as Interim Executive Director has coincided with a global financial crisis that has not spared the philanthropic sector in general, or the Bernard van Leer Foundation in particular. A fall in the value of the foundation's capital has translated into a reduction in income, currently estimated at 20% for 2009.

This has, in turn, necessitated a reduction in expenditure, and it has fallen to me to make painful but unavoidable cutbacks. The foundation's full-time staff has already been reduced by almost a third. And more hard choices remain to be made: it is likely that the foundation will need to reduce by around a quarter the

number of countries it works in, to be able to maintain the necessary level of engagement given the lower level of human and financial resources.

The reductions will not, of course, affect our existing commitments to existing partners.

It may be a cliché, but every crisis also presents an opportunity. In our case, a challenge which already engaged us but which now confronts us with greater urgency and intensity is learning how best to translate our limited resources into maximum impact for children. One highly promising avenue is the foundation's nascent engagement with the private sector, which aims to involve corporations in supporting early childhood development. 2008 saw business leaders meet in The Hague and Washington DC for the "Business Champions" events, co-organised with two influential US-based organisations, the Committee for Economic Development and the Wolfensohn Centre at the Brookings Institute. Further such events are planned for South Africa and Brazil.

As we have repeatedly documented in our publications, the economic case for investment in early childhood is overwhelming. While the Business Champions initiative is one that, by its nature, will take time to bear fruit, we are confident that business leaders – with their capacity to appreciate the outcomes of cost-benefit analysis – will

increasingly resolve to demonstrate their corporate good citizenship by getting more involved in projects for young children.

We will need to be ever more inventive in finding ways to confront influential decision-makers with the uncomfortable realities of young children's situations, along with practical ideas to tackle them. Another interesting example from the last year was the much-discussed photo exhibition put on, with foundation support, by Panos at the Mexico International AIDS conference.

Play spaces

What we must never forget, as we rethink and reorganise to adapt to tougher economic times, is that we exist to touch the lives of young children. I was powerfully reminded of this by a visit to partner organisations of the foundation in Israel.

Israel is an important country for the foundation because of the Jewish origins of our benefactor, Bernard van Leer. We strive to be scrupulously even-handed in our engagement with the country, in line with our vision of a world in which every child is equally valued, equally respected, and given equal opportunity to achieve everything in life of which they are capable. We support projects that work with children of Arab and of Jewish origins, with Haredi families and Bedouin families, and with populations

of more recent immigrants into Israel, notably from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

It happened to be a project working with the Ultra-Orthodox Haredi community which brought home to me the human impact of the foundation's activities. The importance ascribed in this community to boys learning scripture had led to a situation in which learning scripture was pretty much all boys did, from the age of 3 onwards. Asking himself why a proportion of boys always seemed to end up struggling, one rabbi took the brave and unusual step of soliciting ideas from outside the Haredi community. The experts he consulted noticed that the boys never play.

As a consequence of this rabbi's reaching out, our partner Mercaz Beth Jacob now works with local Haredi communities to create play spaces for boys. Some of the rabbis, not having been encouraged to play as children, had first to learn how to play themselves before they were equipped to engage with the children. As a result the boys' physical co-ordination, roundedness as characters, and above all social skills have all noticeably improved.

One mother told me she had always been suspicious of influences from beyond her community, but now saw that external ideas could enrich rather than threaten her identity. This mother exemplified, for me, the way that

sensitive engagement with communities can meet children's rights and needs while respecting the cultural sensibilities of their parents. It is a guiding principle that runs deep in the foundation, and that in my opinion deserves to be cherished.



Monique van 't Hek
Interim Executive Director

A teacher in Nairobi, Kenya, works with puppets to help young children express their feelings about the devastating effects of AIDS on their families.

Photo: Wendy Stone



Mission and policy

The Bernard van Leer Foundation funds and shares knowledge about work in early childhood development. The foundation was established in 1949 and is based in the Netherlands.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation receives the bulk of its income from the Van Leer Group Foundation, a charitable entity based in the Netherlands. In the late 1990s, the Van Leer Group Foundation sold Royal Packaging Industries Van Leer NV, which it had fully owned. The Van Leer Group Foundation's income now derives from a global portfolio of equities, securities property, and a venture capital company. The total value of the Van Leer Group Foundation's assets is today approximately EUR 500 million. For more information about the Van Leer Group Foundation's investment policy, see its annual report on www.vanleergroupfoundation.nl.

Our mission is to improve opportunities for children up to age 8 who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. We see this both as a valuable end in itself and as a long-term means to promoting more cohesive, considerate and creative societies with equality of opportunity and rights for all.

We work primarily by supporting programmes implemented by partners in the field. These include public, private and community-based organisations. Our strategy of working through

partnerships is intended to build local capacity, promote innovation and flexibility, and help to ensure that the work we fund is culturally and contextually appropriate.

We currently support about 140 major projects. We focus our grantmaking on 21 countries in which we have built up experience over the years. These include both developing and industrialised countries and represent a geographical range that encompasses Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

We work in three issue areas:

- Through “Strengthening the Care Environment” we aim to build the capacity of vulnerable parents, families and communities to care for their children.
- Through “Successful Transitions: the Continuum from Home to School” we aim to help young children make the transition from their home environment to daycare, pre-school and school.
- Through “Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity” we aim to promote equal opportunities and skills that will help children to live in diverse societies.

Also central to our work is the ongoing effort to document and analyse the projects we support, with the twin aims of learning lessons for our future grantmaking activities and generating knowledge we can share. Through our evidence-based advocacy and publications, we aim to inform and influence policy and practice both in the countries where we operate and beyond.

Grandparents in South Africa must often assume a key role as primary child carers, either because their own children or other extended family primary carers fall ill, are severely disabled, or die, or must migrate in search of work. They face multiple challenges arising from poverty, bereavement, frailty and the widening generation gap between old and young.

Photo: Anthony Swift



Stories from India, Mexico and South Africa

The stories on the following pages about work we have supported in India, Mexico and South Africa illustrate the deep effect our funding is having on young children's lives in widely varying places. We thank our partner organisations for their willingness to contribute not only to this Annual Report but also to help us enhance our own knowledge and understanding of early childhood development.

Each set of stories is followed by a brief 'country strategy'. These strategies have been developed by the foundation in 2008 in close collaboration with our partners to respond to key early childhood development-related issues in each of these countries.

Teacher Nayame Giomango hands out cut-out home-made figures to 4-year-old Ambesh in a small pre-school assisted by the People's Rural Education Movement (PREM), which offers a service to a remote community in the hills of Gijapati District, Orissa, India.

Photo: Jim Holmes



Stories from India

CHETNA: leading in advocacy on children's rights

Since 1994 the foundation has worked with the Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), an organisation based in Ahmadabad which has a distinguished track record of working with disadvantaged women, youths and children. With foundation support, among others, CHETNA has become a leader in training, capacity building and advocacy on young children's rights – predominantly, the four cornerstone rights to survival, protection, development and participation.

The last five-year phase of the partnership involved an extensive endeavour to study the situation of Indian children and to develop and disseminate communication materials aimed at influencing the policies of the state and national governments. These efforts culminated in the three-day National Consultation on Mainstreaming Child Rights, held at New Delhi's India International Centre in November 2008, which attracted 150 representatives of NGOs – including 20 children – from 11 Indian states, as well as national and international experts on child rights.

Three important sets of materials were presented at this conference. The first was a training manual entitled

Learning to Teach Child Rights, which will be used by facilitators to run training sessions with teachers and staff who work in non-governmental and community-based organisations. The manual comprises seven modules with further reading in a companion resource book. It defines concepts related to child rights and presents statistics and case studies that will give participants an informed understanding about the issues faced by individual children in India and why the concept of child rights is significant and necessary in an Indian context.

According to a CHETNA study, about 90 per cent of parents, 40 per cent of teachers and fully 97 per cent of children are not even aware that children have rights. The second of the materials presented to the New Delhi conference is aimed at spreading awareness among children. Entitled *A World Without Tears*, this storybook aimed at children and illustrated by children will help children understand their rights and embolden them to take action within their communities.

Participation

CHETNA promotes children's participation in many other ways. For example, at the same conference in New Delhi in November 2008, CHETNA facilitated one of the sessions in the National Child Rights Assembly, organised by World Vision of India and

the India Alliance for Child Rights. This was the culmination of a process across 11 states in which grassroots children's clubs were invited to stocktake the country's performance on guaranteeing their rights and to come up with proposals for action.

The third important set of materials presented by CHETNA at the National Consultation is a set of 18 hard-hitting posters, called "Girl Child First". The posters address issues specifically faced by girls in an Indian cultural context which traditionally places greater value on boys, to the extent that parents selectively aborting female foetuses significantly skews the birth rate.

During the decade and a half of foundation support, CHETNA's Child Resource Centre has developed a rich repository of materials – available in local languages – to support work among young children in disadvantaged circumstances. These three sets of materials will be valuable additions.

TN-FORCES: getting communities involved

Although India's government-run scheme of care and pre-school education centres for children under the age of 6 – known as Anganwadis – is an impressive programme, there have long been difficulties with how it operates in practice. Common problems are that it does not reach many poor families in rural and urban slum areas, its workers are often inadequately trained and too poorly paid to be motivated, and the centres themselves are of inconsistent quality, many suffering from such problems as lack of clean water, toilet facilities and spaces to play.

Expanding the number and improving the quality of Anganwadis are priorities for the Tamil Nadu Forum for Creche and Childcare Services (TN-FORCES), a network of organisations which advocates on behalf of young children from the poorest sections of society in Tamil Nadu, where two-fifths of people live below the poverty line. The 120-strong membership of TN-FORCES includes child advocacy organisations, women's groups, community-based organisations, trade unions, professional associations and academic institutions.

In 2008 an evaluation report looked back on ten years of the Bernard van Leer Foundation's involvement with TN-FORCES. The evaluators found that

TN-FORCES has been effective in getting attention for early childhood care and education from state-level policy makers and the general public alike. Its authority comes from having organised and involved the Anganwadi workers from the beginning, and emphasising work through local structures such as self-help groups to get communities involved in improving the services delivered by Anganwadis. Researchers found a strong link between the level of community involvement in an Anganwadi, the quality of infrastructure – such as toilets – and the observable health and happiness of the children.

