



Newsletter

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Editorial

Crime and Whose Punishment?

Serious punishment for serious crime. Killers, rapists, and people who deal drugs deserve long and harsh jail sentences.

It is already hard enough to accept that, after the mess they made, we tax payers have to pay for their prisons. At least make sure the jails are not luxury hotels.

Only if the sanctions we give criminals are long and hard will people think twice before they commit a crime.

Only if we separate them from everyone and make them live in the most basic of survival modes will we be able to protect our society.

Right? Wrong!

We pretend that prisons serve at least 3 functions: punishment; protecting society; and rehabilitation.

In reality, we give priority to punishment, and we don't care that in the long run this choice jeopardizes the possibility of rehabilitation and consequently undermines the protection of society.

Prisons are in fact a kind of graduate school for criminals; prisoners do not come out of them rehabilitated. Studies in the USA show that 51.9% of released prisoners return to jail within 3 years.

The model of totally separating prisoners from the rest of society does not stand up to scrutiny either. Putting too many obstacles in the way of maintaining contact between convicts and their families is counter productive.

Studies comparing recidivism rates suggest that prisoners who maintained family connections during their prison time through letters and personal visits actually did better than those who did not.

There is more bad news. We are creating a

breeding ground for new criminals, as demonstrated by the fact that children of offenders are six times more likely to go to prison than their peers.

The prison system actually punishes society far more than severely than society could ever punish a criminal. An increasing number of specialists believe that the threat of violence from within the endlessly growing prison population is much greater than from terrorism.

The only answer we have given so far is to send more people to prison every year, for longer and longer sentences. In 73% of the countries in the world, there is substantial increase in the prison population annually. This trend is not expected to be reversed.

One reason is that we place a higher priority on punishment than on rehabilitation and the protection of society. Another reason is that the very existence and growth of the prison system is increasingly tied to financial interests. More and more countries are outsourcing their prison management to private companies.

In many developing countries prisoners have to produce market goods. Prisons are vital for businesses; having more prisoners equals more business. Prison populations will keep on growing.

Unfortunately the relevance of Morning Tears in society will only increase because the number of children with at least one parent in prison will grow as well.

Morning Tears does not intervene in the judicial process itself in the countries in which we work. However, we do feel pain within our hearts when we observe this trend. That pain is the suffering of the children for whom we work; it is the morning tears of those children.

Koen,

on behalf of the children and Morning Tears

News from Children Village

- Two boys, 12 and 8 year old brothers, and a 6 year old girl arrived in Children Village in May. This brings the number of children living there to 80.
- A large delegation from the province of Antwerp visited Children Village.
- The roadway inside the village is now complete.
- One new caregiver joined the Children Village team in June.
- All children and the caregivers have completed the vaccination programme as of June.
- All of the children had their Health Check-up on Children's Day of this year.
- A Spanish television station crew came to visit Children Village in April.
- Journalists from Belgium visited Children Village, and they will produce a new promotional DVD.
- Two Children Village girls took the National University Entrance Examination on June 7th and 8th.

Morning Tears Chopsticks

We have produced some very nice chopsticks, with the name and logo of Morning Tears printed on them. We are selling them for € 1/ pair, or 10 RMB/pair.

Using Morning Tears chopsticks in your home, at your event, or in your restaurant is an excellent way to bring up the destiny of the children of convicts in your dinner conversation.

To order or for more information, send an email to info@morningtears.org, and put "Chopsticks" in the subject line.



Stakeholder Consultation: Morning Tears Strategy Plan 2008-2011

A draft of the Morning Tears Strategy Plan for 2008-2011 is now available. We invite anyone who is interested to comment on or make challenges to the plan.

Please request a copy of the plan by sending an email to info@morningtears.org with "Strategy Plan" in the subject line.

The closing date for comments is August 31, 2007. The Strategy Plan will be revised based on the comments received, and the final version is scheduled to be issued in the middle of September 2007.

