# HELPING THE HARD ONES
## Child Scavengers of the Philippines

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**SUMMARY**

Picking through garbage for food or saleable articles is an increasingly common occupation of very poor children in the Third World. But despite its obvious danger, it is one of the most intransigent forms of child labour to eradicate. This is because it occurs in the informal sector, beyond the reach of not only labour inspectors but the law as well. It also pays well, so well the children do not want to stop, nor do their families want them to. In the Philippines, child scavengers can often earn as much in a day as an adult factory worker.

Yet, unless ways can be found to either force the children to stop, or at least to mitigate its negative effects, many thousands of children may grow up damaged and unequipped for normal life ... or even lose the opportunity to grow up at all. Child labour in scavenging is similar to child labour in prostitution and the drug trade which are also dangerous, hard to enforce, and lucrative. These are occupations that challenge all existing methods of dealing with child labour and force us to re-examine our basic assumptions about what drives child labour.

This case study describes an experimental programme with scavenger children at the huge garbage dump in Manila, Philippines, known as Smokey Mountain. The *"Pilot Project on Child Scavengers in Metro Manila"* was carried out jointly by the International Labour Organisation and the Philippine Government's Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), with financing by the Dutch government. This study shows the model that was used, the process by which it was developed, and the insights gained about child scavenging and its physical and emotional effects. The intention is to give a practitioner's perspective on the difficulties and importance of child labour work.

The project itself was funded for only three years (although the work has continued under a private agency), yet during this time it was able to reach almost all of the 1,200 scavenger children who lived and worked on the dump with at least one kind of service, and to actually remove some of them from work altogether.

Some of the methods are not particularly new, and in fact, are widely used and recognized. But the "Smokey Mountain model" is perhaps uniquely comprehensive ... and it is the way in which these elements were combined which accounts for its effectiveness. It has two parts: one is an "intake" and protective programme to identify children at risk, assess their family situation and health/educational needs, and give them crisis care in the form of clean drinking water, food, immunization, and first aid (the 'Drop In Center'). The other part is a rehabilitation programme that combines learning, earning, health and parent involvement to ready the children to leave their work and enter ordinary schools (the 'SABANA').

The principles behind the model are important too. One is a "*bottom/up*" or "child-centred" style of work in which the needs of the child determine what is to be done, rather than the more customary way of working "down" from a plan, an institution, or a theory. Another is an emphasis on *community-wide action*, which highlights the fact that a child is not a free agent but part of a larger group -- sometimes a family, sometimes just a self-organized group of peers -- and takes cognizance of the unfortunate reality that much of child labour is a product of families

and communities that can no longer support their children economically or socially. Efforts to stop child labour will have only a temporary effect unless there is a critical mass composed of families, community, authorities and even other children that is convinced that child labour must end. A third principle is *data-gathering*. Data-gathering enables all involved to have a common grasp of the problem and to understand it from the 'inside'. But information is not the only objective. Data-gathering was one of the major means used to organize action in the community, as well as to stimulate awareness beyond it. The *Pilot Project on Child Scavengers* was carried out in a zig-zag fashion: research, then action, then research again. In this way, new information was provided at each stage in the work which could be used to either change direction if necessary or to fine-tune activities already under way.

What was learned from this project, the result of the various research and action activities, was that scavenging exacts such a severe physical and psychological toll on children that it outweighs any other concern; although a tolerable occupation for adults, it cannot be tolerated for children. True, it puts food on the table, but the nature of this work -- its ease, its financial return, and its availability -- rapidly makes it a means to other ends. The project showed how time and again, against their declared intentions, adults found it expedient and then necessary, to share and then shift the burden of family support to the shoulders of their children. As the children took the weight, the adults were drawn to care of others, to more appealing jobs, or to gambling, drinking, or leisure.

The findings of this project support the view that child labour may be important for the very poor, but insists that a line be drawn in the case of dangerous work. There are a types of child labour which cannot be tolerated in any way and these must be the first priority of government, social service agencies, and the public at large to stop. And child labour of this kind can be stopped. This project demonstrated in a modest way that, given the political will to recognize the problem -- as the Government of the Philippines was courageous enough to do -- children can be removed from hazardous work.

# INTRODUCTION

It is customary to start a case study with a situation analysis, and then to describe the plan, how it was implemented and what was ultimately achieved. But this is not necessarily the way work is actually done. This is the story of a child labour project, the *Pilot Project on Child Scavengers in Metro Manila,* as it actually happened. It reflects the fact that, at the outset, very little was known about the situation or what could be done about it. It shows the false starts and confusion, as well as the small triumphs of work against child labour.

The case study covers the period 1989 through 1992. Part I describes, chronologically, the trial-and-error process of learning about child scavengers and of developing the project. It points out the major benchmarks along the way, identifying each as to whether the activity was primarily one of "research" or "action" in order to show how data-gathering was built into the project and how findings of the various studies that were undertaken under project auspices influenced decisions about the course of the project and the eventual design of the model. At the end of Part I is a description of the model in its final form showing how its various components fit together.

Part II contains the results of six landmark technical studies -- on the physical health, psychological health, social context, and economic life -- of the child scavengers. It concludes with the project staff's assessment of 'what should have been done', if these results had become available at the start of the pilot project.

The Appendix contains model examples of the innovative curriculum and teacher training programme that was developed in the course of the project.

Running alongside the story of the project, there is also the personal story of how a heterogeneous group of people worked with each other and with this particularly complex and "messy" problem of getting children to stop garbage work. For some reason -- maybe it was the nature of the site, or the very pathetic situation of the children, or the type of people who were willing to work there -- the group that formed the project team became very heavily involved with the problems of Smokey Mountain and its children.

At the outset, the team consisted of only three people: the National Coordinator, Zenaida Ostos; the ILO Technical Advisor, Susan Gunn; and the Project Director, Ms. Aura Sabilano who, as chief of the Bureau of Women and Young Workers in the Department of Labor and Employment, was the Project Director. From time to time and for varying periods, others came on as consultants[1], government counterparts,[2] or volunteers.[3] The backbone of the team,

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[1] Cecilia Andal, Ann Avery, Erlinda Lagasca, Cecilia Ona, Alex Marcelino, Ida Matriano, Espie Reginaldo, Ferdie Sta. Maria, Nonoy Torrijos

[2] Emily Dayacus, Mike Iranzo, Caloy Matayo, E. Rodriguez, Alice Santos, Amy Torres

[3] Mary Ng, Joyce Yukawa, Marcia Hamilton

however, was the group of people from the Smokey Mountain community itself, most of whom themselves were scavengers when the project started but who became the teachers, researchers, health care providers, and ultimately administrators of the project. Known as "the Community Workers" they were: Alberto Barnachia, Lita Colina, Wilma Degollacion, Teresa (Tess) Espena, Manuel (Manny) Geronimo, Manuel Manarang, Jaime Placides, Alvin Salamat, Vilma Simbahan, Rosalie Vergara, and Lhiza Yanga.

The entire team has contributed in one way or another to this story. Several members have assiduously documented it as it unfolded and have written major portions of this case study, notably Cecilia Andal, Ann Avery, Alex Marcelino, and Ida Matriano. Technical research studies and background reports were prepared by Dr. Lourdes Carandang (Ateneo de Manila University), Miguel Iranzo (National Manpower and Youth Council of the Philippines), and Dr. Lucila Rubico, Dr. Ronald Subida, and Dr. Elma Torres (University of the Philippines). Compilation has been done by Susan Gunn.

This work would never have begun in the first place if it were not for the support and direction of Dr. Assefa Bequele and Dr. Gert Gust of the ILO, and Ms. Confessor of the Government of the Philippines.

## THE OTHER VOLCANO

In 1992, Mt. Pinatubo in the central Philippines began spewing smoke and ash in an eruption that would last for many months. Its dramatic reawakening grabbed media attention around the world. Emergency teams rushed to help the afflicted communities around it. No such drama or haste, however, has ever swirled around Smokey Mountain, the "other volcano" in the Philippines.

When you first see Smokey Mountain in the distance, you cannot quite grasp what it is. A hill, yes, but odd only in that there should be a hill like that when the whole of Metro Manila is so very flat. It does not even look particularly big. But the size is deceptive as the grey fog covering it blurs its shape and it makes it look further away than it really is.

Up close you are hit by the reality: it is huge -- 20 hectares in area and over 200 metres high. It is dead black. And it is nothing but garbage. Enclosing it is a bitter acrid stench, so thick it seems impossible to take it into your lungs; your stomach lurches. You grab a hankerchief, your sleeve, your hand, anything to cover your nose and mouth. And you can now see where it gets its name. Smoke is rising from hundreds of fissures on the upper slopes.

Then you see the people. Swarms of figures, ghostly in the smoke, follow along behind the bulldozers and are clustered around garbage trucks that are crawling slowly along the skyline. Here and there an individual pokes away at the steep side slopes. Their homes, patched together out of rusted metal sheeting and construction detritus, cluster in a dense ring around the bottom.

The smoke and the smell will not leave you when you turn around to escape back into the normalcy of the city. Your hair and clothes are permeated with the stuff. The sticky muck clings to the undercarriage of the vehicle. You wash and wash, but the reek is still there ... and so is the memory.

### Andoy

He must have been about seven years old, but he was so small, coming up only to my waist. We took a photo of him that first day because he seemed so typical of the children who were milling around on top of the dump with the adult scavengers. He had on a long-sleeved shirt and a pair of shorts -- that much was ordinary. But what was extraordinary was the rest of his gear: a T-shirt worn over the top (he pulled it up over his head whenever the smoke was particularly bad so that he could breathe through the cloth); long stockings that covered his knees and were tied with rope, and high rubber boots. In his hand was a *kalahig* (a long piece of wire, hooked at one end) and on his back, held by a leather strap over his shoulder, he carried a *buslo* (a basket) -- a basket large enough for his own body to fit inside. It was almost impossible to tell what colour his clothes once were; they were filthy. Wherever his skin showed, it too, was black with soot. The soot, the grime, the background erased by smoke, a pinched face with pale lips -- this (literally) 'black-and-white' image -- was a Smokey Mountain child scavenger.