Achievements

Concrete achievements in the last decade include securing improvements in pay and benefits for Anganwadi workers, and the state government's adoption of a pre-school curriculum that recognises the importance of play. More generally, the evaluators found that TN-FORCES had played an important part in improvements in the overall quality of Anganwadis and the relatively high level of awareness of young children's issues among Tamil Nadu's politicians, media and general public.

TN-FORCES employs a variety of methods to get its messages across. Rallies and 'public hearings' – events where officials hear petitions – are especially helpful in getting the attention of the state's media and government.

One notable success was persuading the government to bring in new laws that help working mothers to access childcare through the Anganwadis, which had been made difficult by inconvenient opening times and lack of facilities for the under-2s.

The network's growing influence was visible in the most recent state elections, in 2006. Through a series of meetings, TN-FORCES drew up an election manifesto which called for more resources to be allocated to Anganwadis, communities to be involved more, and services to be extended further into rural and tribal areas. Petitions and rallies attracted media interest, and several parties adopted some of the specific demands in TN-FORCES manifesto as pledges in their own manifestos – including the party that went on to form the government.

**India country strategy:
Successful transitions for young
tribal children in Orissa**

Having worked in India since 1991 we have decided to focus our programme on a limited number of states in the coming years, beginning with Orissa. This decision is not only because India's daunting size increases the risk of spreading our limited resources too thinly, but because so many administrative functions are devolved to state level.

With a population of 37 million, Orissa is India's ninth largest state and also one of its poorest. It has the third largest concentration of 'scheduled' tribes, those recognised in India's constitution as needing special measures to counteract the deep-rooted discrimination suffered by many indigenous populations. Known as the Adivasi, there are eight million members of 62 such tribes in Orissa, speaking 15 languages and many more dialects between them.

The Adivasi are predominantly found in remote and inhospitable areas, sometimes after being forced off richer ancestral lands. Most own no land or assets, and many need to migrate to find work as labourers on very low wages. Despite state initiatives to universalise primary education, the Adivasi continue to lag behind educationally, with a literacy rate of 37% compared to 63%

for the state as a whole. Female Adivasi literacy stands at under 25%, while mothers are generally the first educators of their children.

There are several explanations for this. The national Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, more commonly known as the Anganwadis, doesn't reach the more remote tribal villages, and ICDS workers are anyway inadequately trained in early childhood education. Although primary schooling itself is free, there are other costs, including foregone labour. Parents mostly did not go to school themselves. Teachers are often from higher castes, with different values. Adivasi children's mother tongues are not used, and curricula do not engage their interest. Over a quarter of the children drop out in their first year.

Raising awareness

Our programme in Orissa is part of our broader programme of 'Successful Transitions: the Continuum from Home to School', through which we aim to ensure that all children have practical access to the opportunities afforded by quality education. We are collaborating with the state government to create links between pre-school education in the mother tongues of Adivasi children and multilingual education programmes being offered in primary schools. The expectation is that this will increase the

retention of Adivasi children in school and improve their learning outcomes.

We support local partners to help improve the quality of pre-school provision where it exists, and to create community-based pre-school centres where it doesn't. This involves improving Anganwadis by developing new curricula, training and play materials, and finding ways to get parents and community members more involved in the Anganwadis, or in establishing their own early childhood centres in remote areas where the Anganwadi network does not reach.

By raising awareness among tribal communities of the benefits of early childhood education, the work we support will nurture demand for better provision. We will also support our local partners to document the knowledge they generate and to advocate for better policies through media strategies, rallies and campaigns; although official policies recognise the importance of early education, in practice it remains a low priority for most politicians.

Young children from indigenous families who have migrated from the countryside play together in a local market in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.

Photo: Michael Feigelson



Stories from Mexico

IMIFAP: Training caregivers

Every year, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans migrate to the USA in search of work. Many are parents of young children. In parts of the Mexican state of Hidalgo, where average wages are ten times less than migrant Mexican workers can earn in the USA, around one in three children are growing up with at least one absent parent. These are “the children left behind”, in single parent homes or with extended family members.

Between January 2007 and December 2008, the foundation supported IMIFAP – the Mexican Institute of Family and Population Research – to look at ways of ameliorating this situation in three of Hidalgo’s most marginalised municipalities, where most families live in small towns and villages, and a third of adults have not completed primary school.

IMIFAP has a strong track record of promoting child development through health and nutrition. But this project focused more on social and emotional development – which initial research found was profoundly affected by the absence of parents. As a pre-school teacher put it, the children “get sad, they don’t say anything. Sometimes they feel bad and don’t want to talk about the absence of their parents. This is what I’ve seen in these children.”

IMIFAP devised training for pre-school teachers, young children and their caregivers, based on existing successful experiences with older children. As well as equipping caregivers – who are often isolated and impoverished – with more general ‘positive parenting’ skills, the training was specifically geared towards helping young children to develop the skills of understanding and expressing their emotions. In the case of young children with absent parents, those emotions were often ones of abandonment, loneliness, stress and anger.

Qualitative evaluation research identified a range of improvements – in children’s social behavior and emotional expression, in caregiver–child and teacher–child interactions, and in strengthened mutual support and cooperation among caregiver networks. For example, one parent told the evaluators: “My son told me, ‘if you yell at me, I keep crying and I keep yelling, but if you conform to me and speak to me softly, I calm down.’”

Certificate

During the first year of the project IMIFAP trained 78 pre-school teachers in 25 schools who, in the second year, trained 1,530 pre-school children and 400 parents or caregivers. For the teachers it was an extra-curricular activity which – thanks to IMIFAP’s strong relationship with the educational

authorities – resulted in the award of a certificate that is formally recognised as contributing to their professional development and qualifications.

Following the success of this pilot project, IMIFAP is currently working with state government education officials to roll out the training modules into the formal training of pre-school teachers. The lessons learned from the pilot project are being disseminated to a wider audience through international journals, and the next phase of the project will expand the training to focus on children in the home environment who are still too young for pre-school.

Books about migration and young children

Many young children in Mexico are growing up in a place their parents don't call home. Their stories are varied: rural mothers who have come to the city in search of work, Guatemalan families eking out an existence on rubbish dumps over the Mexican border, children of agricultural workers who spend over half of each year working on private farms far away from their places of origin.

What these children have in common is that they do not register on the radar of public consciousness. Their stories are untold, their experiences unrecognised. Where they are noticed, they can be looked down on for various reasons: their ethnic or geographical origin, their parents' social and economic status. And typically, they are invisible to the public services that should be looking after their needs and protecting their rights.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has recently funded two initiatives to publicise the situation of these children, with the aim of promoting empathy within broader society and empowering migrant families to stand up for their rights. The first is a book, *Migraciones Vemos, Infancias no Sabemos*, published by Ririki Intervención Social. It tells paradigmatic stories of migration through the eyes of children, written by five professional journalists with

guidance from experts in children's rights.

The book's launch created a significant buzz. It was presented by a former national minister of finance and a former secretary of public integration for Mexico City. The launch was covered widely in the press, television and radio. David Ibarra, a highly respected political analyst with major Mexican daily *El Universal*, wrote that the "cutting issues" described in the book ought to "feed the formation of a truly constructive national consciousness".

Emotional power

The second initiative is a book developed by Melel Xojobal A.C., *Para Que Sepas*. This book grew from work with single mothers who had migrated from rural areas of Chiapas to the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, where they – and their children – often faced difficulties and discrimination. The aim was to help the mothers to communicate their life stories to their own children, as an exercise in empowerment.

It soon became clear that the project was having a transformative impact on participants, and that its emotional power deserved to reach a wider audience. The stories were made into a book for use in pre-schools, to promote empowerment among children of migrants and empathy among the children of others. After a popular reception the book has been translated

into English and is currently being used in the USA by pre-schools in Boulder, Colorado, a city with a sizeable Latin American immigrant population.

In both cases, the aim of the publications is to encourage people to understand migration and its effects on children in terms of real human stories, not abstract social trends.

Mexico country strategy: “Infancia en Movimiento” (Childhood in Movement)

We have worked in Mexico for almost 30 years. We decided that our focus for the coming years should be on young children affected by migration for two main reasons. First, the numbers of children being affected by migration in Mexico is growing and will continue to grow. Second, there is only very limited support for young children of migrants.

What support exists tends to be aimed at children of primary school age and above. Programmes for young children, meanwhile, tend to focus on communities in rural areas – in other words, the areas where many migrants come from, but not where they go to.

There are many different reasons for migration in Mexico. The four locations where we have chosen to focus our support represent some of the main types of migration. These are Ciudad Juarez, on the Texan border, where young mothers migrate to work long hours in factories; Soconusco, at the other end of the country, where migrants from Central American countries can be found living in conditions of extreme poverty; the state of Sinaloa, where agricultural workers migrate seasonally in conditions of extraordinary hardship; and San Cristóbal de Las Casas, where indigenous families displaced by rural

conflict and economic need encounter a new and hostile urban environment.

Safe spaces

Whatever the circumstances of migration, it affects young children in broadly similar ways. They lack safe places to play and rest, a problem compounded when their parents work long hours, leaving them on their own or in the care of other children. Their parents find that institutions such as pre-schools and clinics are difficult to access, for reasons including language barriers, complicated and inflexible bureaucracy, and discriminatory attitudes among the local populations. And they have not been seen as an important enough constituency to attract much attention from legislators or generate sustained political will behind efforts to improve their situations.