Agreement to Help Children Using TCM and Western Psychology

Morning Tears has signed an agreement with the Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital of Xi'an, in Shaanxi province.

The hospital will provide support to traumatized children using both traditional Chinese medicine methods (including acupuncture and tuina) and western psychological methods. The treatment will be provided free of charge for street children and children whose parents have been executed or are in prison.

Morning tears will provide staff training in the hospital for helping traumatized children using western psychological methods.

Upcoming Events in Children Village

- Two boys, each around 15 years old, graduated from middle school in June
- The children started their summer holidays at the beginning of July. At their request, they will continue to classes in art, music, dance, sport, and English throughout the holidays.

Ecuador: 700 Innocent Children Live Behind Bars

Miet Koppers, a volunteer 'Country Researcher' with Morning Tears, has recently completed her study of the situation for children-of-convicts in Ecuador. A summary of her findings is included below, but the complete report can be requested by sending an email to her at miet.koppers@morningtears.org.

Ecuador is one of Latin America's poorer countries. The size of the prison population, as well as the percentage of prisoners who are women, has been increasing rapidly in recent years. This is due, at least in part, to changes in the incredibly slow and corrupt judicial system.

The current prison population in Ecuador is 16,557 and of them, 1,648 – roughly 10% – are women.

The focus of this investigation was to answer the question of what happens to the children of these women. Here are some of the answers:



Relatives are often unable to care for them because they don't have the financial resources to do so; sometimes they simply don't want to take care of them.

When these children are put in controlled facilities apart from their parents – such as orphanages and other institutional settings – they are often abused just because they are the children of criminals. As a result, many of them escape from these institutions and end up on the streets or back in prison with their parents.

Legally, children are only allowed to stay with their parents in prison until they are two years old. The reality, however, is that there are currently about 700 children, ranging from newborns to teenagers, are housed in prisons with their parents. They are being deprived of their freedom for crimes their parents committed.

The Guayaquil Women's Prison mentioned above, for example, has an inmate population of 500 women plus 150 of their children. These children can spend up to 16 years living in horrible prison conditions.

No extra food is provided; instead the mothers have to feed their children out of their own meagre allotment of low quality food. There is little room for the families, as the prisons are badly overcrowded, and neither running water nor sanitary facilities are available.

As a result of poor control and unqualified staffing, children are constantly exposed to both physical and psychological abuse. There is possibility of being educated, and medical care is non-existent – physical or mental care.

All of these things together have a severe negative impact on the physical and psychological well-being of these children.

There are a few small, local organizations which are dedicated to rescuing children of prisoners. The National Institute for Children and Family, in cooperation with local organizations, started a program this year to address this problem. They are relocating children from living with parents in prisons to living with extended family members and are providing \$100US a month to assist in their support.

The results are not all that encouraging however. Of the 80 children who were originally "saved" from this situation, half of them – 40 children – have returned to living with their parents in prison.

Much work still needs to be done to give the children of prisoners in Ecuador an opportunity to have the kind of future every child deserves to have.

Cruz Ocaña Mata, a 37 year old woman, entered the Guayaquil prison one year and three months ago. Her two daughters, 9 year old Estefania and 7 year old Yamilé, live in the prison with her. She also has the responsibility of caring for her two young cousins: Kevin, who is 2, and Kerwin who is 1.

Ocaña says she is in jail because police found her in possession of 100 grams of narcotics. Since there is no one outside of the prison who can care for the children, all four of them are accompanying her during her incarceration.

The five of them live together in a small cell, and they share that cell with five other prisoners who also need to take care of their children.

Source: *Diario El Comercio*, September 2006

Call For Volunteers

The range of our activities in Belgium and Spain is expanding. We organize exhibitions and events, present at markets, work with schools and we do research.

We are continuously are looking to expand our network of volunteers.

Volunteers can provide support at single events, or become involved in a more continuous way. Volunteers can active in person or they can be involved through the internet.