Andoy became our icon. The photograph shows him looking down, intent on his work. Along with the others, he had been picking through the garbage from a truck that had just dumped its load. He would pass over this mound of fresh rubbish again and again over the next several hours, looking first for *bulosi* (metal, bones, undamaged items, aluminum cans, and whole bottles), then picking up the plastic, objects that might be reparable or useable, tin cans, and finally getting the *iskrap* (broken glass, paper, cardboard, and plastic bags that were of least value).

When Andoy's basket was about half full -- and it was heavy by then -- he took it down to the first row of shacks on the side of the dump to have the contents weighed. The plastic bags he put to one side. He was going to clean them later in the black and fetid estuary that flowed along one side of Smokey Mountain as other children did.

Andoy worked most of the day up there. He would sit down, now and again, to play *kalog* with some of the others, pushing the bottle caps around on the improvised board and betting the contents of his *buslo*. Once or twice, he bought something to drink from one of the stalls and around lunchtime ate a roll he had found. He stopped to watch some men who were grimly, silently at work butchering a dead dog that had turned up in the garbage.

We have another photograph of Andoy taken two years later. He is looking straight ahead into the camera, laughing. He is wearing a clean white Tshirt and is busy decorating another Tshirt with a lavishly coloured painting of a tropical bird. No *buslog* or *kalahig*, because now he was spending his mornings in school (Manila public schools are on the shift system) and his afternoons at the SABANA. SABANA is the rented house at the foot of the dump with the "learn-earn" programme that was created for Andoy and the other children who had been working in the garbage.

Our last photograph of him, taken not long afterward at a good-bye party for one of his SABANA teachers, shows his now rounded and rosy cheeks wet with tears, crying just like any ordinary child.

Andoy was one of the 200 or so children who were given back their childhood by a Dutch-financed, ILO programme for child labourers. It took an immense amount of effort, considerable money, and the time and emotional commitment of about 15 people to do this. Was it worth it? Was it a unique case? Did we learn anything that could be used elsewhere? Did we stop children scavenging? Here is our story ... you decide.

# PART I: THE STORY OF THE PROJECT

## 1. TRYING TO MOVE MOUNTAINS

It was this unforgettable memory of Smokey Mountain -- of the smell, the 20,000 people whose densely-packed shacks ring the lower slopes, and the hundreds of children who were reported to live and work amidst the garbage -- that energized Jose Lacson, a government official, and Jan Van Osterhoot, a young ILO staffmember, to try to do something there. They proposed a project to help the child scavengers.

As they conceived it, the project would stop child labour on Smokey Mountain by addressing the root cause: poverty. They reasoned that if the income of the families could be raised, the families would be better able to provide for their children and the children would be able to go to school, leading naturally to a decline in child labour.

It took about three years for this idea to solidify into a formal project proposal and for it to receive funding. During its three year journey through the procedures of the ILO and of the Dutch and Philippine governments, however, the project was greatly expanded. From a simple income generation project for families on Smokey Mountain, it had become an ambitious plan for government institution-building, public awareness-raising, community development, credit services for families, vocational training for household heads, as well as education, health and vocational training for children. Details were worked out in a series of discussions among senior officials from the ILO and the two governments. As they had many demands on their time and virtually no exposure to the target group, inevitably their choice of activities was based on what was current (e.g. income generating projects for women), or politically appropriate (e.g. institution-building), and additional elements were tossed into the already bewildering array with little regard to what was actually feasible to do in a short time among a hard-to-reach population. The project document which resulted was still somewhat vague on the nature of the problem (the situation to be addressed), but exceedingly complex in the elements to solve it.

Although it had originally been planned as a five-year project, it turned out that there was initially only enough money for two years; it was understood, however, that once underway, it would likely be extended for a much longer period. The budget was trimmed accordingly. Unfortunately, however, the objectives and the proposed activities were not.

In April 1989, the project received final clearance from the Philippine government (although no formal agreement had yet been signed) and the initial team was put together: a Project Director assigned by the Philippine government, and two people from the ILO hired as advisors.

We started work in June 1989. Acutely aware that we had to produce something compelling within two years, we were determined to get the project up and moving fast. The first two steps seemed reasonably simple and clear: arrange for all parties to formally sign the Project Document so that funds could flow; and establish an office to work from at Smokey

Mountain. After that, we would immediately start working with the children.

As it turned out, the Project Document was not signed for another three months, the official project office took fifteen months more, and the work with the children started somewhere in between! We had been very naive. It was not so much that we had miscalculated the time it takes to do things, but rather, that we had not recognized that Smokey Mountain was only a part of the work. The other part was building the organizational infrastructure that would enable the parties involved to make child labour a part of their work both during the project as well as in the years to come. The Philippine government and the ILO (two 'mountains' in their own right) had previously worked only on the legal aspects of child labour. They had to be helped to adapt their structures to accommodate, or at least appreciate, practical community-level work on child labour. In retrospect, it is hard to say which part of the work was ultimately the most difficult: challenging the closed community and the forbidding environment of Smokey Mountain ... or challenging the institutions that served it.

Like many technical cooperation projects of this time, there was a division of labour between the international and national agencies involved. In this case, the ILO was the "executing agency", whose role was to manage funds and provide technical advice upon request. The "implementing agency", which was responsible for carrying out the project, was the Philippine Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE). The community was also there as a silent partner (it was not a formal signatory to the project document), but it was assumed that the community would provide at least "voluntary service" to the project. The Philippine Government, the ILO, and the community -- all three entities were of good will, were more than happy to participate in the project, and wanted to help the children of Smokey Mountain ... but good will did not make it any easier.

The obstacle from the side of the executing agency was its own budgeting procedures. It was accustomed to financing consultants, conferences, fellowships, and training courses ... part-time teachers, clubhouses, rice or vaccinations. Procedures called for formal contracts, multiple bids and printed invoices and receipts. It dispensed monies only after (not before) services were rendered, and in large amounts. It had never encountered a situation where the vendors were illiterate, the goods cost less than $1, and checks could not be cashed because the area was too dangerous for banks. It had never had to deal with providers of goods and services who worked so close to the margin that they had to be paid daily and in advance so they could buy supplies needed for the work.

The major obstacle from the side of the implementing agency was that, according to Philippine law, (Article 139 of the Philippine Labor Code, PD 442), child labour in hazardous occupations was illegal. Therefore, many reasoned, to carry out a project "for" child workers would imply tacit acceptance of a condition which was not supposed to exist.

In addition, many felt that much too much attention was already paid to Smokey Mountain. Photo journalists frequently used shots of the dump community to illustrate an amazing array of issues: the effect of American military bases, government corruption, a lack or excess of religiosity, the deplorable state of public services, etc. Most of all, it was a metaphor

for the Philippines' poverty ... and to the government a sign of failure. Thanks to the international media, news viewers around the world knew about "Smokey Mountain".

Then too, the government felt that the scavenger children were a relatively minor aspect of the child labour problem in the country and, as such, did not deserve the financing that a major ILO programme would give them. Some felt that the Government had been pressured into supporting work that would divert it from much larger priorities.

Internal issues also needed to be solved before work could proceed. Although it had the mandate for addressing child labour in the country, the Bureau of Women and Young Workers (BWYW), the division within the DOLE to which the project was assigned, was essentially an advisory agency. It had no staff to provide on-site services; rather, it was expected to provide advice to the regional and municipal governments who actually would provide whatever services were required.

For its part, the municipal labour authority was concerned primarily with inspection of factories and businesses. Short-staffed as it was, it did not have the number of workers needed by the project. Like an official bureaucracy anywhere in the world, it could not just hire someone to staff a project, even if the money was there, because the addition of a permanent civil service position would take years. The Manila City Labor Dept. had known nothing about the project during its gestation and was understandably reluctant to shift gears and priorities in the middle of a budgeting cycle. Priorities were negotiated and staff allocations were made a year or two ahead. Then too, they did not have the type of staff needed for child labour work. What could a well-intentioned labour inspector do for a child worker?

At the crux of the government agencies' unease was the basic question: Is child labour a social issue or an economic one? They could undertake a project ... but only within their mandate and could offer only their customary services. Division chiefs in the Department of Labour and municipal authorities were happy to participate if the project was going to be one of factory inspection and promoting adult employment; they could help disadvantaged families to either get jobs or to increase family income through setting up small family enterprises. But was it not the ministries of social affairs and education which were supposed to deal with children and which had welfare services at their disposal? If child labour was a social issue (due to parents who do not have the will or wherewithal to take care of their children or send them to school) as many officials considered it, then it was logical for the social welfare people to take matters in hand and get the children properly cared for. But what if child labour was both a social and economic issue? Who had jurisdiction then?

We began to realize that these wrangles over approach and jurisdiction were partly because no one really knew the facts. Were the children just poor or were they socially disadvantaged in other ways as well? Were they part of a family or were they on their own? It was assumed they had had no schooling, but was this true? And of course, how many child workers were there? How old were they? We didn't even know for sure whether they were boys or girls. They thought they knew; everyone had seen child scavengers, had a picture in mind of what they looked like, and had a firm conviction about why they were working. The problem

was that many of those involved 'did not know that they did know'. To them, child labour was something to do with being poor and its solution was, after all, simply a matter of "common sense". The assumption that things were simple was the biggest hurdle the project had to overcome.

Becoming aware that we did not know much, and that nobody else knew either, was the first turning point. Without convincing facts, it was clear that we were not going to be able 'move mountains' of any kind. We would certainly not be able to get the ILO and DOLE to accept a change in course, or to simplify the project, or to change internal ways of doing things. We decided that the very first thing we had to do was get more information.

