



Over a year ago, I wanted to find ways to bring hope of a better future to children and young adults in developing countries so I founded the Smiling Children Foundation with two friends, Alexis Sautereau and Ayse Messiqua. With the help of volunteers and the generous donations of those of you who have supported the foundation, Smiling Children has now begun to make a difference. Our programmes and projects focus on providing education to underprivileged children or on generating local employment for poor communities. So far, we have concentrated on Morocco, but based on the experience we acquire today and our ability to call upon our support network, our longer-term aim is to develop more projects with local partners in other developing countries.

Thank you to all of you who support Smiling Children, especially those who attended our successful Gala evening early in 2006. We want to keep you interested and involved in our work. This e-newsletter is one way we want to keep in touch with you. We are ultimately only as good as our network of donors and friends.

Yann Borgstedt
President

THE "LITTLE MAIDS" SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

fighting against child domestic labour in Morocco

SOME BACKGROUND...



Morocco has one of the highest child labour rates in the Middle East and North Africa. Despite a law that prohibits children under the age of 15 from working, official government statistics suggest that at least 600,000 children aged 7 to 15 (11% of children in that age group) are engaged in child labour. The true numbers are undoubtedly much greater.

Of these child workers, tens of thousands are young girls, some as young as 5 or 6 who work in private homes as domestic workers. Known locally as "petites bonnes" (little maids) these girls are essentially live-in servants who are routinely made to work hundred or more hours per week without days off. Their employers frequently abuse them physically and emotionally. They are denied an education, and sometimes they are denied food, medical care and can be subjected to sexual harassment by their employer or other family member. They get very little money, most of which ends up in the hands of the brokers who found them the work in the first place, or it is given directly to their families. Many of these girls end up running away, into a life of forced prostitution or destitution.

Moroccan child labour experts frequently cite poverty, unemployment, poor quality education and poor access to education (particularly for girls), as well as broken families, and widespread social acceptance of child labour as the primary factors explaining the prevalence of child workers. (www.hrw.org source: Human Rights Watch report, December 2005, on Abuse of Child Domestic Workers in Morocco).

<http://hrw.org/reports/2005/morocco1205/morocco1205.pdf>



THE PROGRAMME...

Smiling Children has created and developed the "little maids" sponsorship programme in partnership with a Moroccan local non-profit organisation, Institution Nationale de Solidarité avec les Femmes en Détresse (INSAF). The programme takes "little maids", some as young as 6 or 7 years old, away from that life. It reintegrates them with their families and sponsors them through school. Currently 30 girls are benefiting from the programme, with the help of a social worker hired by Smiling Children to bring the much needed emotional support to the girls and their families. The programme operates in the province of Chichaoua, one of the poorest regions in Morocco. It has received great local press reaction "Au secours des petites bonnes"

www.lematin.ma

<http://www.smilingchildren.org/littlemaids.html>

INSAF, based in Casablanca, is responsible for coordinating and managing the programme locally along with the social worker employed by Smiling Children. The number of girls sponsored will increase over the next few years. We are also developing with INSAF a campaign to raise awareness of the plight of "little maids" throughout Morocco. Together, we are looking into other ways to fight against child labour, including replicating this project in other rural regions.

FOR DONATIONS
VISIT OUR WEBSITE

if you would like to sponsor a child
www.smilingchildren.org



L'OLIVERAIE

generating local employment in poor rural areas of Morocco



Original bottle design by ora-ito

L'Oliveraie, also known locally as project Zeit Zitoun, is Smiling Children's newest project involving the production and export of olive oil from Morocco. We have developed this project together with a local non-profit organisation, Targa-Aide in Morocco (www.targa-aide.org) which focuses on helping the rural world, and the Italian company ColleMasarri, producers of wines and olive oils. Our aim in creating this project is to generate sustainable, longer-term employment and revenue for the poor communities in the Taounate province of Morocco. Smiling Children has hired a local expert in agronomy, Mr Hassan Mouks, who has 12 years of experience working for Targa to advise on the local conditions, to draw up a business plan and to manage the project locally. Smiling Children will fund the construction of a factory for pressing and bottling a high quality olive oil, and together with partner ColleMasarri will provide the technical expertise and training on the production of olive oil. We will continue to support the project with our network of entrepreneurs as the project moves into the phase where the olive oil is ready for export and international distribution.

We will keep you informed as this project develops!



SMILING CHILDREN

*partners with Innocence in Distress
to help Lebanese children*

innocence in distress

Help the Lebanese children

Last summer, during the conflict in Lebanon, Smiling Children partnered with the charity Innocence in Distress (website: www.innocence-in-distress.ch) to help the innocent victims of war: the children. Lebanese hospitals in the affected areas suffered from a shortage of essential medical supplies and food. Doctors on the ground were asked to provide a list of medicines they needed, and these were provided to them together with food. The project succeeded in delivering one tonne of medicines and one tonne of powdered milk to help save the lives of the innocent victims of the conflict. Smiling children donated in excess of 30,000 chf.

SMILING CHILDREN

*Dominique Perret's 24hr freeride
January 27 and 28 2007*



Smiling Children was one of two charity chosen to benefit from this year's 24hr Dominique Perret Freeride in Verbier.

The event was a great success, with 120 teams participating (Smiling Children had one team). The event raised a total of 130,000 chf.

We would like to thank Dominique Perret for choosing Smiling Children and for all the time and effort he and his team have spent organizing the event.

We hope to see you next year at Dominique Perret's 24 hr Freeride event .



EVENTS IN THE PIPELINE....
- Ladies Lunch June 2007