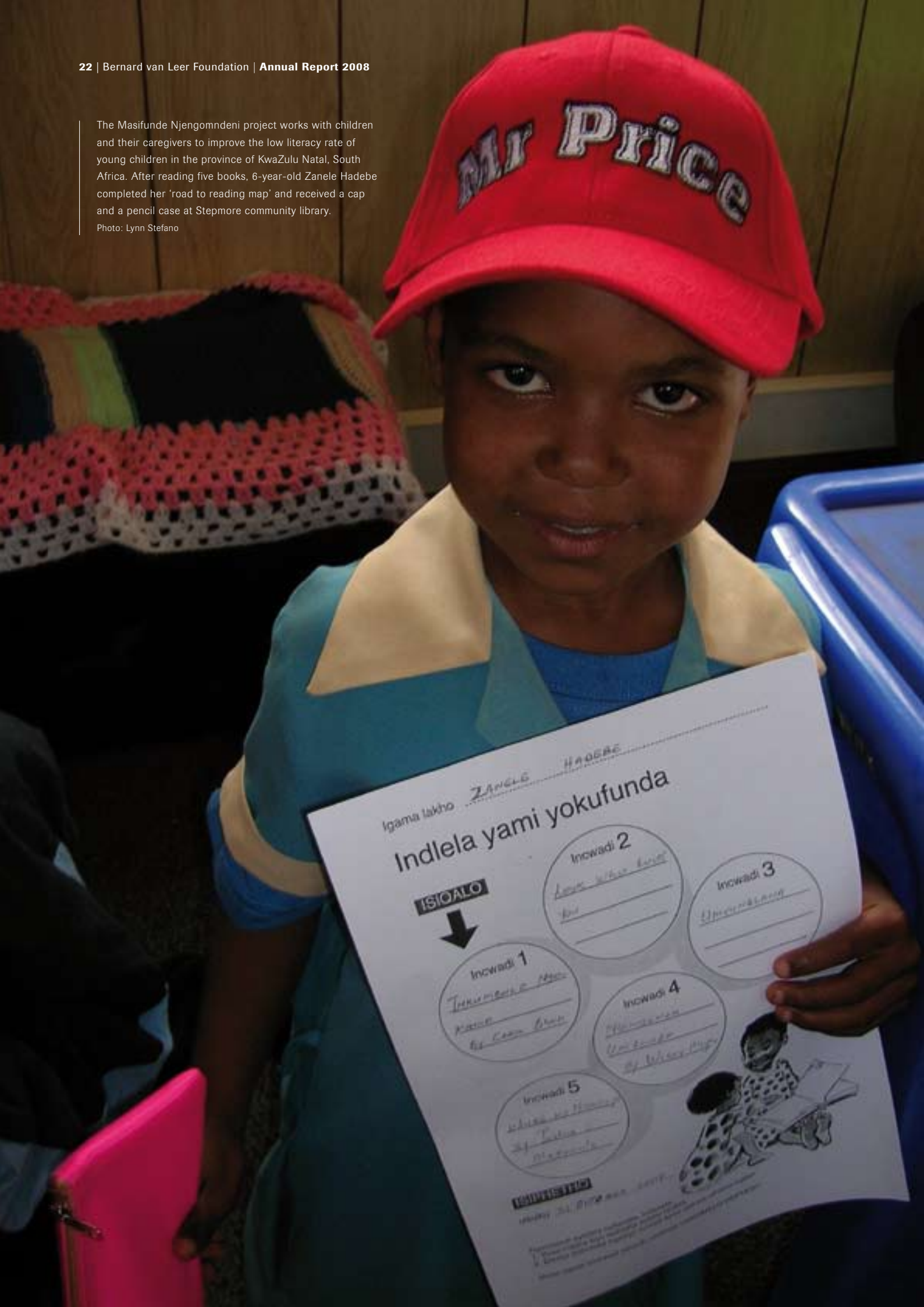
The programme will work principally with partners in civil society, but also in close collaboration with government and academia. About two-thirds of our support goes to partners that work with the young children of migrants in the four locations, exploring different ways of creating ‘safe spaces’ for these children in the community and in institutions such as pre-schools and childcare centres. Because we carefully chose our four locations to be paradigmatic, we expect that they will help create broad visibility for

the problems faced by young migrant children and that the ways in which our partners work here will have broad relevance elsewhere in the country and region.

The remaining third of our support goes towards documentation, research and advocacy. We will support our partners to disseminate what they learn to public-sector agencies, NGOs and international organisations who have the ability to adopt, expand and sustain demonstrably successful models of intervention. And we will work with a network of journalists as well as with civil society organisations to draw attention to the rights of young migrant children, and advocate for more public investment in appropriate and inclusive programmes and services.

The Masifunde Njengomndeni project works with children and their caregivers to improve the low literacy rate of young children in the province of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. After reading five books, 6-year-old Zanele Hadebe completed her 'road to reading map' and received a cap and a pencil case at Stepmore community library.

Photo: Lynn Stefano



Igama lakho ZANELE HADEBE

Indlela yami yokufunda

ISIQALO



Inqwadi 1
Ikhumbane Mpho
Khumbane Mpho
Isi-Corn Bran

Inqwadi 2
Izwe lase kwi
Izwe

Inqwadi 3
Umphelele

Inqwadi 4
Umphelele
Umphelele
Umphelele

Inqwadi 5
Ikhumbane Mpho
Ikhumbane Mpho
Ikhumbane Mpho



UMPHILISHO

Project funded by Bernard van Leer Foundation, South Africa
Project supported by the Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal
Project supported by the Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal
Project supported by the Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal

Stories from South Africa

ABC Ulwazi: Speak free

Although almost half of South Africa's population is under the age of 18, relatively little South African media is targeted at children – and almost none is generated by children. Young children are especially excluded because relatively little media is in local languages, which are their first languages and those they find easiest to understand. Community radio, which broadcasts in local languages, is therefore an ideal medium for reaching young children.

The foundation has been working for several years with ABC Ulwazi, a non-governmental organisation established in 1994 which promotes community radio. With foundation support, the “Bua Fela” (“Speak Free”) project developed a methodology to enable young children (0–8 years) to express their views, including those on children's rights. This methodology involves children, usually aged from 9 to 14, in producing children's (community) radio programming. Wisdom from this project was distilled into a 2006 handbook, entitled *Bua Fela*, which gives practical advice on radio for young children, by children (www.abculwazi.org.za/files/Bua_Fela_Book.pdf).

The initial phase of the project had considerable success, as measured by audience figures, phone-in responses and research showing a more concrete

awareness of children's rights among both young and older children as well as adults. The presence of child producers and presenters was a key success factor in engaging the youngest children, who were reported to respond positively and actively to what the child presenters said. The final phase of the project, which ended in 2008, has been focused on helping community radio stations to continue the programming after ABC Ulwazi stopped providing ready-made inserts for the programmes to be based around. Evaluators set out to investigate the challenges, and why some stations were more successful than others.

Foresight

One problem was logistical – providing the child producers with transport to the station, and internet access. Enthusiasm of managers was key here. But managers also needed the foresight to recognise the challenge posed by the original child producers and presenters growing older, and the consequent need to recruit and train up a new generation of children. The age of the mentors selected by managers to work with the new presenters has been a significant success factor, with young mentors – in their 20s – seeming to be more successful.

The importance of community participation is emphasised by the station manager at Takalani Radio, one of the stations where the programming has continued to evolve: “The

community should be told, for instance, what is the programme or topic for that week so that they can prepare themselves if they can phone in. The community should see the station as their own tool. It does not belong to the management or the presenters or the volunteers.”

Finally, training the children in scriptwriting and journalism as well as presenting skills has been significant. This has enabled them to generate their own material – both gathered from the local community and in the form of their own mini-dramas, an important part of the programming – and thereby keep the programmes fresh, informative and locally relevant. Sadly, however, many of the children report that it continues to be an uphill battle to be taken seriously by many of the adults they invite to be interviewed on their programmes.

CRC: Child-Friendly Society

The South African constitution guarantees the rights of all children in theory, but most do not have their rights protected in practice. The Child-Friendly Society project, implemented by the Durban-based Children's Rights Centre (CRC), aims to close this gap between theory and practice through awareness-raising, advocacy, networking and building the capacity of organisations that work with children or have the potential to improve children's lives. The project completed its second phase in 2008.

An example of the activities during this phase of the Child-Friendly Society project is the training of individuals from 36 organisations – government and civil society – in promoting children's rights in policies and practice. According to the project's external evaluator, these trainings have reached a “geographically and institutionally diverse and far-reaching range of duty bearers and role players” and “achieved a remarkably high and cost effective level of sustained influence”.

With experience, the CRC has learned how to maximise the benefits of training. Effort needs to be put into identifying individuals who are in positions of influence within their organisation, as “many participants, although very enthused by the training, struggle to implement what they have

learnt on return to their organisations”. For the same reason, follow-up site visits to organisations have proved to have beneficial effects that easily justify the time they take.

Value of play

The “Play Rights” component of the Child-Friendly Society project – which involves giving ‘play packs’ and training to organisations which work directly with young children – is another area in which learning from experience has improved effectiveness. It became clear that many of the adults who were being trained had “not themselves been exposed to play”, and were consequently “unable to teach the children or really comprehend the value of play in children's lives”.

Again, extra effort on identifying enthusiastic and committed individuals to undertake the training has paid off, as have follow-up site visits to check how the play materials are being used. The training has consequently evolved to place more emphasis on explaining the philosophy of the need for play, on getting the adult trainees to play with the toys themselves, and on explaining how toys can be made from recycled materials without financial cost.

Foundation support has enabled the CRC to produce and disseminate materials such as the “Visions & Voices” travelling photo exhibition, which forms an important component of many

workshops. Among other materials produced with foundation support and available on the CRC website (www.childrensrightscentre.co.za) are the *Living Positively Handbook* for children with HIV, available in English and local languages, and the manual for trainers, *Making Children's Rights a Reality*.

The nature of the Child-Friendly Society project means many of its most important impacts are indirect, such as those on public policy through advocacy by organisations which the CRC has mobilised or sensitised. The external evaluator finds many positive changes that are “far beyond the direct control of CRC, but undeniably as a result of CRC's influence”.

**South Africa country strategy:
Strong families, strong
foundations for children**

South Africa has changed greatly since the foundation began to work there in the 1970s, and so has the nature of the foundation's engagement. Where initially we focused on improving mainly pre-schools, since the 1990s we have oriented our work towards supporting families and communities in four of the poorest provinces: Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Free State.

We see this as the most fitting response to the sheer numbers of children affected by the two most pressing problems that shape the social environment: poverty and HIV/AIDS and the fact that the majority of young children have no access to early childhood development services.

