



# Themba Club

## Bringing Hope & Dignity to Our Children in Need

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### CHILDREN'S AMENDMENT BILL 2006

Presentation to the KwaZulu-Natal Portfolio Committee on Social Development

Port Shepstone, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2006

by Mr Morgan NGCOBO – Programmes Manager

case studies from LINDANI and ZWELINKOSI

#### 1. Introduction:

- Representing organisation: Themba Club, started in 1993
- Primary Objectives
  - (a) ultimately reuniting any child who lives or works on the streets, with his family and community;
  - (b) enabling children in surrounding rural communities, at risk of leaving home for the streets, to remain in their home environments.
- Area of operation Lower South Coast of KZN

#### 2. We have three main changes to recommend for the Children's Bill. These changes will be for Chapter 14 and Chapter 8.

##### a) Ch.14: Staffing of Street Outreach Programme and Drop-In Centres

*The success of the entire programme depends on the success of these 2 phases - if not handled correctly by trained staff, the child will not form a trust relationship with the staff member and he will not commit to the programme.*

Our first point for change is therefore that we recommend that these functions NEVER be performed by unqualified people.

Section 215 in Chapter 14, allows for "any person or organisation" to "establish or operate" a drop-in centre. Even municipalities (Ch14: 225(1)), are given the power to carry out the functions for drop-in centres.

Many people believe that Drop-in Centres are casual places. Drop-in Centres run by unqualified people give this impression. Drop-in Centres run by good organisations that are registered, have structured programmes.

➤ The statement in section 215 in chapter 14 should be changed, to read:  
*Any properly qualified person, or organisation with properly qualified staff, may establish or operate a drop-in centre...*

##### b) Ch. 14: Drop-In Centres – Minimum Norms and Standards

My second point for change is that the Children's Bill does not list proper programmes for Drop-In Centres – it only lists basic service provisions.

Our experience has shown that:

- the **sooner an intervention is made** in the life of a child that has arrived on the streets
- the **better the quality of care provided** through that intervention, the greater the chances are for an ultimate successful reunification.

We run the following programmes at our Drop-In Centre:

- family investigation → support visits → reunification
  - Bridging Education
  - Arrange Counselling services (Trauma Counselling; Crisis Centre; Wilderness Therapy)
  - Clinic or hospital visit if required
- We recommend that the Minimum Norms and Standards for Drop-In Centres in Chapter 14: 220, be extended to include:
- family reunification programmes
  - access to education, health, medical, counselling and social development services
  - therapeutic and developmental programmes

Before making my third point, one of our children will tell you his experience.

#### **LINDANI (summary)**

- **Reason for leaving home:**  
**Home in KwaMashu; mother left to work in Johannesburg; left in care of aunt and uncle – alcohol abuse; physically abused; left and went to Point Road area in Durban**
- **Intervention by service providers – Themba Club:**  
**Made a friend and together went to Port Shepstone; found by social worker; taken to Themba Club**
- **Reunification Process:**  
**In third phase shelter; attending school; visits home every holiday; will ultimately return home**

#### **c) Ch.8: Prevention & Early Intervention Programmes**

*These programmes have the following advantages:*

- *they reach far more children for relatively lower cost than working through shelters*
- *they ensure that the child can remain with his family, in his own home and community*
- *they empower the family*
- *they uplift the community*

The last point for change that I want to make is Prevention Programmes – the Children's Bill does not show what NGO'S like the Themba Club are doing.

We have developed the following Programmes:

- School Support Programme – buy the child a school uniform, pay his/her school fees and register him/her at school
- Food Parcels in desperate cases
- Welfare Grant application and ID / Birth Certificate Documentation application assistance
- Foster Grant / Placement application assistance
- Counselling
- Boy's Soccer League in Communities

- Community Awareness and Education Days
- After Care Programme: - a child that has been reunited with his family, and his family, are included in all the Prevention and Early Intervention Programmes that they require, until such time as they can support and sustain themselves. Decreasing follow-up visits to the home and school are then conducted throughout the year.

Chapter 8 143 speaks of providing social development services for children, and 144 (2) also mentions helping families obtain basic necessities.

- We recommend that Chapter 8 144 (2) has an added section:  
*(c) health, education, sport and recreation programmes, as appropriate.*

Zwelinkosi will give you one example of how the Themba Club prevention programme actually works in the community.

#### **ZWELINKOSI (summary)**

- **Reason for being at risk:**  
**Home in KwaNzimakwe (South Coast); mother unemployed; no father; dropped out of school due to poverty**
- **Intervention by service provider – Themba Club:**
  - i) Came to Themba Club for assistance**
  - ii) They provide school fees and uniforms for him, his younger brother and sister**
  - iii) They provide a food parcel for the family until self supporting**
  - iv) They assisted his mother in applying for ID documentation and Child Support Grants**

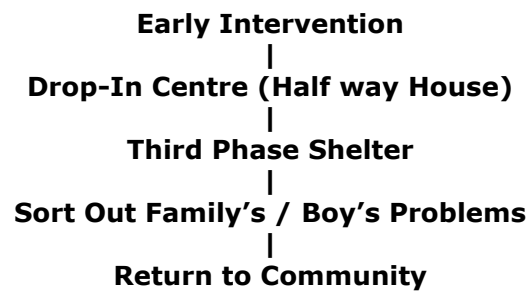
This ends our presentation.

Thank you from the boys and from Themba Club for arranging these public hearings.

We greatly appreciate them.

## APPENDIX 1

*The development of our programmes has been determined by the needs in the communities*



*The Reunification Programme and the Prevention Programme are the foundation on which everything else is built. They are equally important and they provide the essential components to:*

- *reach and assist a child once he has got to the streets*
- *prevent more children from going to the streets.*

*They have proven to be extremely effective in our work.*