To learn more about how to join us send an email to rosapou@morningtears.org (for Spain), or to dirk.truyens@morningtears.org (for Belgium or the Netherlands).

The Story of Li Zhen

Li Zhen is a twelve year old girl with big shining eyes and a very happy voice. Meeting her for the first time, you will not notice anything wrong with her. You might think she is a perfectly happy child. If you stay with her for a long time, however, you will see that there is definitely something wrong with her – even if it is hard to tell exactly what.

It has been four years since Li Zhen arrived at the Children Village, but she still likes to hide under the bed. She does this whether she is playing games with other children or if she is staying alone; it doesn't matter. For no apparent reason, she will suddenly scream wildly, even when she is playing or laughing. This habit scares the other children away from her; it makes them want to not play with her.

Li Zhen always looks like she is trying to get your attention, but when you notice her and try to talk with her she vigorously challenges your being so close to her. The only time she is able to really act like a normal child is when she is with her older brother.

Li Zhen's mother has been in the Shaanxi Women's Prison these past four years, and she will be there at least 18 more because she killed her husband. Li Zhen hated her father for the violent abuse he inflicted on the family, but when she was just nine years old she suffered the horror of watching her father die right in front of her. It was more tragic still, because it was her beloved mother that killed him. During a simple childhood game of hide-and-seek with her brother, she was hiding under the bed waiting for her brother to find her. From her hiding place she saw her parents start to fight violently, and then saw her mother kill her father. After the police caught and arrested the mother, people found Li Zhen still hiding under the bed, too terrified to come out. After they finally got her out, she refused to speak and would only stay with her brother.

The local police brought Li Zhen and her brother to Children Village, and she always tried to follow and stay with her brother. All day and all night, she only wanted to be with him and she refused to talk with anyone. After a long and difficult effort, the teachers were finally able to get Li Zhen to go and live in the girls' room. After that, Li Zhen constantly screamed in the night and woke up from having nightmares. When she found her brother was not around she was like a wild animal, screaming and crying. It was also a nightmare for the girl's care giver because she was always so worried for the child. Because the woman did not know what else to do, she would just try to hold the girl in her arms. Perhaps because the warm embrace against the woman's bosom reminded Li Zhen in some way of her mother, she gradually began to accept the care giver – the first person besides her brother that she started to trust.

Now, four years later, Li Zhen can study at school and play with the other children. Still, she remains a deeply traumatized child. She can not express herself clearly, not even very simple feelings, the way a child her age should be able to. She always tries to avoid face-to-face contact, and can not bear to look directly into another's eyes. We know the horrible thing which she watched happen four years ago almost completely destroyed this little girl's entire world. We know that what happened was more than she could understand and that the world did not make sense to her after that. But now, we can see that she is able to at least calm down some and begin to reconnect with the outside world. We know it is so very hard for Li Zhen to do, but we also know we have helped her start to put the pieces back together in her mind, to rebuild the world inside of her. We also know that now we have started helping her with this we can never stop. We don't have the right to stop, because this is the only way Li Zhen can have her own life, a real life, when she grows up.

Kou Wei

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Feedback

This is the third issue of the second volume of our quarterly newsletter. Your feedback will help us to improve. Also, we will be happy to include your contributions or announcements. We look forward to hearing from you. Please mail to: info@morningtears.org.

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



Our New Model for Helping Children: Home-Based Care

Until now, Morning Tears has always been protecting and caring for children within the Children Village model. Social scientists refer to children in this kind of setting as “children in institutional care”.

In recent years, a whole body of research has emerged comparing the benefits for children growing up in institutional care against those for children growing up in foster care. Foster care is a model in which children enters an existing family, and is cared for within that context.

The research makes it very clear that foster care offers many more opportunities for child development and other benefits than institutional care. These include: more individual attention for the child; more chances to practice and develop necessary life skills; and better integration into society.

Morning Tears acknowledges the results of this research, and we recognize the disadvantages of institutional care in the daily life of Children Village.