This choice was a considered one. First, we knew that research would be acceptable to the government as it was a legitimate activity of the BWYW and did not imply its commitment or condoning of any particular course of action. (Thus we could put aside the controversy, for a time, of whether child labour was properly the province of the department of labour, of education, or of social welfare.) It was simply "data-gathering". Second, as a standard activity of the BWYW, there were staff already budgetted and mandated for research. We had the people we needed to do the work. Third, it put all those involved into a "listening" rather than a talking mode.

***Research: Who is working there?***

It seemed logical to first find out what projects were already underway on Smokey Mountain, what their experience had been regarding effective and ineffective approaches to the people there, and to find out from them something about the Smokey Mountain community.

The BWYW proposed to undertake a formal survey through its research division that would identify all the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governmental organizations (GOs), and churches that were serving the community. The results of the survey showed that there were already ten NGOs, and three governmental agencies, plus three churches.

In July and August, we invited the agencies that had been identified to a meeting to get their opinion on what was needed and what it was possible to do on Smokey Mountain. This meeting produced an even longer list of groups active in the area. There were, it turned out, 28 NGOs, several more churches, 21 community groups (who were organized into a confederation known as Katipunan para sa pag Unlad ng Smokey Mountain), over 50 cells in a structure of 'Basic Christian Communities' organized by the Parish, and 8 government agencies! We organized a second, then a third meeting.

This plethora of agencies did not mean that the development impact was great. On the contrary, as the agencies described their work, it was evident that many were highly specialized (e.g. feeding malnourished infants) or provided only episodic interventions (e.g. biannual medical fairs). The majority of the outside agencies were service-oriented, and therefore were not in a position to promote the capacity of the community to address its own problems or to

develop politically. Only two or three of these groups were directing their attention to children of the 5-15 age group, and only one to the child workers specifically.

It also emerged that the various NGOs, churches and agencies gave assistance on a selective basis (for example, churches helped members of their own congregations) rather than to the community as a whole. There were allegations that this partiality might be actually exacerbating the existing rifts within the community. What was astounding was, that for such a small geographical area, almost all 36 resource agencies worked in isolation of each other ... and even worse, in isolation of the community groups.

The initial response to these findings -- from the institutional side -- was not the polite interest that we had expected which would have allowed the project to move on to the next step. Rather it was the opposite. On hearing that there were so many organizations already present on Smokey Mountain, they told us to stop. "There was certainly no need for another." "Go back to the Dutch and renegotiate a new project in a new location." "At least use the money for something else." We were fast heading back to square one.

It turned out that this enthusiasm to stop work on the rather repugnant issue of scavenger children owed something to the fact that another project had appeared on the horizon. UNICEF was launching a nation-wide programme on child labour. It was to be situated in the same department as ours (the BWYW) but it had a budget and infrastructure that dwarfed ours by many times. Seen side-by-side, it was immediately evident that the two projects reflected the conceptual and procedural differences of their parent institutions. The ILO project was approaching the question of child labour from the micro angle, the UNICEF project was approaching it from the macro. ILO was retaining control over finances and ultimate programme decisions; UNICEF was delegating these to the BWYW. The one refused to provide "honoraria" for meetings and salary additions for participation in the programme; the other offered stipends as incentives in the interest of practicality and expedience. Faced with two projects -- one small and budget-conscious, concerned with the minutiae of child labour in a particularly unpleasant context, and the other which was generous, expansive, and concerned with the more prestigious work of policy in the context of training and meetings, it was inevitable where the attention would go.

## ***Research: What is needed?***

While the clash of views continued among all those "in charge" of the project as to what to do with it, and the cacophony of information, misinformation, and so-called common sense about the child workers and what to do with them continued, it seemed most sensible to continue fact-finding, as soberly and professionally as possible, until the way forward became clear. We escaped to Smokey Mountain and the community itself.

The pall of smoke over Smokey Mountain which gives it a vague unworldly aspect at the best of times and completely obliterates it at the worst, is a good metaphor for the pall of rumour that distorts and obfuscates outsiders' attempts to understand this strange place. Although it was

not barricaded or fenced, as dumps usually are, both in the Philippines and in other countries, and the residents were accustomed to a steady flow of journalists, officials, and tourists coming through in pursuit of their own ends, the human community on Smokey Mountain was not particularly accessible. The Catholic Church -- the only permanent structure -- stood prominently near the entrance, a clinic was beside it, there were many tiny shops along the main road buying and selling the commodities and necessities of the dump ... but those who manned these establishments were grimly attending to the business at hand, and few but the children would look up as outsiders passed by.

We began our community work with another research activity: "social mapping". We thought that if we understood something about the structure of this closed community, we might be able to find a way in.

**a. Community Meetings**

We asked the priest at Smokey Mountain if he would convene a community meeting so that we could introduce ourselves, explain about the project, and hear their views on how we should proceed. Father Beltran had been there for fourteen years. He had seen agencies like ours come and go. He was sceptical of government whims and well-meaning individuals. However, he agreed to let us see for ourselves. A meeting of community leaders was arranged in the parish hall. About 12 attended.

In the meeting we learned that, yes, the community had its problems. But child labour was not among them. On the contrary, most families considered children healthy and strong enough to work were a solution to their problems. Their most pressing issue was land and livelihood. They explained why. All of them, in fact all the people of Smokey Mountain, had been forcibly removed from their homes in 1982 by a government embarrassed by their presence and the attention they were getting. It had relocated them far outside the city, then bulldozed their homes so they could not return. As there had been no industry or opportunity for them to make a living in the new site, the scavenger families had slowly drifted back to harvest the garbage of Smokey Mountain. But they remained continually suspicious of what they perceived as external efforts to interfere in their lives. The fact that they had not been consulted in the plans for this project made them suspect that this was a veiled attempt to justify another removal.

In the succeeding days, we met with individuals from the group again and again, learning more each time. We found out that there were more leaders than those who had attended the meeting. Their absence on that occasion was a symptom of another problem of the Smokey Mountain community: that it was riven by factions. The community groups in Katipunan competed with the Catholic Parish's neighbourhood-based BCC federation, and the BCCs in turn felt themselves beset by the protestant evangelizing groups. To work with one, was interpreted by all as exclusion of the rest.

Zeny Ostos carried on more and more detailed mapping. She met with the elected head and council of each of the two Smokey Mountain *barangays* (official administrative units) which

were centered on opposite sides of the pile of garbage but blended indistinguishably one into the other. These two communities were now in uneasy truce after former years when open fighting took place between the two over rights to the garbage. She asked their permission to talk with the residents.

She then arranged to have a meeting in each of the 17 *puroks*, or neighbourhoods, which is the smallest administrative unit. Seated in whatever open space was available among the shacks, she listened to parents discuss their concerns and hopes concerning their children, trying to hear where the needs of the people might converge with what the project was supposed to achieve. In these talks she gradually began to meet more of the community's informal leaders.

**b. Community conference**

The neighbourhood meetings created the basis for organizing a larger, community-wide meeting. A 3-day conference was arranged to be held, as a treat, at a lovely training centre just outside the city. Those invited to attend were the leaders of the *puroks* and community groups, plus the elected leaders of the community as a whole (the *barangay* chairmen). The specific objectives of the joint meeting were to provide a forum in which all community groups could meet, and secondly to see if the groups would entertain the possibility of a joint action project (i.e. with all factions involved) to address child labour on Smokey Mountain.

The meeting achieved the first objective but not the second. A good *esprit de corps* was established, but the minds of the leaders were on matters other than their children. They were all extremely agitated by recent reports that one body of government -- the City of Manila, which technically "owns" Smokey Mountain as well as being responsible for public waste disposal -- was considering a plan to again relocate the people away from the area and build a large incinerator on the site to handle the garbage. It was pointless to try to discuss the niceties of what age children ought to work, when the families' homes and livelihood were suddenly in jeopardy.

There of course had been, on a number of occasions, lofty discussion among agency heads to the effect that removing Smokey Mountain would, in one blow, remove both the problem of child scavenging and an unsightly landmark. Proponents of this view (supporters of the Mayor of Manila's removal plan) thought that the advantages outweighed the problems. One problem was where the breadwinners of this community of 20,000 would find alternate employment. The second was the technical matter of how to dispose of a mega-city's daily trash without self-employed scavengers to pick it up from homes, haul it to central points, sift it for recyclables and resell them. The value of such recycling alone, in terms of jobs and materials, was calculated at many millions of dollars per year.

There was, however, another body of government -- the Presidential Task Force on Waste Management -- which was also giving attention to these facts. President Aquino had come to power, in part on the strength of the organized poor. Early after her election, she issued a decree that assured the Smokey Mountain people of their right to remain on the site and this Task Force had been set up to develop the area through water, low-cost housing, and job training.

In this conference, which we had intended to be a sober project planning session on child labour, the project was instead challenged by the community to throw its weight, as an adjunct of an international agency, behind the President's plan and 'save Smokey Mountain'! If we did not support the community, we would never be able to work there. If we did not support the project's implementing agency, well... The project (which was still not formalized) was now in the unfortunate position of not only being embroiled in dispute within a government agency but was in danger of getting itself caught between two branches of government as they both began to put into action their opposing plans for Smokey Mountain.

**c. NGO conference**

Despite the precarious political situation that we were in now, the community leaders thought the conference was a grand success. They had never been all together, in such a pleasant environment no less, nor their opinions treated with such deference and respect.

Not knowing what else to do until it was resolved, and still believing that we had something to contribute, we continued trying to lay a framework for child labour work. We thought we would try the same approach -- a conference -- with the NGOs. Our aim this time would be to stimulate some cooperation among them on the issues which were of concern to the community. We organized a one-day meeting and invited all of the outside NGOs and churches. Most did come, and for some, it was the first time to meet.