South Africa is not a resource-poor country, yet almost two-thirds of children live in poverty. The government offers far better social support than is available elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, including cash support grants and free healthcare for children under the age of 6. But these services can be hard for many families to access in practice. With almost one of five adults living with HIV, the effects of poverty are made worse by sickness and death. The consequent loss of income and costs of medical care impose greater burdens

than many families and communities can bear.

When the capacity of caregivers and families to provide adequately for their young children is compromised, that puts at risk those young children's development – not just in terms of health and education, but the serious psychosocial impact of growing up among adults who have little time or energy for them and little hope for their future. Hence our South African programme is all about strengthening families.

Informal services

We do this directly by funding projects implemented through local partner organisations that seek to spark the revitalisation of communities, improving livelihoods and helping to organise informal, community-based services for young children such as playgroups, pre-school education and parental support groups.

Limited resources mean that we will only ever be able to reach a few communities with our own interventions, so we work also to improve the quality and accessibility of formal, government-funded services that should work to strengthen families. We advocate to policy makers and share knowledge learned from our projects about how best to implement services to meet the needs and rights of young children.

The inadequacies of government services are partly attributable to the lack of strong voices demanding better services for families and children. So we want to mobilise and enable caregivers to stand up for their rights, to demand better policies and more effective service delivery. Promoting children's right to participate in decisions affecting them is an important part of this strategy.

Our thematic focus in the country, "Strengthening the Care Environment", reflects the importance of building on what already exists. Poverty and HIV/AIDS have stretched the informal community safety nets to breaking point, but many external interventions end up eroding rather than harnessing indigenous practices and knowledge about childrearing. So we will document and spread awareness about positive parenting and care practices that are rooted locally. When communities are fractured, interventions must strengthen not undermine their cultural identity.

In a pre-school in Kreznica Jara, Poland, Dominika Monka takes part in a dancing, moving and actions game in which children take turns to stand in the centre of the ring. The Comenius Foundation for Child Development works with many pre-school centres in Poland to develop curricula and support training initiatives that build a better early childhood development environment.

Photo: Jim Holmes



The foundation's Board of Trustees

The Dutch legal system allows for considerable flexibility in the design of governance structures. Foundations are broadly structured along two models. In the first model the Board of Trustees is responsible for both oversight and execution of policy. This “one-tier” Board structure is fairly common in what is known as the “Anglo Saxon” system of governance. In the second, “Rhineland” model, the Board’s main responsibility is overseeing the foundation’s strategy and operations in the broadest sense, while execution of policy (i.e., the daily operations) is delegated to an Executive Director or an executive board. The Bernard van Leer Foundation employs this “two-tier” Board structure.

The fiduciary responsibility for fulfilling the vision and mission of the foundation, as laid down in the Articles of Association, fully rests with the Board of Trustees and cannot be delegated to an executive level. The Board is therefore tasked with the selection and appointment of the executive director, the approval of the strategic plan and annual financial and operational plans, and the general oversight of the functioning of the foundation. The Board meets four times per year, and more if and when necessary.

Composition

All members of the Board are also member of the Board of Trustees of the Van Leer Group Foundation (see the Financial Statement 2008 on p. 11 for more about the Group), but they have different Chairs. This ensures that while there is alignment between funder and recipient on mission and values, the Bernard van Leer Foundation has the possibility of attracting other funders

and partners while the Van Leer Group Foundation has room to fund more than one entity.

The Board of Trustees is currently composed of nine members. The Board selects and appoints its own members. Trustees generally serve up to a maximum of three four-year terms. The foundation’s Trustees bring a wide range of knowledge of and experience in the areas of scholarship, business, government, policy and non-profit management to their task of governing the foundation.

The Board appoints from among its members a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Executive Director of the foundation serves as secretary to the Board. The Board members receive no remuneration but are reimbursed for expenses incurred in their capacity as Trustee.

The board's oversight of grantmaking

Within the budget approved by the Board, the foundation makes more than

150 grants in a typical year. The Board has delegated authority for approving grants up to EUR 500,000 to the foundation’s Executive Director. Higher amounts require approval by the Board. The Trustees review approved grants at their regular Board meetings. Trustees make periodic visits to selected partners worldwide together with a staff member of the foundation, which allows Trustees to meet grant recipients and learn about their work.

Members of the Board of Trustees at March 2009

Peter Bell (born 1940) joined the foundation's Board of Trustees in 1986. Mr Bell is a visiting fellow at The Carter Center in Atlanta. He is Vice Chair of the Inter-American Dialogue and a trustee of the World Peace Foundation. He is a former chair of the ONE Campaign, CARE, Refugee Policy Group, and Advisory Council of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton. He obtained a B.A. in History at Yale College in 1962 and a master's degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton in 1964.

Joep Brentjens (1940) has been a Board member since 1998. He is presently member of the Board of Fortis Obam NV, and Chairman of the Niels Stensen Foundation and the Lucas-Ooms Foundation.

Rien van Gendt (1943) became a Board member in 2007, after serving as Executive Director of the Van Leer Group Foundation since 2002. He served as Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation from 1988 till 2002. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, the Jerusalem Film Center and of the Bernard Van Leer Stiftung in Lucerne, Switzerland. He serves on the

boards of several foundations, not-for-profit organisations and corporations in the Netherlands and abroad. Mr Van Gendt graduated as an economist from the University of Amsterdam in 1967 and received his PhD in Economic Studies in 1980.

Wilfred Griekspoor (1950) has been a Board member since 2005. He is Director Emeritus of McKinsey & Company, serves on the board of PharmAccess and is a founding board member of the AIDS Foundation East West. Mr Griekspoor holds an MSc in Physics from the University of Utrecht.

Harry Leliveld (1939) joined the Board in 2002. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and a member of the Stiftungsrat of the Bernard Van Leer Stiftung in Lucerne. He is also a member of the management board of Brack Capital Real Estate BV and a member of the Supervisory Board of Optas NV. He is advisor/consultant to the European Foundation Financial Investment Officers (EFFIO), Emeritus Member of the US Foundation Financial Officers Group and member of the board of the Amsterdam Zoo. Mr Leliveld has a MSc in Economics from the University of Amsterdam.

Trude Maas-de Brouwer (1946) has been on the Board since 2001 and has

been Chair of the Board since 2002. She serves on different supervisory boards, including ABN AMRO, Philips Electronics Netherlands, Schiphol Group, Twynstra en Gudde and Arbo Unie. She participates in advisory groups with regard to lifelong learning, innovation in education and writes articles in the Dutch financial daily. She is Chair of the Advisory Board of Nuffic. Ms Maas-de Brouwer has an MA in Linguistics from Utrecht University.

Gideon Frank (1943) joined the Board in early 2008. Mr Frank is currently Vice Chair of the Board of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission. He obtained his BSc in Mechanical Engineering and MSc in Nuclear Sciences from Technion, Israel Institute of Technology.

Nancy Newcomb (1945) has been Board member since 2001. Ms Newcomb currently serves on the Board of Directors of Moody's Corporation, Sysco Corporation, and the DirectV Group, Inc. She also serves on the boards of the New York Historical Society, where she is co-chair of the Executive Committee, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and the Foundation for Landscape Studies. She has an MA in Economics from Boston University in 1968 and attended the Program for Management Development at the Harvard Business School.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation produced 20 publications in 2008. They are available free of charge in both paper and digital formats. You can download PDF files and order paper copies via our website www.bernardvanleer.org.

Working Papers

These are think pieces aimed at contributing to a current debate; encompassing the work of foundation-supported projects or reviewing the state of academic and practical knowledge in a field more generally.

A case for early childhood development in sub-Saharan Africa

Working Paper 51

by Alan Pence and Bame Nsamenang

Issues connected with child development are increasingly prominent across the world, but the international image of children is increasingly Western-derived. This Working Paper explores the reasons behind this reduction in diversity. The authors conduct an overview of critiques in the international literature of early childhood development since the UN adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, and present a review of key developments in Africa since the early 1970s.

68 pages | ISBN 978-90-6195-109-4

National plans of action for orphans and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa: Where are the youngest children?

Working Paper 50

by Patrice Engle

This paper reviews 17 national plans of action for children affected by HIV and AIDS, launched by sub-Saharan African countries in recent years. The author reviews the scope of these plans, concluding that many remain vague and ill-defined, and makes recommendations.

84 pages | ISBN 978-9-06195-107-0

Fostering language acquisition in daycare settings: What does the research tell us?

Working Paper 49

by Simone Beller

Fostering language acquisition in daycare settings reviews research and theories on language development, focusing on how pre-schoolers' social environment affects their ability to learn languages and their subsequent reading and writing skills. Because children from immigrant families and those with a low socio-economic status often have difficulty with language acquisition, this review looks in particular at language development initiatives for disadvantaged groups in daycare settings.

64 pages | ISBN 978-9-06195-108-7

Early childhood transitions research: A review of concepts, theory, and practice

Working Paper 48

by Pia Vogler, Gina Crivello and Martin Woodhead

The authors review the major perspectives in research on early childhood transitions. Assessing concepts in developmental theory that preceded transitions research, as well as more recent approaches including systems theories and the role of children as active participants in transitions, the paper reveals the predominant areas of focus in both academic and professional studies. The authors give examples to show how multidisciplinary collaboration and culturally sensitive interventions can result in better participation of both parents and children in crucial early childhood transitions.

60 pages | ISBN 978-90-6195-103-2

The paper is also available in Spanish as Working Paper 48S: *La investigación sobre las transiciones en la primera infancia: Análisis de nociones, teorías y prácticas*, ISBN 978-90-6195-111-7

**Early childhood in the Caribbean
Working Paper 47**

by Christine Barrow

Early childhood in the Caribbean looks at the development and socialisation of children under 5 years of age in two Caribbean countries: Trinidad and Tobago and Dominica. A summary of a longer document, "Childhoods and family culture: Growing up outside, shifted or left behind?", it involved fieldwork in four very different communities as well as extensive discussion with academics and professionals. It looks at issues including poverty, cultural change, parenthood, community support, education and children's rights.