In the past, China’s laws and policies made it impossible to even consider assisting our children in a foster care setting. Now Chinese authorities have adopted a policy that foster care is the preferred model for providing care to parent-absent children.

However, we believe foster care is not suitable for children whose parents are in prison or have been executed. Our children have experienced very severe traumas, and they also have to face deep prejudices against them by society.

Integrating our children into existing families would destroy a crucial aspect of support for their psychological well-being: the support of their peers.

Morning Tears has therefore started working with a variation of the foster care model. Over time, we will gradually switch from a purely institutional care model to a new model which can be best described as ‘home based care’.

Under this model, children will live together in an apartment in the city. They will live together in groups of 4 to 6, and in each case there will be 1 or 2 care givers living with them.

They will participate in the daily life of the family-sized home and in society, and at the same time they will have the immediate support of their peers.

These homes will be linked with a “Child Assistance Centre”, and the centre will be the base for providing a number of services. They will act as the intake centre for these children, and be the central point to maintain links with hospitals and prisons. Staff at these centres will deliver psychological and medical care for the children, as well as coordinate and train the caregivers and social workers who are involved in the children’s lives.

Morning Tears plans two new home-based care projects in China in the coming months. One will be in each of the provinces of Shaanxi and Henan.

In each project, we plan to provide services for between 50 and 70 children. These projects will for the most part be providing care and assistance to ‘new’ children.

We have no plans to systematically move children out of the existing Children Villages. We believe that doing so would effectively destroy the close relationships they have established inside the safety of the villages, and for many of the children the harm it would do would far out-weigh the benefits that life under the new model will offer.

For more information about the costs and expenses associated with these home-based projects, please read the “Financial Barometer” section of this newsletter.

A complete program description for these new projects can be requested by sending an email to koen.sevenants@morningtears.org.

News Items

EU Pushes For a UN Moratorium on Death Penalty

The EU Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Luxembourg agreed in June to table their draft resolution on a U.N. moratorium during the next U.N. General Assembly session beginning in September.

Representatives of human rights organisations campaigning to abolish the death penalty welcomed this initiative. Originally, it was going to be presented before the summer break, but the extra two months will be spent in improving the proposal.

Although it is not clear how the UN moratorium will influence governments in different countries, rights activists note that a U.N. resolution is not legally binding on any member, “but it is a politically and morally powerful act”.

In the USA, a recent RT Strategies poll found that 58 percent of U.S. citizens believe that it is time for a moratorium on the death penalty.

News Items (cont'd)

Number of Executions Falls Around The World

According to Amnesty International figures, the number of executions worldwide fell from 2,148 in 2005 to 1,591 in 2006, thanks to growing international pressure against death penalty.

Six countries – Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Pakistan, the USA and China – were responsible for 90 percent of all executions carried out in 2006.

In 1977 only 16 countries had abolished the death penalty for all crimes. Now, more than one hundred countries have abolished death penalty. The central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan is the latest nation to join the list, abolishing the death penalty just one month ago.

It is estimated that around 20,000 people are currently on death rows across the world, waiting to be killed by the state.

China: Supreme Court Targets 'Judicial Injustice'

Different yardsticks for applying the death penalty have led to "judicial injustice" in China, acknowledged Zhang Jun, vice-president of the Supreme People's Court. Uneven standards applied during mandatory second-instance trials by provincial high courts in cases involving the death penalty have led to problems, according to the review by the highest court.

The different criteria are mainly for economic and drug-trafficking crimes. "The Supreme People's Court will gradually unify standards for penalties for similar categories of criminal cases across the country," Zhang said. Unified guidelines for pronouncing the death penalty in four categories of crimes which usually draw the largest number of death sentences - murder, robbery, drugs and intentional injury, - will be released within the year.

The move will be another major milestone in the reform of the judicial system after the Supreme People's Court took back the power to review and ratify all death sentences starting from January 1 this year. Last month, Beijing No 1 and No 2 Intermediate People's Courts said the number of death sentences in first trials resulting in immediate execution had dropped 10 percent year-on-year during the first five months of this year.