The group heard from representatives of the community about the issues facing the children of the community, then broke into discussion groups to discuss those aspects which were closest to their own activities, whether education, health, water, community development, etc. The discussion groups each had formal documentors, skilled in 'story board' techniques, to keep the groups on target and product-oriented.

Meeting together, this was the first time the NGOs had attempted to consider, and to respond to, what the Smokey Mountain people felt was their most urgent issue. The problem was, that this urgent issue was now land rights, which was well beyond the purview (and the interest) of all the NGOs, most of the churches ... and especially the project on child scavengers.

Thus the meeting's first objective, which was to try and enlist the NGOs' and churches' advice, support, and ultimately action on one issue -- which, if it could not be child labour, then at least should be the community's "felt need" -- was obviously not making headway. And even its second objective, (never explicitly stated) which was to see if there was a role for the project as a coordinative mechanism among the agencies, was not only apparently unfeasible but somewhat pretentious. For while the NGOs had common goals and accepted the principle of joint action, they were nonetheless in aggressive competition for funds, members, and public attention and many differed profoundly in the methods they thought suitable for achieving these ends. Those present at the meeting recognized that there was a need -- not for a new group to come in and deliver services -- but for someone to work with all groups to facilitate coordination and to help them focus their work on areas of high priority. Unfortunately, they could not agree on what that priority should be, nor did they agree that it should be us!

Well, we decided, if the project could not work with all NGOs at once, maybe it could find one or two that would be willing to be partners. Following the joint NGO meeting, we made follow-up visits to those which were most probable: the NGO that was already working with the scavenger children (Institute for the Protection of Children), the Parish, and Katipunan.

The "hunch" at this stage was that Katipunan might be a good channel to the children and later, with some strengthening, might serve as a long-term foundation for the work -- after all, they were theoretically the representatives of the community. With this in mind, weekly meetings were started with the leaders of Katipunan. Katipunan, of course, thought this was a good idea and strongly encouraged the project to continue ... under its aegis. On the other hand, the Parish was also a possibility and discussions with them indicated that the church was much better organized (although this organization did not, and would not, include the protestants) and would accept the project also ... under its aegis. Again, the dilemma of who to work with and how to work.

At this point, four months after its start, the project could point to little progress. We had drafted plans, only to have them become the centre of institutional debate. We had met with all those on the periphery of the problem -- community members, community leaders, NGOs, government agencies -- but not with the children themselves. We were no closer to a solution for the child workers.

However, we did know now a great deal more about Smokey Mountain, what was currently going on there, what had been tried in the past, and what had not worked. We knew who was there and who could be enlisted for what purpose. We had established some base of credibility with all groups, which even if they would not work with or talk to each other, were willing at this point to work with and talk with us. Not to be disparaged was that these attempts at networking, both in the community and with those who worked there, had ensured that now all at least knew about the project and knew us by sight. It became easier to drop in, to ask for advice, and last but not least, it became somewhat safer to walk around what was considered as the roughest and most dangerous district in Manila.

In fact, despite the lack of broad consensus, the networking meetings did lead to the coalescing of two special interest groups. One group, calling themselves the Smokey Mountain Health Coordinating Committee was composed of all those which delivered health or nutrition services to residents (three NGOs, Katipunan, the Parish at least for a little while, and then much later, the City Health Dept. joined the group). The second group was the less formal "education group", which was composed of those who provided scholarships, books, and other assistance to help children get into school.

***Research: Is it feasible?***

The Project Document had stated that, within a two-year period, we were expected to reduce child labour on Smokey Mountain through four major areas of activity: income generation and training for women-headed households, vocational training and basic education

for children, health services, and public awareness-raising. There were Smokey Mountain NGOs already working in each of the first three; and a number of them were highly disparaging about the possibility of achieving anything in these sectors. "You'll find out!" they warned time and again. And when they heard we were in a hurry as well, our reputation as serious development agents was practically ruined. We shrugged it off at the time, figuring that despair and frustration must be an occupational disease of the area. But it alerted us to the necessity of finding out as much as we possibly could before becoming involved in something.

So when we were offered seven graduate students from the prestigious Asian Institute of Management, we leaped at the chance. The students teamed up on a set of feasibility studies on a number of project ideas, including a scavengers cooperative, a health and family planning programme, and small-scale enterprise development.

These studies were extremely helpful in clearing our minds of any remaining rosy thoughts. The painstaking economic analyses for a scavengers' cooperative and small enterprises did not give us a flat "no" but indicated that, for the cooperative, the numbers of people that would have to be involved to achieve a critical mass would have to be a very high proportion of the community, and that for the enterprises, the break even point would be very difficult to achieve to compete with the return on scavenging, and for both, that several social variables (still poorly understood) might negatively affect the outcome. These studies were persuasive to us, but also later on to those who would evaluate the project. (The prognosis on family planning was positive, but that seemed an excessively long term way to deal with the problem of child scavengers.)

For those sectors, such as vocational training, where no feasibility study was done, we decided to go ahead with some trial activities of our own. We let it be known that we would work, at least for the time being, one-to-one with any group that was willing to do something that, directly or indirectly, would benefit the child scavengers.

## ***Action: Sports Club***

The first to come forward, oddly enough, was the Narcotics Foundation. This was a small 3-person NGO which was dedicated to combatting drug use among young people. It proposed to the project (and by now it was a project as the Project Document had finally been signed, although none of the theoretical disputes had been settled) that together we could start a sports programme on Smokey Mountain. Its object would be to provide a constructive outlet for the teenagers' time and energies, and also to identify natural leaders among the youth who might then serve as positive role models for the others. The plan was for the Youth Leaders to be given leadership training and help in organizing clubs; and then, once teams had been organized and play areas set aside, sports equipment would be provided.

The idea made a lot of sense, but organizing it took more time than we had expected. In the densely packed slum, there was simply no room for play areas. It took six weeks of negotiating before one purok had managed to clear an area of debris and unused shacks that was

large enough for a basketball court. We purchased nets and balls and Narcotics Foundation organized the teams. But then we saw the flaw: the teams were composed of the youth who had time for such activities, not the working children.

This taught us that, although sports activities might be considered preventive, to continue with this line of action would undoubtedly divert energy from the main target group that the project was trying to help. Moreover, sports clubs were implicitly oriented toward boys, and therefore missed completely any girls who might be working.

Valuable information learned from this experiment was that (1) the children's play area was not where they lived, but on the flat area on top of Smokey Mountain where the garbage was being dumped, and which therefore made it easy for them to start scavenging, and (2) the children apparently <u>did</u> want to play, but they were apparently under considerable pressure to work instead. We did not know who or what was exerting that pressure.

***<u>Action: Training for Mothers</u>***

The project document specified that there should be income generating projects for women-headed households, and DOLE also felt that this was the correct approach: removing the need for child work by increasing the income of parents. Therefore, when approached by another NGO, the Salvation Army, to join with them in sponsoring a training course for Smokey Mountain women in high-speed sewing, the project welcomed the opportunity to try this avenue. (High speed sewing had been frequently mentioned by community residents as an area of keen interest because with sewing skills one might be able to get a regular job.)

A training site, equipment, teachers and a schedule were all organized; the six-week class would take place in a community centre about a mile from Smokey Mountain. All that remained to be done was to select the 36 trainees for the first set of classes. In turn for providing the funds, we stipulated that first preference should go to mothers of working children. Of 110 who were identified by the community leaders, about 20 expressed interest in the class, and 11 agreed to sign up. A second and then third attempt was made, but still we could not get enough for a viable-sized class until other women from Smokey Mountain and even the surrounding area (some of whom were girls just out of school) were invited to join.

Even then, the drop-out rate was high. Half-way through the sessions, about a third had given up and almost half were attending only intermittently. Afterwards, of the 22 who had completed the course, approximately 10 got jobs in the nearby clothing factories. After two weeks, however, only two remained employed. The others complained of the long working hours, the low pay, the supervisors' attitude, the need to commute, and the need to care for young children at home.

A second round of high-speed sewing training produced similar results. In spite of our providing transportation to and from Smokey Mountain, reminders about the time, financial assistance to purchase sewing accessories, and intercession with the teacher to encourage her to

be considerate of the sensitivities of her clients, the drop-out rate was high.

Thinking, perhaps, that the type of training was wrong, arrangements were made for training in soap-making and other kinds of income generating work that women could do at home. As in sewing, initial interest was high, but production bogged down soon after training was completed. The problems seemed to be a mix of logistics, lack of funds to keep production going, and lack of energy. Like the sewing training, there was the additional problem that none of the raw materials were especially cheap or easily available in this area of town. The competitive advantage, if there was one, came only from the willingness of the community to sell its labour at lower rates than in other slum areas of the city.

This, they were generally unwilling to do. The major miscalculation of "income generating projects" planned for this area was that the people were extremely poor, that they had no real source of income, and that they had a lot of time on their hands. In reality, there was always the chance to make money in Smokey Mountain. In fact, people would tell us that if there was no money for rice some evening, they would just send some one of the family up to the dumping area for an hour or two. The high-speed sewing work that the newly trained women chose to forego, was work that involved 10 or more hours a day of consistent work, in close and stuffy buildings, under the stern eye of a supervisor, for which they would receive approximately half of what they would have if they spent that time scavenging. Moreover, scavenging not only allowed a person to set his or her own pace but enabled women to keep an eye on the children, to return home at noon to cook a meal, and did not require expenditures for travel fare or lunch. Seen from a purely economic angle, the women's behaviour was completely rational.

***Action: Job Placement for Fathers***

The disadvantage of scavenging, of course, was that it was hard, dirty, and socially degrading. The latter seemed to be an especially awkward burden for men to carry, hence their eagerness to find work, "real" work. This need had been emphasized during the community leaders' meeting.