76 pages | ISBN 978-90-6195-102-5

**Expanding early childhood care and education: How much does it cost?
Working Paper 46**

by Jan van Ravens and Carlos Aggio

Lack of transparency regarding the costs of early childhood care and education contributes to reluctance on the part of developing country governments and donors to invest in developing strong national policies. Building on a paper commissioned by UNESCO, this Working Paper presents a model – applied here to the Arab States – for estimating the costs of making early childhood services available to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

88 pages | ISBN 978-90-6195-101-8

Early childhood spaces: Involving young children and practitioners in the design process

Working Paper 45

by Alison Clark

Using case studies, *Early Childhood Spaces* explores the methodology and some issues raised in seeking to involve young children in the process of designing buildings and spaces for early childhood provision.

50 pages | ISBN 978-90-6195-099-8

**Early Childhood Matters/
Espacio para la Infancia**

Enhancing a sense of belonging in the early years

Early Childhood Matters 111

Readers are invited to reflect on how the theme of a sense of belonging relates to young children. After a conceptual overview by Martin Woodhead and Liz Brooker that philosophically roots the subject firmly in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, this edition of ECM goes on to include contributions from the field in Israel, Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, Mexico, Lebanon and Australia, together with an interview with Cameroonian academic A. Bame Nsamenang and reflections on promoting a sense of belonging in the especially challenging circumstances of conflict zones and refugee camps.

56 pages | ISSN 1387-9553

**Sembrando un sentido de pertenencia en los primeros años
Espacio para la Infancia 30**

Invitamos a nuestros lectores a reflexionar sobre cómo el "sentido de pertenencia" se relaciona con la primera infancia. Tras una perspectiva general presentada por Martin Woodhead y Liz Brooker que filosóficamente anclan el tema en la Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño, esta edición de *Espacio para la Infancia* continúa con las contribuciones desde el trabajo de campo llevado a cabo en Israel, México, Alemania, Turquía, Australia, Oriente Medio, etc. También entrevistamos al académico camerunés A. Bame Nsamenang y ofrecemos reflexiones sobre cómo la promoción de un sentido de pertenencia es particularmente desafiante en situaciones de conflicto o en campos de refugiados.

60 pages | ISSN 1566-6476

Early childhood education: questions of quality

Early Childhood Matters 110

This edition of *Early Childhood Matters* seeks to focus attention on how quality early childhood programmes can lay the foundations for quality primary education. Among the articles there is an overview of the complex topic of 'quality' in early childhood education, an interview with a specialist in basic education for children that highlights the importance of respect for the right

to education, and a look at Innocenti Research Centre's Report Card 8, which suggests benchmarks for measuring the quality of early childhood education and care services in the OECD countries. Examples from ECD work come from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Peru, Tanzania, Brazil and India.

56 pages | ISSN 1387-9553

La educación infantil: El desafío de la calidad
Espacio para la Infancia 29

Esta edición de *Espacio para la Infancia* centra su atención en cómo la calidad de los programas de la primera infancia pueden contribuir a sentar las bases de la educación primaria de calidad. Entre los artículos presentados, se presenta una visión general sobre el complejo tema de la "calidad" en la primera infancia, una entrevista con una especialista en educación básica que resalta la importancia del respeto por el derecho a la educación, y una introducción al Report Card N° 8 del Centro de Investigaciones Innocenti de Unicef que establece una comparativa sobre la calidad de los servicios de educación inicial en los países de la OCDE. Además, también se presentan experiencias en la práctica de Bosnia Herzegovina, Perú, Tanzania, Brasil e India.

64 pages | ISSN 1387-9553

Practice & Reflections

This series presents analytical case studies based on in-depth impact evaluations of programmes and projects; providing a forum for assessing and reflecting on the lessons from foundation-supported work.

Making the road as we go: Parents and professionals as partners managing diversity in early childhood education

Practice & Reflections 23
by Fuusje de Graaff and Anke van Keulen

Making the Road as We Go discusses the experiences of the Parents and Diversity project, carried out in the Netherlands by the consultancy and training company Bureau MUTANT. The project, which ran between 2003 and 2005, focused on the two complementary subjects of 1) building partnerships between childcare providers and their children's parents and 2) childcare providers meeting the differing needs of the increasingly diverse population of parents and their children.

132 pages | ISBN 978-9-06195-110-0

Online Outreach Papers

This series is published in PDF format only and posted on the foundation's website or distributed electronically via email, providing information about current issues

or foundation-supported projects of interest to a limited audience.

Valuing the learning: An annotated bibliography of the resources and publications of the Bernard van Leer Foundation and its partners in the area of Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity (2002–2008)

Online Outreach Paper 6
by Margaret Kernan

This is a documentary resource that captures the rich diversity of activity in the area of social inclusion and respect for diversity that has been documented by partner organisations as a result of Bernard van Leer Foundation investment. It aims to share experiences, open up of lines of communication and contribute to fostering an explicit concern with the importance of social inclusion and respect for diversity in addressing the essential needs and rights of children.

65 pages | Available online in PDF format only

Costing early childhood care and development programmes

Online Outreach Paper 5
by Robert G. Myers

It is increasingly well accepted that early childhood programmes bring benefits – but how to be precise in estimating the costs? Figures in official budgets can fail to include costs such as cash in kind and time from local communities and parents. With examples from Bolivia,

Chile and Jamaica, this paper shows that 'free' programmes are often quite costly for resource-poor parents and there is often inadequate expenditure on supervision and monitoring.

65 pages | Available online in PDF format only

The social agenda and early childhood care and education: Can we really help create a better world?

Online Outreach Paper 4
by Philip Gammage

Stressing the importance of the early years in shaping the adult personality, this paper discusses the changing economic and cultural context of early childhood and reviews several widely publicised cost-benefit analyses which illustrate how the provision of early childhood services can give a positive return to the community in both economic and social terms. The author lists the main forces and changes affecting the children of today and gives ten imperatives for policy and leadership.

28 pages | Available online in PDF format only

No small issue: Children and families – Universal Action Now

Online Outreach Paper 3
by Linda Richter

No Small Issue is the text of Linda Richter's plenary presentation at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City on 6 August 2008, which argues that children and families have

been severely neglected in our responses to HIV and AIDS. It makes the case that responses should be large-scale, integrated and national, characterised by social justice enabled by basic income security and by universal access to essential services such as health, education and social welfare.

22 pages | Available online in PDF format only

Realising the right to education in multiple contexts

Online Outreach Paper 2
by Various authors

Background paper prepared for a symposium at the International Transitions Research Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, April 2007. Three of the foundation's partner organisations present illustrations of how child rights are introduced in three different disadvantaged contexts, in India, Israel and Poland. With commentaries by Joseph Tobin of the Arizona State University, and international children's rights consultant Gerison Lansdown.

16 pages | Available online in PDF format only

An analysis of abstracts from the Toronto AIDS conference

Online Outreach Paper 1
by Lorraine Sherr and Rebecca Varrall

This paper explores the frequency and specifics of child-focused HIV research through a detailed analysis of the abstract database of the Toronto International

AIDS Conference held in 2006, to inform research and programme agendas and highlight planning strategies for future such events.

24 pages | Available online in PDF format only

Corporate

Annual Report 2007

The Bernard van Leer Foundation's Annual Report for 2007 includes an in-depth focus on the foundation's public policy advocacy activities, and a new feature reporting on progress made in previously grants. As always, it includes a foreword by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, a report from the Executive Director, and overviews of finances and grantmaking. There is also an executive summary in Spanish.

60 pages | ISBN 978-90-6195-106-3

Early Childhood in Focus: a new series of policy oriented publications

2008 saw the launch of *Early Childhood in Focus*, a new series of research dissemination publications offering accessible summaries on global early childhood issues. The project is directed by Martin Woodhead and John Oates, from the Child and Youth Studies Group of The Open University, UK, along with an international network of contributors. The choice of topics for the series is being planned to elaborate on aspects of the foundation's three core issue areas 'Strengthening the Care Environment', 'Successful Transitions: the Continuum from Home to School' and 'Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity'.

Each volume of *Early Childhood in Focus* takes a key child rights theme as its starting point, as set out in to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and General Comment 7. Specially commissioned research and policy messages are communicated through concise summaries that can be accessed at varying levels, including overviews of research data, policy questions, and compelling photographs to engage the reader on each topic. Each issue is designed to be relevant to diverse global audiences and published in English and

Spanish, in print and as a downloadable PDF via www.bernardvanleer.org.

The first three issues were published in 2007 and 2008. Edited by John Oates, the first issue was titled *Attachment Relationships*. Bringing together theory and evidence from many of the world's leading experts in early child care and development, this inaugural issue was downloaded 4,000 times from the foundation's website during the first three months of its availability, and more than 3,000 printed copies have been distributed. Issue 2, *Transitions in the Lives of Young Children* was edited by Martin Woodhead and Peter Moss (London University Institute of Education) and issue 3, *Developing Positive Identities*, was edited by Liz Brooker and Martin Woodhead.

Trainers and practitioners

The positive feedback from professionals, politicians, policy makers, academics, and child rights advocates from across Europe, North and South America, Africa, and the Middle East has been highly encouraging for the ECiF series. For example, a senior UNICEF official wrote about ECiF 1: "Congratulations. Easy to read, concise, policy oriented brief. Excellent work". A mark of the accessibility and wide appeal of the series has been its adoption by trainers and practitioners as well as the main intended audience. For example, the English National Primary

Strategy is using ECiF extensively within local and national training schemes.

Martin Woodhead and John Oates are now coordinating the production of a further six volumes in the ECiF series. Issues on 'Supporting Parenting', 'Effective Early Childhood Programmes' and 'Early Learning in Cultural Contexts' are close to completion or in development, with a further three issues already being planned.