During this period, 342,854 people were convicted by courts at all levels across the country, and 56,056 received sentences longer than five years. The figure includes life terms and executions.

Source: *China Daily News*, July 2007

UK: Prison Mothers Can Still Read Fairy Tales To Their Kids

The Newport ADC prison facility can feel closer to home, thanks to a program called "The Storybook Project". The volunteers in the project raise funds to purchase children's books.

When they the prison four times a year, they bring with them the children's books and a tape.

The ladies are notified ahead of time of when the project will be held and they are allowed to sign up. With the volunteers, the ladies are brought in and read the book into a tape recorder as if reading to their child. The program lasts from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. each visit.

The volunteers then obtain the address of the inmate's child and send the book and tape to the child. When the children receive their packages, they can read the book along with the tape that their mothers made. According to Dewhitt, the program is working very well in both English and Spanish.

"This is a very healthy way for the ladies to feel they are interacting with their child," Dewhitt said. "The inmates are very fond of the opportunity. This is just one kind of encouragement to both the ladies and their families and children."

Source: *Newport Independent*, July 2007

Thousands Await Trial for Months, Years in Latin America

Many Latin American prisons are full of men, women, and children who have never even received a trial, let alone been convicted of a crime. Many of them spend months or even years in maximum security prisons for crimes they did not commit.

In Brazil alone, there are 172,000 prisoners awaiting trial, according to official figures. One out of every four prisoners in Haiti, and three quarters of all inmates in Bolivia and Paraguay have not yet been convicted, according to the International Centre for Prison Studies, located in London, UK. Of the 15,000 prisoners in the Dominican Republic, almost two thirds are still awaiting trial.

Too many cases in the queue and too few judges to handle them makes for this endless traffic jam in Latin American courts. Often times, the judicial systems in Latin America do not fully respect the presumption of innocence once a suspect is arrested after a police investigation.

In response, in 2002 Chile established a new penal system with new judges and special measures to try to reduce waiting times. In Mexico, where 43% of all inmates are still awaiting trial, president Felipe Calderon has proposed a general reform, including the use of oral trials and establishing a uniform penal code for the whole country.

Source: *AP*, June 2007



morning tears Belgium

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morning tears China

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morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.

morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

morning tears has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 **morning tears** became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, **morning tears** has offices in Belgium, Spain and China.

morning tears is run entirely by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of **morning tears** are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.MORNINGTEARS.ORG

Financial Barometer

The Cost of Home-Based Care

Morning Tears will soon launch projects for home-based care (an explanation of home-based care can be found on page 5).

Providing care through the home-based care model costs significantly more than working within the Children Village model. The staff-to-child ratio is higher and more physical resources are needed.

We know that the added benefits of home-based care justify the added costs, but making this choice presents us with some significant financial challenges.

First, we intend to rent 12 flats in the two provinces where this programme will be implemented. After that, we will build a Child Assistance Centre in each of those provinces.

The annual costs for maintaining each of the flats is € 11,800. This covers the direct cost of the flat (rent, heat and electricity), the basic care of the children (food, medical care and clothing), the children's education (tuition and supplies), their psychological support, staff salaries, and prison visits.

The cost of constructing each of the Children Assistance Centres is € 30,000.

Lastly, we need to purchase a mini-bus in each province to provide a transportation link for the children between each of the flats and the Children's Assistance Centres. The cost of these vehicles is €12,000 each.

Morning Tears is searching for sponsors – companies, foundations, and individuals – who are willing to cover the annual costs of one flat (€ 11,000), the cost of construction of a Child Assistance Centre (€ 30,000), or the cost to purchase a car (€ 12,000).

Potential donors can obtain a complete information package, including information about sponsor visibility and direct linkages between sponsored projects and donors, can be requested by sending an email to koen.sevenants@morningtears.org