To the extent possible, we wanted to follow the needs and interests expressed by the Smokey Mountain residents at the community meetings. Also, wherever possible, we wanted to use the resources which the Department of Labour was able to offer. Therefore, it seemed that an income generating activity still deserved further attention. It was the local (National Capitol Region) office of the DOLE which provided the opening. The Director of the office thought it might be an interesting challenge to see if the Smokey Mountain residents were, as many insisted, really hard-core unemployed and unemployable, or if it was more that the approach which had been taken in the past to get then into the labour market was wrong. Although his staff displayed the usual signs of overwork, apathy and harassment, a number were also rather bored by their ordinary grind of inspections and unemployment registrations and quite willing to join in the experiment. He put a team of 3 labour inspectors to work. First, they drew a circle on a map, 1 kilometer in radius, centring on Smokey Mountain. They then proceeded to survey all business and manufacturing establishments within that area. Most of these were unregistered, informal sector enterprises with only a few workers and which were practically invisible since

they operated out of houses or tenements. The aim of the survey was to identify all jobs that were available in the district.

The second part of the plan was to register the unemployed of Smokey Mountain and to direct them to the identified jobs. However, on putting the idea to people in Smokey Mountain that the Dept. of Labour might help them find jobs, they were not enthusiastic. All knew of someone who had tried this before, who had gone down town to the labour office, only to be baffled by the maze of offices, the paperwork, and the contemptuous manner of the staff. Most men on Smokey Mountain had previously been agricultural labourers, driven out of their home islands to the south by typhoons and falling sugar prices. They had no job experience, other than as scavengers; they were intimidated by the city and its bureaucracies; they did not know where to go or how to fill out forms. They were not prepared to expose themselves to ridicule again.

Taking these feelings into account, we negotiated with the labour office to do the registration on Smokey Mountain itself, rather than in town, and then contacted the NGOs and churches on the "master list" drawn up during the NGO conference, proposing that they inform their members and clientele. Several agreed to help us in preparing the potential registrants for the "job registration day". Tables were set up at central points to distribute the forms and help each prospective job-seeker to fill one out. On the day that the team came from the labour office, over 700 residents were able to register.

But that, unfortunately, was the easy part. The survey had turned up, in fact, very few jobs in the area for them to apply for, fewer still that were for unskilled labourers. For the 20 jobs immediately available, there were over 100 applicants for each one. And even with the recommendation of the labour office, employers in a number of cases were reluctant to take people "they didn't know". This intensive effort was valuable, however, in that it demonstrated that the problem was not one of information, or of not using the labour services which were available; it was a more profound one concerning the very economy of the area.

Outside the area then would seem to be the next logical place to look. A cluster of over 15 jobs was found at a construction site to the south of the city and the employer agreed to hire people from Smokey Mountain. But this time, it was the residents who were unwilling. They calculated that the time and cost of travelling daily from the north of the city to the south, plus lunch, would mean that they would just about break even financially. Again, too, they were uncomfortable about going into what they perceived as a new and potentially hostile environment.

Job placement (and job training) for men or women could indeed be pursued further, but as a result of these two experiments, we had to accept that instead of one activity among several, it would require a major investment of time and skills. One that ultimately may or may not benefit the children. It seemed an entirely different type of project than what had been envisioned, and made it advisable to look further.

***Review: Self-Assessment at Six Months***

The research activities and test activities to date showed just how misguided our initial assumptions about child scavengers and poverty had been. But still it was frustrating. It seemed that every avenue we tried was proving to be a dead-end. Either it was unlikely to be successful or it was unlikely to help the child workers. At the end of the first quarter of the project, conscious of the project elements that remained still untouched and time slipping past, we only knew what we could not do, not what we could do. And it seemed that we had not been able to put a dent in either of our two institutional "mountains".

The mere logistical problems of trying to carry out the test activities: no place to meet, no tables on which to lay the maps, no files in which to keep the records, and most of all, not enough hands to organize and follow up made it impossible to ignore any longer the "housekeeping" issues of the project.

There was no money in the project budget for facilities, office space being part of the government counterpart commitment. But the government had been unable to secure a place for us yet. It had tried; it had contacted the government agencies which had buildings in the vicinity to request space, but the official request and response procedure itself took many weeks, as such communications had to move up and down the bureaucracy, and it was done sequentially, such that when in the end a request was denied -- either because no room was available (as in the nearby clinic or social welfare office) or because it was too dilapidated to be used (no electricity or plumbing) -- the whole process had to be started again with another agency. It was, in fact not until almost a year later that the BWYW, after months of negotiation, was able to secure a shell of a building attached to the municipal hospital across the road from Smokey Mountain. Obtaining the materials to finish it -- roofing, windows, flooring -- took another 6 months. Even then, BWYW staff had to bypass standard departmental procurement procedures to obtain cement, which was then being reserved for highway projects, and in the end coaxed carpenters from Smokey Mountain to do the work themselves. In spite of these efforts, the "project office" was not ready for occupancy until the final quarter of the project.

Meanwhile, the ILO funded staff continued to work out of the DOLE offices, which while close in terms of distance (5 miles) compared to other government facilities which were on the far side of Manila, was far in terms of commuting time due to the congestion of the area around the port and dump. A journey by *jeepney* (the local public transport) took approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours. This was especially difficult for Smokey Mountain residents to reach given the cost involved.

There was also no money in the project budget for staff, other than an administrative assistant, secretary and driver, because staff were part of the Philippine counterpart contribution to the project. Even then, the allocation in the project document was for two data analysts and two supervisors from the government, and any additional manpower needs were supposed to be supplied by "volunteers" from the community. This implied a strange logic: that removing children from work would not require the assistance of specialized people, or that if it did, it would not require much of their time. Equally questionable was the assumption that poor and

unskilled people from the community could afford to volunteer their time on a regular and consistent basis.

The paucity of these assumptions was evident when examined, but the problem was that, in framing the budget, no one had thoroughly considered the strategy by which the money would be employed. How could 15 volunteers provide education, vocational training, alternative work, food and health care to 500 children? and how would that yield a demonstrable change in their lives within two years? and, the question that was never asked: how would these activities remove them from scavenging, and either equip them for school or to enter the job market?

Clearly, at the administrative level, both in the implementing and executing agencies, there was willingness to take the word for the deed, that is, to accept an attempt as worthy in itself regardless of whether or not it led to the desired result. This, however, did not suffice at the community level. It mattered very much to the community whether an activity improved their lives or not. In their view, if it did not, there was no point in wasting energy on it.

Apart from the theoretical issue of what staff were needed and how many, the fact remained that our promised counterpart staff had not materialized. They were available on occasion to attend some meetings, but were unavailable to "go to the field" on other than brief occasions or to participate in the routine grind of budgets and report writing.[4] Who would do the future field supervision and work with children? The project was blessed with an abundance of supervisory staff but had no one to do the work!

There was another aspect of this that was becoming increasingly more serious as time went on: although quite willing to direct the project, the government counterpart staff, by not being directly exposed to the scavenger community or the day-to-day operations of the project, had little to offer to programme decision-making. They were missing out on the burgeoning learning process that was taking place, particularly through the mapping work out on Smokey Mountain. For, what those at the project site were learning was that the neat assumptions that they had held did not hold up to the realities of the dump, and the practicalities of working there demanded a whole different set of approaches. On their side, the office-based government staff felt their directives were not being respected, much less followed by the field people. The more they felt their authority challenged, the more they retreated into strong assertion of their views about the children, the nature of their problem, and the proper solutions. Hence a gulf began to appear in the early months of the project which steadily widened as time went on between those who worked in the field (the ILO paid staff) and those who worked in the office (the government counterpart staff).

***Action: Changing the Objectives***

[4]For most of the first year, none of the counterpart staff, other than the researchers, visited the site (the residents came to the office to meet with them there).

And now some major programme decisions needed to be made. The experience from our first trials (the sports club, the sewing training, and the job placement) showed that what was laid out in the Project Document was not feasible. We had a choice. The simplest -- and the proper -- thing was to continue to try and do the project as it was written in the Project Document and to let the implementing agency address the problem with whatever services it could muster. If we (the National Coordinator, the ILO Advisor, and the BWYW Director) remained in our assigned advisory roles, it would allow the municipal authorities to proceed at their own pace. If, at the end of two years, for some reason, the project had not really helped the children, it could simply be discontinued. No one entity would have to bear the blame. After all, everybody was pretty well convinced that Smokey Mountain presented a rather hopeless situation anyway.

This was the 'easy' way out, but it was not a comfortable one. For one thing, it would be an opportunity lost. At the time, almost no government in the world other than the Philippines, had taken the courageous move of admitting to a child labour problem and allowing attention to be drawn to it in the form of a project. For another thing, if something could be learned in this two year period that would advance our knowledge, the Philippine experience would be of help not only to scavenger children on Smokey Mountain but also to many other governments faced with the same problem. It seemed to make sense to do it right.

From this, then, the task of the project was clear. It had to help people see, first, that child labour was neither simple nor easily understood nor quickly dispensed with, and secondly, that addressing it would have to involve a painstaking process of discovery, testing, then retesting of various approaches. Instead of the safe, sure ground of a prescription, it would have to become an experiment. Although it would ultimately take just over a year (half of the project's life) to get acceptance from the executing and the implementing agencies for the project to be re-cast, this new vision was already being incorporated as we drafted our work plan at the end of the first six months.

The project objective we set for ourselves was to develop a "replicable model for the protection of child workers and their removal from hazardous occupations". By implication, this meant that for us to claim succes at least some child scavengers would have to have been removed from work by the end of the project period.[5]

The activities and budget were revised as well. To continue to follow the original staff and office resource allocations, would have meant resigning ourselves to a much slower pace of project implementation and therefore lose all hope of meeting the two-year deadline. Instead, we decided to try to do some "creative programming" with the budget, opening up some funds with which we could hire people from the community and outside instead of waiting for

[5] The original formulation accepted project activities as ends in themselves. Effecting a demonstrable change is much harder to achieve, but it is immeasurably more valuable ... not to mention more ethical.

government counterparts.