Our staff at 1 March 2009

Executive Office

Monique van 't Hek
Interim Executive Director
Jane Hartman-de Boer
Secretary to the Executive Director

Issue Area:

Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity
Michael Feigelson
Acting Programme Manager
Shanti George
Programme Officer
Rita Swinnen
Programme Officer
Sonja Wehrmann
Programme Assistant

Issue Area: Strengthening the Care Environment

Jolanda de Haan
Programme Assistant
Marc Mataheru
Programme Officer
Aloysius Pereira
Programme Manager
Jackie Ratsma-Melville
Programme Assistant
Nyambura Rugoiyo
Programme Officer
Huub Schreurs
Senior Programme Officer

Issue Area:

Succesful Transitions: the Continuum from Home to School
Alicia Fernández
Programme Assistant
Liana Gertsch
Programme Manager
Joke Junger
Programme Assistant
Jeanet van de Korput
Programme Officer
Stephan Meershoek
Programme Officer
Leonardo Yáñez
Programme Officer

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Editorial Assistant
Jan van Dongen
Manager
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Writer/Editor Spanish Publications
Paloma Martín Rodríguez
Address Management Assistant (temporary position)

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Anne Bergsma-Schierbeek
Head of Resource Centre

Vera van der Grift-Wanyoto
Information Management Assistant

Reinhard Skinner
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
René Schoenmakers
Manager
Selim Iltus
Studies Officer
Janbee Shaik
Resource Centre Assistant (temporary position)

Proposal Administration
Essie Karting-Hallegua
Support Officer
Lia de Ruiter
Proposal Administrator

Support Services
Rutger Wijnands
Manager

Facilities
Marijke Schoenmaker
Cleaner

Financial Administration
Jane Moerland-Cowan
Financial Officer
Jimmy Visser
Financial Officer

Human Resources
Sylvia Erwig-de Haas
HR Officer

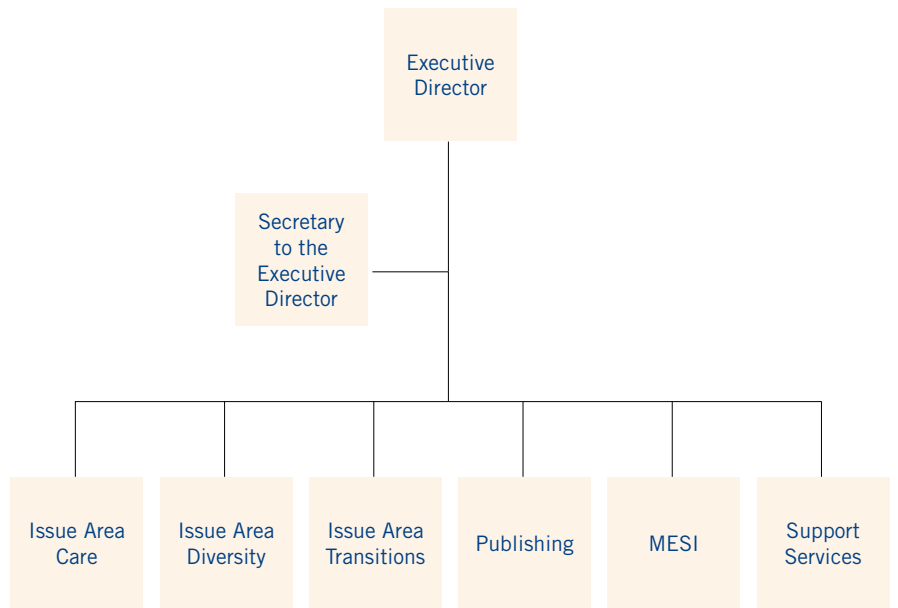
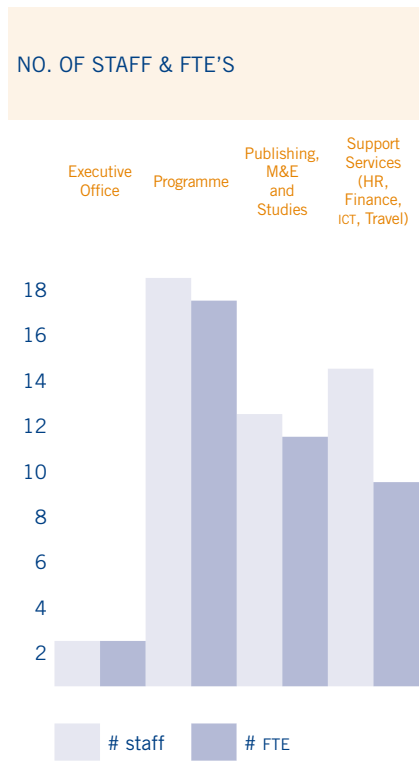
Margriet Wolters
HR Officer
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HR Officer

Information and Communication Technology
Steffan Hoeke
ICT Officer
Ellen Uijterwijk
ICT Officer

Reception
Marian Meyer
Receptionist/Telephonist
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Receptionist/Telephonist
Wilma Dijkhuizen-Korving
Receptionist/Telephonist

Travel Conferences and Visitor's Services
Inge Hanny-de Leau
Assistant
Pamela Visscher-Verheusen
Head

The chart below compares the number of staff with the number of FTEs (full-time equivalents) in the various departments of the foundation. The foundation has a total of 45 staff, all based at its offices in The Hague; the total number of FTEs is 38.



Children at the pre-school "Vidal Alcocer" in the village of Zimapan, Hidalgo, Mexico, in a project run by IMIFAP, which devises training for pre-school teachers and caregivers. The training is specifically geared towards helping young children to develop the skills of understanding and expressing their emotions.

Photo: Jon Spaul



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BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31

	Notes	2008 (EUR)	2007 (EUR)
ASSETS			
<i>Fixed assets</i>			
Book value fixed assets	(1)	68,100	106,800
<i>Long term assets</i>			
Guarantee Network of European Foundations	(2)	60,000	60,000
		128,100	166,800
<i>Current assets</i>			
Van Leer Group Foundation current account	(3)	22,216,000	22,208,200
Debtors	(4)	694,000	727,100
Cash & Bank	(5)	4,525,300	3,933,800
		27,435,300	26,869,100
Total assets		27,563,400	27,035,900
AVAILABLE FUNDS AND LIABILITIES			
<i>Available funds</i>			
Nominal foundation capital		453,800	453,800
Available for grantmaking	(6)	1,682,600	811,500
Available for indexation of pensions	(7)	404,800	437,300
Total available funds		2,541,200	1,702,600
<i>Other funds</i>			
Approved but not yet committed project grants		5,287,000	5,135,600
<i>Liabilities</i>			
Project commitments	(8)	18,957,500	19,377,900
Creditors	(9)	777,700	819,800
Total liabilities		19,735,200	20,197,700
Total available funds and liabilities		27,563,400	27,035,900

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR

	Notes	Budget 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2007 (EUR)
INCOME				
Regular income				
Van Leer Group Foundation		23,842,000	23,842,000	22,990,000
Interest	(1)	200,000	249,700	216,800
Total income		24,042,000	24,091,700	23,206,800
EXPENDITURE				
Grants	(2)	17,856,000	17,035,000	18,293,800
Foundation Managed Projects	(3)	1,444,000	1,186,600	1,078,300
Administration and programme services	(4)	5,100,000	5,031,500	5,446,500
Total expenditure		24,400,000	23,253,100	24,818,600
Operating result		-358,000	838,600	-1,611,800
Appropriation of operating result				
Add. to / Deduct. from Available for grantmaking	(6)*		871,100	-1,589,400
Deducted from available for indexation of pensions	(7)*		-32,500	-22,400
			838,600	-1,611,800

* This note refers to the notes on the balance 6 en 7 under 'Notes on balance' sheet (page 42)

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	2008 (EUR)	2007 (EUR)
Receipts		
Van Leer Group Foundation	23,834,200	23,058,300
Interest	249,700	216,800
Sub-total receipts	24,083,900	23,275,100
Disbursements		
Projects	17,304,000	18,539,100
Administration	6,163,600	6,467,900
Purchases of fixed assets	24,800	51,600
Sub-total disbursements	23,492,400	25,058,600
Increase in cash & bank	591,500	-1,783,500
Balance cash & bank December 31	4,525,300	3,933,800
Balance cash & bank January 1	3,933,800	5,717,300
Increase in cash & bank	591,500	-1,783,500

General notes

The Van Leer Group Foundation guarantees that, if the activities of Stichting Bernard van Leer Foundation are discontinued, sufficient funds will be available or will be made available to enable Stichting Bernard van Leer Foundation:

- to terminate the employment contracts of permanent employees, subject to a period of notice of six months; and
- to comply with any past and future obligations relating to other expenses, with an aggregate of at least 75% of the costs relating to administration and software services in accordance with the last Stichting Bernard van Leer Foundation budget adopted by the Board of Trustees prior to discontinuing its activities.

General Principles

- The Annual Report is prepared in accordance with the guidelines for annual reports 640 (not-for-profit organisations) of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board.
- All assets and liabilities are stated at nominal value, unless otherwise indicated.
- All figures are either rounded up or down to the nearest EUR 100.
- Income is accounted for in the period to which it is related.
- Expenditure is accounted for in the period to which it is related or to which it is committed.

Specific Principles

- Tangible fixed assets are valued at purchase cost after deduction of depreciation based on the estimated lifetime of the assets.
- The loans due within one year are included under current assets.
- Cash and Bank in foreign currencies are valued at the rates of exchange at balance sheet date.
- Cancellations of projects are included under grants expenditure.

NOTES ON THE BALANCE SHEET

1 FIXED ASSETS

	Hard- & Software (EUR)	Furniture & Equipment (EUR)	2008 EUR	2007 EUR
Cost price				
January 1st	125,500	126,400	251,900	299,600
Write off *)	20,300	36,900	57,200	99,300
Purchases	19,500	5,300	24,800	51,600
December 31st	124,700	94,800	219,500	251,900
Depreciation				
(rate applied)	33%	20%		
January 1st	62,200	82,900	145,100	164,200
Write off	20,300	36,900	57,200	99,300
Depreciation	41,500	22,000	63,500	80,200
December 31st	83,400	68,000	151,400	145,100
Bookvalue				
December 31st	41,300	26,800	68,100	106,800

* Written off fixed assets: these are completely depreciated

2 GUARANTEE NETWORK OF EUROPEAN FOUNDATIONS

A four-year loan made in 2006 to the Network of European Foundations of EUR 60,000 at 0% interest per year.

3 VAN LEER GROUP FOUNDATION CURRENT ACCOUNT

Balance January 1	22,208,200	22,276,500
Amount of preliminary allocation to BvLF	23,842,000	22,990,000
Sub-total	46,050,200	45,266,500
Disbursements	-23,834,200	-23,058,300
Balance December 31	22,216,000	22,208,200

At the Governing Council meeting of the Van Leer Group Foundation held on 13 November 2008, it was decided that the amount of preliminary appropriation for 2009 for the foundation would be EUR 19,148,000

4 DEBTORS

Receivable Interest	47,100	20,200
Pre-payments	105,800	168,700
Pension/WIA premiums	60,600	0
Surplus interest account	404,800	437,300
Various debtors	75,700	100,900
Total	694,000	727,100

5 CASH & BANK

Bank	4,524,700	3,932,500
Cash	600	1,300
	4,525,300	3,933,800

6 AVAILABLE FOR GRANTMAKING

Balance January 1	811,500	2,400,900
Excess of income over expenditure of the year	871,100	-1,589,400
Balance December 31	1,682,600	811,500

The amount available for grantmaking is at the free disposal of the Board of Trustees. It is intended to decrease the amount for "Available for grantmaking" to zero in 2009.

7 AVAILABLE FOR INDEXATION OF PENSIONS

Balance January 1	437,300	459,700
Accrued interest	15,200	13,800
Indexation of pensions	-47,700	-36,200
Balance December 31	404,800	437,300

The amount available for indexation of pensions is reserved for the indexation of pensions of retired and former employees. The foundation cannot use this amount for other purposes.

8 PROJECT COMMITMENTS

Balance January 1	19,377,900	17,844,700
Monies committed to grants to projects	16,870,300	20,364,400
Sub-total	36,248,200	38,209,100
less:		
Cancellation of commitments	-3,400	307,800
Currency differences	-12,300	-15,700
Payment of commitments	17,306,400	18,539,100
Sub-total payments and cancellations	17,290,700	18,831,200
Balance December 31	18,957,500	19,377,900
Project commitments planned for 2008		13,448,400
Project commitments planned for 2009	13,765,000	4,822,000
Project commitments planned for 2010	4,160,500	1,107,500
Project commitments planned for 2011	1,012,000	
Project commitments planned for 2012	20,000	
	18,957,500	19,377,900

9 CREDITORS

Accruals	175,300	122,400
Holiday pay	210,500	236,100
Pension premiums	0	14,900
Wage tax	153,100	182,700
Various creditors	238,800	263,700
	777,700	819,800

10 COMMITMENTS NOT SHOWN IN THE BALANCE SHEET

Bank guarantees

The foundation has instructed ABN AMRO Bank to issue a bank guarantee of EUR 60,000 towards the lessor of the office building, Stena Realty.

NOTES ON THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2008 (EUR)	2007 (EUR)
1 INTEREST		
Bank and deposit accounts	234,200	216,800
Other interest	15,500	0
	249,700	216,800

2a APPROVED GRANTS

New projects	7,721,800	7,322,900
Project extensions	6,169,900	9,249,300
Supplementaries	467,000	750,900
One time grants	1,178,300	969,600
Planning grants	1,171,200	293,200
Phase-out grants	316,500	0
	17,024,700	18,585,900
Cancellation commitments	3,400	-307,800
Cancellation project	-3,000	0
Currency differences	12,300	15,700
Miscellaneous projects	-2,400	0
	17,035,000	18,293,800

2b APPROVED GRANTS PER ISSUE AREA

	Budget 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2007 (EUR)
Care	5,971,000	5,409,300	5,434,600
Transitions	5,845,000	5,823,600	6,296,200
Diversity	5,640,000	5,490,000	5,829,500
Other Programme	400,000	301,800	1,025,600
	17,856,000	17,024,700	18,585,900

The discrepancies (total EUR 831,300) between the 2008 budget and the 2008 expenditure are explained by the fact that several grants could not be issued. This was due to various reasons: the political situation in Kenya and Zimbabwe; the departure of the Programme Manager of the Diversity and Social Inclusion issue area; the departure of Executive Director; and the long-term illness of the Public Policy Officer.

3 FOUNDATION MANAGED PROJECTS PER ISSUE AREA

	Budget 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2007 (EUR)
Care	200,000	126,000	314,200
Transitions	200,000	202,900	130,300
Diversity	200,000	249,400	269,800
Other Programme	844,000	608,300	364,000
	1,444,000	1,186,600	1,078,300

Discrepancies (total EUR 257,400) between 2008 budget and 2008 expenditure are largely explained by the fact that several publications, studies and planned evaluations were postponed to early 2009.

4 ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAMME SERVICES

	Budget 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2008 (EUR)	Actual 2007 (EUR)
Board of Trustees *	75,000	56,700	156,000
Personnel **			
a) salaries	2,710,000	2,628,500	2,915,300
b) social charges	808,000	720,400	796,800
c) general staff costs	157,000	85,500	163,300
d) recruitment	40,000	88,200	55,800
e) staff development	80,000	59,500	27,200
f) temporary personnel	30,000	181,800	29,700
	<u>3,825,000</u>	<u>3,763,900</u>	<u>3,988,100</u>
Consultants	65,000	92,500	98,400
Staff travel/Hospitality	302,000	306,000	322,700
Documentation	23,000	23,500	23,300
Premises	420,000	405,200	427,100
Office equipment	142,000	128,600	159,300
Office expenses	16,000	15,500	16,300
Public relations	10,000	17,100	11,300
Telecommunication	55,000	48,800	51,300
External auditors ***	35,000	44,000	41,100
General costs	132,000	129,700	151,600
	<u>5,100,000</u>	<u>5,031,500</u>	<u>5,446,500</u>
Total			

* The Board of Trustees does not receive any remuneration.

** For privacy reasons (according to the accounting rules) the remuneration of Management is not disclosed as it relates to a single person (the Executive Director).

*** External audit costs over 2008 are related to 2008 audit (EUR 41,700) and additional 2007 audit costs (EUR 2,300).

Discrepancies (total EUR 68,500) between the 2008 budget and 2008 actuals include the following:

1. higher temporary staff and recruitment costs due to the appointment of an interim Executive Director and the recruitment of a new Executive Director. This was compensated in part by lower salary costs due to the vacant Executive Director position;
2. a high-court case with a former employee who left in early 2002 resulted in a payback of EUR 85,000 of the original EUR 125,000 that a lower court had ordered as severance pay (see General staff costs budget line);
3. a dismissal which led to a compensation of EUR 30,900.

Discrepancies (total EUR 415,000) between 2008 actuals and 2007 actuals include the following:

4. a decrease in personnel costs in 2008 compared to 2007 (down to 38 FTE from 43 FTE); and
5. significant lower (almost EUR 100,000) Board of Trustees costs in 2008, when only one Trustee went on field mission, whereas in 2007 one Board meeting took place in South Africa and there were several individual missions of Trustees.

Children at a crèche built by the community in Kgatelopele,
Free State, South Africa.

Photo: Ann Perry



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Appropriation of operating result

The total income exceeded the total expenditure by EUR 838,600. In 2008, the foundation deducted EUR 32,500 (balanced) from the amount available for the indexation of pensions. The foundation added in 2008 EUR 871,100 to the amount available for grantmaking.

Subsequent events

On 13 November 2008 the Governing Council of the Van Leer Group Foundation decided to apply a cut of 20% to the foundation's 2009 income.

Therefore on 20 February 2009 a decision was taken to reorganise the foundation, which will lead to the forced dismissal of a maximum of 12 staff members. The costs related to this reorganisation are calculated at a maximum of EUR 1,160,000.



To: Board of Trustees and Executive Director of Stichting Bernard van Leer Foundation

Auditor's report

We have audited the accompanying financial statements 2008 of Stichting Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Hague, which comprise the balance sheet as at December 31, 2008, the income and expenditure account for the year then ended and the notes.

Management's responsibility

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the Guidelines for annual reporting 640 'Not-for-profit organisations' of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Dutch law. This law requires that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Stichting Bernard van Leer Foundation as at December 31, 2008 and of its result for the year then ended in accordance with Guidelines for annual reporting 640 'Not-for-profit organisations' of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board.

The Hague, February 25, 2009

Ernst & Young Accountants LLP

Signed by

P.J.A.M. Jongstra

Children at a pre-school supported by Centros Infantiles de Desarrollo (CINDE) in Zacamil, San Salvador, El Salvador.
Photo: Jon Spaul



En esta edición de la Memoria Anual se resaltan de forma significativa los efectos que la crisis financiera mundial están teniendo sobre la Fundación. El nuevo escenario hace replantear nuestros enfoques de forma, si cabe, más estratégica y precisa. De forma resumida presentamos algunas pinceladas de algunas iniciativas a seguir –por ejemplo, nuestras alianzas con el sector privado– así como algunos de los documentos donde se definen las estrategias de los países en los que intervenimos.

Monique van 't Hek, la directora ejecutiva interina que asumió el cargo durante el período de transición tras la salida de Peter Laugharn en mayo de 2008, señala que la recesión económica mundial no ha eludido al sector filantrópico en general, ni a la Fundación Bernard van Leer en particular. Según las cifras estimadas actualmente, una caída en el valor del capital de la Fundación se ha traducido en una reducción del 20% de sus ingresos para el 2009, y de al menos un 10% para el 2010.

Este nuevo escenario ha supuesto una reducción de los gastos y unos dolorosos, pero inevitables, recortes. El personal de plantilla se ha visto reducido en casi un tercio, y todavía quedan algunas decisiones difíciles que tomar. Además, es probable que la Fundación tenga que reducir en una cuarta parte el número de países en los cuales trabaja. En cualquier caso, esperamos poder mantener el nivel de compromiso acorde con el menor nivel de recursos humanos y financieros. Es importante resaltar que estos reajustes no afectan

a los compromisos ya adquiridos con nuestras organizaciones contrapartes.