The project did not divorce itself from the government. To the contrary, the ILO-funded staff continued to come to the DOLE every day or so and counterpart staff were invited to all field activities. But the project no longer fully relied on the government contributions. The DOLE appeared to receive this decision with some relief for the big UNICEF project was now in full swing and demanding time from the BWYW staff as well.

The budget proved to be a more troublesome issue, as the sturdy financial procedures of the ILO were set up precisely to impede such 're-arranging' as we were now preparing to do. Although they allow funds to be shifted between line items, the procedure to secure permission to do this was cumbersome and project funds should not be used for ongoing "running costs", nor for personnel, buildings and other obligations that were to be provided under government counterpart.

To get around this bottleneck and secure the technical help that we so desperately needed, we used the one budget line where there was substantial money but few restrictions -- short-term consultants -- to hire a wonderful array of trainers, teachers, and a planner. Committed individuals all, they were willing to work with us for a fraction of what a professional UN Consultant would demand. Among ourselves, we agreed that titles were irrelevant, and by and large, the field team was able to maintain a very "flat" and collegial structure throughout the duration of the project. However, the ILO finance officer was not entirely pleased when, months later, he discovered that we had hired professionals in disguise and a psychologist in place of a secretary; nor was the government entirely pleased because it was accustomed to a "vertical" structure (of which, according to the Project Document, it was supposed to be the head); and even the staff were not entirely pleased because the unassuming titles we had used ("secretary", "driver") did not look good on a professional curriculum vitae! And then too, when the sheer fatigue, drudgery, and capriciousness of the professional work seemed overwhelming, people complained that they would have much preferred to do what they had been ostensibly hired for, rather than pitching in wherever, whenever, and for as long as help was needed. Still, this 'redefinition of terms' made it possible for work to finally get under way.

## 2. PROTECTING THE CHILDREN

***Research: How many are there?***

A census of the Smokey Mountain community had been conducted in 1987 by the Department of Social Welfare of Manila to establish a benchmark for assessing the need for and the utilization of social services. The figure of 500 child scavengers, which was set as the project's target in the project document, had been based on the findings of this survey.

We decided that a good way to identify the 500 potential beneficiaries of the project was to update this survey. Those who had attended the Community Leaders meeting were contacted to see if they would assist. A list of ten was then selected who were literate and who could spare the time. With the help of these leaders, Zeny Ostos mapped out the survey using the sampling grid of the Social Welfare census which was considered accurate to the household level and worked out a plan for interviewing each household.

The survey had to be fast in two ways: each interview had to be short so as not to inconvenience people unnecessarily, and the whole survey had to be done within a short time to avoid double-counting, since people moved around so much. Most important, and the reason for selecting enumerators from among the community leaders, was that surveys were associated in the residents' minds with designation of property rights and most had something of this nature to hide. (They might be "squatting" illegally, or sheltering people from outside the area, or not paying their electric bill, etc.) It was only these leaders who might be able to convince the respondents that this enumeration was entirely for other purposes.

We organized a half-day orientation to explain in more detail what was to be done and why. On the following day, the survey was conducted more or less simultaneously in all *puroks*. Instead of a questionnaire, the enumerators used a tablet of graph paper. They used a separate sheet for each place, noting on it the age and sex of each person living there who was between the ages of 7 and 15, and their schooling and occupational status. A sticker was affixed to the house upon leaving as a cross-check on coverage. We set up an "office" in the house of one of the leaders which was fairly centrally located, and spread out our maps on the kitchen floor. (Most of the houses are only 10-12 feet square.) As soon as a *purok* sector was completed, a "runner" brought the graph sheets to this "office" where we checked them for accuracy and completeness. The next day all the enumerators gathered again in a day care centre and we verbally tabulated the results.

The results showed that there were a total of 3,349 children between the ages of 7 and 15 in the two barangays. Of these, 974 were acknowledged to be scavengers. We were astounded that instead of the 500 we had been led to believe (which was a lot), there were almost twice that many. Interestingly, the number of scavenger children, as a percentage of the total child population, was higher in certain *puroks* than others. Similarly, the percentage of children attending school was higher in some *puroks* than others. These findings might indicate a group bias, or peer pressure operating in the various *puroks*, either for or against scavenging or school.

Also interesting was the fact that the age group 10-12 comprises over 40% of the child scavengers, and this group showed considerable volatility in terms of school attendance. Whereas all other ages showed a consistent inverse relationship between age and school enrolment, with the highest enrolments among the youngest (16% of scavenger children) and the lowest among the oldest (4%), the three years of 10-12 had no consistent pattern, displaying wide swings between work and schooling. Overall, the two *barangays* reported 78% and 83% respectively of scavenger children going to school, with two *puroks* having over 90% of scavenger children in school. The situation of non-scavenger children in these two *barangays* mirrored this with 89% and 92%, respectively, of the children going to school.

We prepared the results of the survey and presented them to both the community leaders and our counterparts. Although they were impressed with the results, we were most impressed by the achievements of our survey team. Not only had they managed to collect data in record time but they felt they achieved a high level of accuracy which no 'professionals' could have done. And it was this sense of "we can do it ourselves" that contributed to another turning point.

## *Action: Youth Center*

We began to intensively explore the community to find a place to work from. Every conceivable option was considered. Negotiations were held with the churches, day care centres, and NGOs with spacious premises to see if they would "share". Negotiations were held with owners of abandoned or unused lots to see if they would rent or sell, and then with philanthropic groups and businesses to see if they would give the necessary money for a construction venture -- never mind that there was a ban on permanent improvements in Smokey Mountain until the jurisdictional questions could be resolved. Negotiations were held with the government agency (National Housing Authority) that was going to develop the Smokey Mountain site some time in the future in line with the President's plan, and negotiations were held with the City of Manila which was going to bulldoze it, in line with the Mayor's plan. In the end, it was the City which held the only property that was readily available. It was available, of course, because no one else wanted it! It was a cement block building, approximately 50 square meters in size, with metal grating on two sides, a large centre room and four small storage rooms. It was unused and in fact had never been used because it was situated on the very top of the mountain, in the midst of the dumping area. Built as a pre-election gift of the mayor to the people of Smokey Mountain ostensibly as a site for livelihood training and production, it had been placed in the most conspicuous place possible but one which, because of the smoke, lack of water, noise, and flies was impossible to use for that purpose, even if people had been so inclined. And the community, in a rare display of solidarity, had refrained from using it for any purpose because of its political taint. As for our using the building, the community leaders agreed that, whatever their own feelings about the place, the politics need not extend to children.

For the project's purposes it was ideal. The rapid assessment had identified almost 4,000 children in the age group 7-15 who could be said to be at potential risk, but we knew from the assessment that there were already 1,000 who were at immediate risk -- these were the children who were already working. The project had to prioritize and focus its energies just on those who

were most in need. This site made selection almost automatic. By situating itself within the dumping area, the children the project would encounter were likely to be only scavenger children. The project finally had its place!

The staff had no illusions about this building on the top of the dump being a proper office. Our intention, and urgent need as the project now entered its second quarter, was to get close to the scavenger children. The children were always visible working among the adults on top of the heap, but were shy, withdrawn and elusive when approached. If something like food or candy was being given out they would quickly cluster around but just as quickly scatter again once the hand-out was gone.

Katipunan had long felt that what the children needed (and wanted) was a youth centre. But a centre for what? Katipunan thought it would be a good way to forestall delinquency. We were inclined to agree but saw, in addition, that this might be the means we had been looking for to observe the children in a natural way, talk to them, and begin to get their confidence and then find out what they really needed. With Katipunan's guidance, the idea of the 'Youth Center' began to take shape.

As the idea circulated in the community, an unexpected ally appeared. A group of mothers of scavenger children, who jokingly referred to themselves as "The Ladies Brigade of Smokey Mountain", offered to help get the building cleaned and ready. The "ladies" plus volunteers from Katipunan, and the project staff bought water (water is not free on Smokey Mountain), hauled it up the hill, scrubbed for four days, and then painted the little building. Adult scavengers, truck drivers, and the children kept a continuous eye on the proceedings from a distance, maintaining an air of studied nonchalance. The dump managers, however, who were accustomed to using the steps of the building as their vantage point, now moved inside and positioned themselves sullenly in the middle of the room.

Five tough men smoking and drinking in the middle of the children's playroom was not a desirable prospect. The Ladies Brigade counselled that, up on the dump, being "nice" was dangerous; the project would have to claim and hold its territory if it was going to succeed, and the staff (three women and one man at this point) would have to show their 'muscle' or be at physical risk. A two-part strategy was devised.

The ladies collected old mattresses from the dump and from the dealers. They then burned them until nothing was left but the springs. Standing these on end and wiring them together, they enclosed a 100 square metre area on one side of the new Center, leaving only one small entrance. (Later, an invoice for 112 burned bedsprings was duly presented to the ILO Financial Officer.) This thick wire "fence" was virtually impenetrable. On the other side of the Center, they created an area for the dump managers to sit where they could be out of the sun. For our part, we requested a formal meeting with the Department of Labour, ostensibly to present the first quarter report of the project. It was chaired by the Undersecretary of Labour and was attended by senior officials. When the problem was presented to them during the course of the meeting, they agreed to request the City to guarantee the security of the project. They did so, and the chief of the municipal waste authority met with the dump managers to inform them. A rule

was set that no adults, other than those working on the project or visitors, could enter the enclosed area of the Center. It was to be a refuge strictly for children.