En su prólogo a esta Memoria Anual, la Presidenta del Consejo Directivo, Trude Maas-de Brouwer, señala que nuestros presupuestos siempre han sido pequeños en comparación con la magnitud de los problemas de los niños pequeños con los que trabajamos. Aún así, hemos sido capaces de contribuir a cambiar la situación en la que viven. Subraya también la importancia de definir con precisión nuestro enfoque, de trabajar de forma estratégica, centrándose en aquellos países donde podemos causar un mayor impacto, y siempre con la visión, desde el principio, de transferir las responsabilidades a la población local.

La señora Maas-de Brouwer concluye su prólogo con un mensaje de confianza con respecto a la capacidad del personal de la Fundación y de sus organizaciones contrapartes. Destaca que la responsabilidad que tenemos hacia los niños pequeños de este mundo es, en última instancia, el objetivo que

nos guía para salir de esta crisis, incluso de forma más reforzada.

Fortalecimiento de las alianzas con el sector privado

Partiendo de la premisa de que toda crisis representa también una oportunidad, Monique van 't Hek hace hincapié sobre el reto que supone maximizar nuestros limitados recursos para conseguir el máximo impacto para los niños. Con este objetivo, una vía que se presenta como muy prometedora es el reciente compromiso para trabajar más conjuntamente con el sector privado, atrayendo a un mayor número de empresas para el apoyo de nuestra causa, es decir, el desarrollo de la primera infancia. En el año 2008, líderes empresariales se reunieron en La Haya (Países Bajos) y en Washington (Estados Unidos), en el evento conocido como *Business Champions* (Campeones Empresariales), co-organizado con dos prestigiosas organizaciones norteamericanas: la Comisión para el Desarrollo Económico (*Committee for Economic Development*) y el Centro Wolfensohn para el Desarrollo (*Wolfensohn Centre for Development*) del Instituto Brookings. Posteriores reuniones de esta red tendrán lugar próximamente en Brasil y Sudáfrica.

Si por su propia naturaleza la iniciativa “Campeones Empresariales” puede no tener un efecto inmediato a la hora de arrojar sus frutos, Monique

van 't Hek expresa su confianza en que los líderes empresariales –con su reconocida capacidad de valorar los resultados de análisis coste-beneficio– se muestren cada vez más decididos en demostrar su buena responsabilidad social corporativa, participando cada vez más en iniciativas en favor de la primera infancia.

Documentos estratégicos para los países en los que trabajamos

La señora van 't Hek informa que durante el último año, como parte del plan estratégico que actualmente está en vigor (2007-2009), los oficiales de programas de la Fundación han llevado a cabo un análisis en profundidad sobre los problemas y las potencialidades de cada país en el que intervenimos. Trabajando en estrecha colaboración con las organizaciones contrapartes, esta labor ha concluido con la elaboración de los documentos estratégicos para los países. Así, en el 2008 se han definido las estrategias para ocho de los países con los que trabajamos, continuando la tarea en el 2009. Tres de las estrategias finalizadas se resumen en este informe, junto con dos relatos de proyectos financiados en cada uno de estos países.

La sinopsis de nuestra estrategia en **México** describe cómo, después de treinta años de intervención en el país, para el próximo período hemos decidido centrarnos en los niños pequeños afectados por el fenómeno de la

migración. Hemos optado por focalizar nuestro apoyo en cuatro localidades: en Ciudad Juárez, en la frontera con el estado de Texas, donde las madres jóvenes se ausentan para trabajar durante largas horas en las fábricas; en Soconusco, en el otro extremo del país, donde una gran parte de inmigrantes procedentes de otros países de América Central viven en condiciones de extrema pobreza; en el estado de Sinaloa, donde los trabajadores agrícolas migran estacionalmente en condiciones de extrema penuria; y en San Cristóbal de Las Casas, donde las familias indígenas desplazadas por el conflicto rural y por razones económicas necesitan adaptarse a un medio urbano nuevo y, en ocasiones, hostil.

Por lo general, los niños afectados por la migración suelen carecer de lugares seguros para jugar, un problema que se agrava cuando sus padres tienen largas jornadas laborales. Además, el acceso a determinadas instituciones como el preescolar o los centros de salud, puede ser complicado, ya sea por las barreras lingüísticas, una complicada e inflexible burocracia, o bien por actitudes discriminatorias.

Mirando más de cerca a los proyectos apoyados por la Fundación en México, mostramos cómo el proyecto *The children left behind*, llevado a cabo por nuestra organización contraparte IMIFAR, ha capacitado a los maestros de educación preescolar

y a los cuidadores para ayudar a los niños pequeños a desarrollar sus habilidades de comprensión y expresión de sus emociones. Las emociones que a menudo experimentan los niños pequeños cuyos padres están ausentes por motivos de migración, son las de abandono, soledad, estrés e ira.

También se presentan dos libros editados recientemente con el apoyo de la Fundación. Publicado por Ririki Intervención Social y escrito por cinco periodistas orientados por expertos en los derechos del niño, el libro “Migraciones vemos, infancias no sabemos”, relata una serie de historias paradigmáticas sobre la migración a través de la perspectiva de los niños. El segundo, publicado por Melel Xojobal AC, “Para que sepas”, muestra la evolución del trabajo con madres solteras que emigraron para encontrar un trabajo, hacia actividades dirigidas a comunicar sus historias de vida a sus propios hijos, lo cual ha supuesto un ejercicio de empoderamiento para ellas.

En **Sudáfrica**, nuestra estrategia aborda los problemas más acuciantes que conforman el entorno social para los niños en este país: la pobreza y el VIH/SIDA, y el hecho de que la mayoría de los niños pequeños no tienen acceso a servicios para el desarrollo de la primera infancia. Financiamos proyectos desarrollados por organizaciones locales que incitan a la revitalización de las comunidades, la mejora de las

condiciones de vida y la organización de servicios no convencionales con base en la comunidad destinados a los niños pequeños, tales como áreas de juego, la educación preescolar y grupos de apoyo para los padres.

Los dos proyectos presentados son *Speak Free* (Habla libremente), llevado a cabo por ABC Ulwazi, que utiliza la radio comunitaria como medio para que los niños participen en los debates sobre temas que les afectan; y el proyecto *Child-Friendly Society* (la Sociedad respetuosa con los niños), desarrollado por la organización *Children's Rights Centre*, con sede en Durban, que trabaja a través de la sensibilización, la creación de redes y la capacitación de las organizaciones que trabajan con niños o que tienen el potencial de hacerlo.

En la **India** trabajamos en la región de Orissa, la más grande del país, con una población de 37 millones de habitantes, y siendo una de las más pobres. Nuestro programa se lleva a cabo con las tribus “programadas”, o *adivasi*, que son las tribus reconocidas en la Constitución de la India por requerir una atención especial para contrarrestar la arraigada discriminación sufrida por muchas poblaciones indígenas. A pesar de las iniciativas estatales por conseguir una educación primaria universal, los *adivasi* siguen a la zaga de la educación, con una tasa de alfabetización del 37% frente al 63% para la totalidad

Seven-year-old Urmila Raita combs her hair in the mirror at her home in Kharigoda Village, Giajapati District, Orissa, India.

Photo: Jim Holmes



del estado. Nuestro programa apoya a organizaciones locales para mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza preescolar en aquellas zonas adivasi donde ya exista, y para la creación de centros de preescolar con base en la comunidad, en las zonas donde todavía no los hay. También colaboramos con el gobierno del estado para crear vínculos entre la educación preescolar en la lengua materna de los niños adivasi y la educación multilingüe de las escuelas primarias.

El informe describe los progresos realizados en dos proyectos que tienen lugar en otras partes de la India. En la última fase de nuestra colaboración con la organización CHETNA, alguno de los resultados más sobresalientes incluye un manual de capacitación titulado “Aprender a enseñar los derechos del niño” (*Learning to Teach Child Rights*), que es utilizado por los facilitadores durante las sesiones de capacitación con los maestros y las personas que trabajan en organizaciones no gubernamentales o en organizaciones con base en la comunidad. Mientras tanto, en el estado de Tamil Nadu, nuestra contraparte TN-FORCES ha sido muy eficaz a la hora de conseguir atraer la atención hacia el cuidado y la educación de la primera infancia por parte de los responsables estatales para la formulación de políticas, así como del público en general. Para ello, han contado con la participación de las comunidades directamente involucradas en el funcionamiento de

los centros de primera infancia y en las actividades dirigidas hacia la mejora de las políticas estatales.

Testimonios sobre el impacto directo de la Fundación

Concluyendo su apartado, Monique van 't Hek va más allá de la crisis financiera y nos recuerda el impacto humano que va teniendo el trabajo de la Fundación. Para ello, nos describe su visita a un proyecto realizado con la comunidad ultraortodoxa Haredi en Israel, la cual se destaca por la importancia que se da al aprendizaje de la escritura y que prácticamente todos los niños varones llevan a cabo a partir de los tres años de edad. Intentando responder a la pregunta de por qué una parte importante de los niños siempre parecía acabar mostrando dificultades en el aprendizaje, un rabino tomó el valiente e inusual paso de solicitar consejo e ideas fuera de la comunidad Haredi. Los expertos consultados observaron que los niños no juegan.

Como consecuencia de la iniciativa de este rabino, nuestra contraparte, Mercaz Beth Jacob, trabaja en la actualidad con comunidades locales Haredi con el fin de crear espacios de juego para los niños. Algunos de los rabinos, no habiendo sido ellos mismos alentados a jugar cuando eran niños, han tenido que, en primer lugar, aprender a jugar de forma que estuviesen preparados a la hora de

empezar a trabajar con los niños. Como resultado, la coordinación física de los niños, el equilibrio de su personalidad, y sobre todo las habilidades sociales han mejorado notablemente.

Por último, Monique van 't Hek relata cómo una madre de esta comunidad le contaba que ella siempre había desconfiado de las influencias externas de su comunidad, pero ahora se da cuenta de que pueden enriquecer en lugar de poner en peligro su identidad. Esta historia, concluye la señora van 't Hek, ilustra uno de los principios rectores de la Fundación: que el compromiso respetuoso con las comunidades contribuye a realizar los derechos y las necesidades de los niños, sin dejar de respetar la sensibilidad cultural de sus padres.

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