To draw the children, the project began to offer free water. Although food and drink were available from little stands near the dumping area, what they offered was not cheap, nor plentiful, nor particularly clean. It seemed that the children, working for hours in the hot sun but reluctant to spend their earnings on mundane things, might well be getting less liquid than they needed and become dehydrated. To obtain the water, a contract was arranged with a scavenger who had a wheelbarrow and was willing to haul a barrel of water from the standpipe at the base of the mountain up to the Center every morning. (Since ILO Short Term Expert Contracts can only be extended for 5 and a half months, new water hauliers had to be found periodically.) With this water, the children could drink their fill, and wash too if there was enough water at the end of the day. As a conciliatory gesture, the dump managers were offered free water as well. So now, when children came in to drink, they sometimes remained awhile to rest in the shade or to play with the balls, dolls, and games which we had placed conspicuously around. Within a few weeks, there were children almost continuously in the Center, and it was time for the next step.

## ***Research: What are the children like?***

Virtually nothing was known, when we first started, about our intended beneficiaries. No one really knew how long and how often child scavengers worked, who and what they worked for, how much they made, how old they were, whether or not they went to school, what future they yearned for and how they hoped to get it. Without this, it was hard to know how to help them. Furthermore, although the social workers from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) knew the families in general, they drew little distinction between the half of the community that was involved in scavenging and the half that was not. Neither they nor anyone else knew the social context that the child scavengers grew out of.

This kind of information could not be reliably obtained by outsiders, except perhaps through a lengthy sociological study. Noting that the rapid assessment survey had been carried out quite successfully by local residents, Katipunan suggested that a group of Smokey Mountain people could probably do this as well. Although there was much friendly teasing about Katipunan board members making a job for themselves, the project saw it very much in its own long term interest to weave Katipunan leaders into the project from the very start. Enamoured with this theoretically neat approach, we were prepared to hire the 6 member Katipunan Board en masse to immediately get the Center organized and running and to start gathering information on the children. Katipunan wisely counselled us to proceed more slowly. First, given the vicious rivalries on the Mountain, it would be best if everyone had a chance at any permanent job; secondly, finding people who were genuinely concerned about the children and committed for the long term would not be easy. They suggested that the project conduct a training course on how to work with children, publicizing it widely through the churches and NGOs, then taking on the "graduates" as volunteer staff of the Center. In this way, those who were not so committed would drop out of their own accord, it would give us a chance to observe the trainees to see those who were particularly adept, and then there would still be time enough to check out

the reputation of each of the prospective staff before finally hiring her or him.

Two of us, then, organized a series of Saturday training sessions, which were held in the offices of the Department of Labour. The training involved no reading or lecture, consisting instead of role-play, discussion, and games. The trainees worked in triads (two active, one observer) to find out what it feels like to be interviewed and to try out various ways of dealing with fearful children, busy mothers, and hostile fathers. They played and adapted the educational games that they would, in turn, teach the children. They explored how it feels to be a child, or to be powerless, or to be unable to communicate. Most of all, they practised how to "talk" to children; how to literally and figuratively get down on the child's level and understand how s/he is feeling.

In the final workshop, the trainees worked out a system for collecting and organizing the data on the children. They knew that the Center was dusty and windy and that it would be hard to keep records in an ordinary way. They also suspected the children would be wary of any "interviews". Moreover, since they had never even seen a filing system before, they decided it would be safer if they designed the scheme from scratch, based on what made sense to them.

They decided to gather information through short, "spot" interviews and to record them on little slips of paper. They set up a cardboard carton as their "file". When a child entered the Center for the first time, after s/he had a chance to drink and play a little, a worker would ask his or her name, age, and where s/he lived. This would be recorded on the outside of a large manila envelope which was then placed in the box. Each child would have a separate envelope. Whenever something new was learned about the child, either through observation out on the dump or in the Center, or through discussions with others, or by talking with the child, it was written on a separate slip of paper, dated, and put inside the envelope. Each week, all of us on the team would sit down together and go through each envelope one by one. We would review what had been learned about the child and what we still needed to know; then this would be written down to guide the workers during the next week. After a time, it was easy to see the special characteristics and needs of each child beginning to emerge from these crumpled bits of paper. Within one month, there were dossiers on 102 children.

***Research: What's wrong with the families?***

One night, a child asked to sleep in the Center. On questioning, the child confided that he had not earned enough that day and was afraid his stepfather would beat him. We wrestled with what to do. Although many children worked at night, it was mainly the older ones who did so. This little boy was only about 8. He was faced with a terrible choice -- danger of being on the dump after dark, or danger of being beaten at home. One of the workers decided to keep him at his house that night, but then to speak with the father the next day when he was likely to be sober.

Thus began the next phase of data-gathering, known as the "family profiles". Like the talks with the children, the family profiles were designed with two purposes in mind: to get

information that would help in understanding the child's situation, but more importantly to set up a dialogue that would lead to opportunities for intervention. Initial experiences at the Center showed that the children's home life was a significant factor in whether or not the child worked. In order to formulate an effective intervention to address this problem, staff needed to know something about the children's existing social support system, their family structure and how the family acted. At the same time, since activities at the Center had already picked up momentum, scores of critical questions and urgent issues were being raised. The Family Profile activity was therefore a way to reach the parents, inform them of the project and its services and generate feedback from them about the activities they wanted for their children, as well as to validate and cross-check the data that was being gathered in the envelopes.

The Family Profile Activity was conducted in the sixth and seventh month of the project. It used a sample of 100 families of child scavengers (totalling 165 children since several families had more than one child at work) who were identified from the Youth Center registration lists of the previous month. The criteria for selection were set as follows:

1. age (the children were divided into two groups: 7-11 and 12-15)
2. geographical distribution (an attempt was made to get children from all *puroks*)
3. educational distribution (an attempt was made to get a balance between children who were in school and those who were out of school)
4. depth of familiarity with the child (i.e. at least 5 recorded visits to the Youth Center)
5. types and severity of family problems (as noted in the Youth Center records)

After the training, five community leaders were selected to form the impressive-sounding "Family Investigation Team (FIT). FIT was responsible for conducting the interviews, usually in pairs, and then consolidating them so they could be used to guide the rest of the staff when they worked with these children. Two of us professionals participated in these follow up consultations (but not in organizing or conducting the interviews).

The FIT developed a "questionnaire": two sheets of blank paper. When meeting with a family, the interviewer would draw a picture of the child and the members of her/his household on one piece of paper, using symbols to denote different types of person (adult, child, and their relationship with the child, if any). This diagram was intended to identify all those closely involved with the child and their relationship to each other. On the second piece of paper, the interviewer would draw a floorplan of the child's house, its size, and showing where s/he sleeps, any appliances in the home, and any objects of value (e.g. TV set). The house diagram was intended to show the economic status and condition of the family. No one was ever asked how much money s/he made (a question invariably asked in surveys, but never answered accurately) so as not to make people uncomfortable.

A question guide was also set up. During the interview, only the sketches would be made but immediately thereafter, the answers to the question guide would be written on the back of the sheet. Not all of the questions had to have been asked in the one interview; in fact, it was preferred to spread the process over a number of encounters so that a relationship was developed between the interviewer and respondent.

No approach was made to a family, however, until the child had agreed. This was to preserve the confidence of the child, and to confirm that the Center and the staff who worked there were there to support the child, not anyone else.

The question guide for the family profiles covered the following topics:

. why and how the children came to scavenge
. what the families had to say about child scavenging
. what the children seemed to be aspiring for
. what the families wanted for their children
. what the families' special needs and problems were

The 100 Family Profiles, consisting of 165 children 7-15, 75 fathers, 93 mothers, and 60 other adults, yielded fascinating information. Particularly interesting to us was the information on schooling. We found that there were many more child scavengers in school (107) than out of school (58). More than half of the children who were in school had "scholarship" support (money for clothes, books, and lunch) from NGOs (64). Two factors seemed to account for why there were more children in school than out of school. First, at least eight different NGOs and a number of individuals offered scholarship assistance to the Smokey Mountain children. For children who needed and wanted assistance, there was not much difficulty in obtaining it. Secondly, since most of the children were attending nearby public schools; there were no expenses for tuition or transportation. However, because the families did not have regular income and most had difficulties in managing money, plus the numerous projects and activities requiring extra money in school, many children still had to scavenge to get money for their schooling. Also we learned that, while there were a lot of scholarships provided to child scavengers, there was still an alarmingly high rate of school drop-outs, especially during the second and third grading periods.

Concerning the educational attainment of parents, the mode was Grade 6 for both mothers and fathers, with the second year of college as the highest level recorded on Smokey Mountain. What was remarkable was that many of the children had a "significant other" who was even better educated than their parents (up to the second year of high school), suggesting that educated people were valued. On the whole, however, parents and other adults in the household of the child scavengers had a low, and probably unemployable level of education, low aptitude, and there tended to be a prevailing culture of non-achievement. Not surprisingly, the children, in turn, had very low aspirations and parents did not have much to say about what they wanted for their children in the future. Parents' skills were mostly in scavenging, vending (retail sales), and carpentry. They saw few alternatives for gaining income. However, a number of families actually earned sufficient daily cumulative income (the combined earnings of parents, other adults and children) to meet basic survival needs. The Family Profiles clearly showed that most of the adults in the households and even some of the children engaged in gambling and other activities (drinking, paying loans on large purchases, glue-sniffing) which took a significant part of the daily budget. Since residents of Smokey Mountain had long been recipients of Christmas packages and other types of largesse, they had come to depend on these, and tended to wait for goods and services to come to them rather than actively searching them out.

Taking all the adults in the child scavenger household sample together (243 respondents), approximately 33% (79) were unemployed, while another 25% had no regular source of income. Only one quarter of the adults in the Profile families were full-time scavengers themselves, whereas by definition, all had children who were scavengers. Concerning the children's work, 125 of the 165 children scavenged daily, while a comparatively few scavenged on the weekends only.

Together, the Family Profiles and the Youth Center records showed that there were three categories of child scavengers. The first group is comprised of hard-pressed children who were expected to scavenge to help their families take care of basic necessities. These children were very much depended upon by their parents; we call them the 'hard-core'. This group of children were the ones who were often severely beaten or at least reprimanded if they went home with low earnings for the day. This group was the product of any one of the following configurations:

- single-headed households, where one parent is consistently absent, deceased, or away from home most of the time;
- parents who lack a sense of responsibility for their children, who do not have the initiative to work for themselves, or who are very much into gambling, wife/husband-swapping, drinking, wild spending, etc;
- households where one or more of the adults has a debilitating illness or is incapacitated so s/he cannot work;
- broken families, where children are separated from their relatives, have run away, or who have nobody to take care of them;
- parents with very low aptitude or training, who most likely would want to remove from their children the burden of being breadwinners for the family but who are unable to do anything else.

The second group, on the other hand, consists of child scavengers whose families are also very much in need but who would rather not have their children work at the dumpsite. These children started by going up to the dumpsite without their parents' knowledge, scavenging a little, and taking pride in being able to give additional money to meet family expenses. This has developed into a routine, and the parents had given up trying to stop them. The truth is that the money the children add to the family budget really helped their parents a lot.

The third group consists of children who scavenged for social reasons. They went to the dumpsite because of either peer pressure or lack of alternative recreational activities at home. The dump is where these children had an opportunity to socialize and earn their own pocket money at the same time. Parents of this group of children said that they did not allow their children to go to the dump, but the children did so anyway. The children also agreed that their parents did not want them to work, but since they had no spending money, scavenging had become the means for meeting their own personal needs.

All three groups were roughly the same size and children in all three groups felt pressure to work, but the difference was in the amount and type and source of pressure. Although economic pressures were paramount in all three groups, contrary to assumption, the proportion who were faced with either going to work or going hungry was relatively small (about 15% of the total).

The Family Profiles showed that the project should not downplay the economic factor in child scavenging. But, while an economic programme for the parents might make sense theoretically, the parents' limitations, weaknesses and value system made this avenue of intervention very problematic. The information suggested that the economic question might better be approached directly with the children themselves, by providing them with alternate, and safer, means of generating money. This proved to be the first piece in the puzzle of what would later become the project's intervention strategy, or "the Model".

These profiles provided a second piece as well. It was clear that most parents acquiesced in, if not required, their children to work. Besides the money they brought in, many parents were concerned that if the children were not at work they would be likely to get into trouble -- hanging around with bad characters, sniffing glue, stealing to get money, etc. We knew the intervention strategy would have to take into account the parental influence in whatever it did.

***Action: Family Dialogues***

The Family Profile interviews were finished. But by now the staff were already becoming deeply involved with the problems of individual children, and one after another, the Youth Center children were opening up, or in some cases, coming to them for help. During the earlier training sessions, the importance of demonstrating affection had been emphasized. When staff made some tentative efforts in this direction they found an overwhelming response. Now, on seeing a project worker, a child would run to him or her to be lifted for a hug. Even visitors to the Youth Center were sometimes treated to the enthusiastic embrace of a small smelly grimey child. They were at first stunned, then glanced self-consciously at their clothes, then invariably beamed with delight!

The emotional intensity increased as the new workers struggled to contain themselves when a drunken father beat his child, or a mother did not return home for weeks on end. As the children began to let down their guard, the workers saw more and more of how deeply affected these tiny people were by the callousness of the adults around them and how burdened many felt by the helplessness of their younger brothers and sisters. "If I don't do it, who will?" they kept asking.

Obviously the workers were getting beyond their depth. The project tried to enlist social workers from the local Social Welfare office to help in the Youth Center on a regular basis. Although several expressed interest, concern and willingness, none ever materialized. It seemed to us that we were spending weeks on end waiting, waiting for promised help. When we were already so tired and overwhelmed, this waiting seemed especially cruel. Again, the only answer seemed to be to try to "empower" the group[6] to provide for itself. We explored the possibility of getting training for them in counselling skills. In our first inquiries with university psychology

[6] (which was now coming to be spoken of as "the team" and the individuals within it as either the "Community Workers", or "CWs")

departments and clinicians, we were met with consternation. The idea of trying to impart complicated professional skills to a group of ex-scavengers was so foreign to them as to be almost beyond comprehension.

The staff decided it would have to continue to rely primarily on itself and piece together a training programme for the team. During the next five months (April through August), team members who showed interest and promise in this area were sent to every workshop, professional update, or training course that was being offered in the Philippines. These included, for example:

. Training on Counselling for the Poor (sponsored by the Center for Family Ministry of Ateneo)
. Summer course on Community Development (Asian Social Institute)
. Briefing on child development (by a child psychologist)
. Marriage enrichment seminar (by the Christian Family Movement)
. Crash course on child development (by a consultant)
. Introduction to counselling (local resource persons)

On their return to the project, during the long weekly planning meetings, we reviewed with the workers what they had learned, and tried to help them relate it to the problems of specific children and to integrate it into their work.

Family visits were now a regular part of the work assignment of 5 ILO "Consultants" from the Smokey Mountain community. Among us, they were called Community Workers. Their constant friendly dialogue with 'problem parents' or their emergency interventions in times of crisis were clearly a major factor in maintaining the trust of the children, and in helping to forestall active resistance by some adults. For, as the population of the Youth Center increased and some children began to spend as long as an hour or two in the Center, a number of parents became alarmed that such activities were diverting their children from work. We were convinced that as long as children were being beaten for spending time in the Youth Center, it was imperative that a parent outreach effort continue. This then, became the second element to be added to the future intervention programme model.

***Research: How dangerous is scavenging?***

Although the children seemed not to be concerned, or perhaps to accept it as a matter of course, the work they were doing obviously entailed risk. Explosions were not uncommon. The air was usually thick with smoke. Fires burned continuously on Smokey Mountain, either set intentionally by the dump managers to reduce the volume of garbage or spontaneously generating from the methane and other gases produced by the decomposition of the garbage. The latter were most dangerous in that they were not visible on the surface except for the smoke they emitted. Not infrequently a child would be burned when the ground on which s/he was walking gave way into a pit that had been hollowed out by this underground combustion.

Children were hit by dump trucks backing up or dumping their loads and by bulldozers which maneuvered quickly and without warning. They were injured by broken glass and jagged metal.

In pawing through the unloaded garbage they might touch radioactive material or highly toxic materials. Hospital wastes, such as used needles and dressings, even cadavers, were in the garbage. The children knew all about condoms and aborted fetuses.

But the invisible hazards were perhaps the more serious. Children ate with their hands -- hands that had picked up medicine bottles, decayed food, and chemical containers. They constantly breathed in the smoke and fumes of the burning rubbish and plastics. They worked for long hours in the hot sun with relatively little food and water.

Finally, many of the children simply looked 'puny' -- pinched faces, thin little arms and legs. Others did not seem well -- greyish skin, dull eyes, lethargic. Were they malnourished, or just small for their age?

The Community Workers began to pay attention to those who came in, drank, and then just slumped listlessly against the wall watching the others play. They put notes in the children's envelopes; they kept a mental list of the accidents and injuries they saw during the course of the day. But this was not enough.

In order to be able to know what to do, we had to have more than impressions. We decided to approach the health question properly since it was the whole basis for the work we were doing. The plan was to start first by gathering all existing health statistics on the Smokey Mountain children, then developing a structured observation form, and finally by doing actual physical studies on a sample of 35 Youth Center children. It seemed, also, like a good opportunity to use (and thereby reinforce) the Smokey Mountain Health Coordinating Council, the small group of health-active NGOs on Smokey Mountain which had continued to meet monthly following the NGO conference the previous November.

The Health Department of the City of Manila and the district health office for the National Capitol Region both had statistics on the Smokey Mountain community. These were primarily derived from clinic and hospital records, but included as well, the service counts obtained through special primary health campaigns. These records documented that, for children in the age group 7-15 on Smokey Mountain, the most common illness was upper respiratory infection, the second was gastro-intestinal disorders and parasites. Tuberculosis and other chronic conditions did exist but were relatively low on the list. Tetanus, however, stood out as a major cause of mortality.

These findings were, in turn, corroborated by the records being kept by the small NGO clinics on Smokey Mountain. In addition, they were able to supply more details about the prevalence of first and second degree malnutrition and skin conditions, and to provide insights into the residents' health-seeking behaviour and their perceptions of relative gravity of various health problems.

None of what we found in these statistics was particularly surprising, and faced with severe time constraints, one could argue that this data-gathering exercise was rather unnecessary given that it merely reinforced what was already known. But an even more serious question was, since

all the identified health conditions were much more related to the general poverty conditions of the community than to factors associated with child labour, why should a child labour project deal with them at all?

The team argued that the exercise of going out to all these health providers and agencies was useful in that it had, in effect, "brought on board" a major government sector. The series of meetings that the project staff had had with the Department of Health were very heartening for their promise of future collaboration. On this basis, a preliminary decision was made that the project would not proceed further with its own health work, but rather would work to integrate government field personnel into the Smokey Mountain Health Coordinating Council and into the Youth Center services.

But then the results of the structured observations at the Youth Center and the pilot physical examinations of the 35 children began to come in. Some of the results were unpredicted, but were still not particularly surprising: the examinations were picking up an unexpectedly large number of children with low weight for age and low height for age. There was a very low immunization coverage. The number of illnesses and injuries needing medical attention that were being seen in the Youth Center fluctuated greatly over time, from an average of one child a day during August and September, up to more than 4 per day during the rest of the year. This correlated closely with the number of children scavenging. This was hardly dramatic but for programming it was useful because it indicated that it might be worthwhile to man the Youth Center with medical professionals on weekends and school holidays.

However, something else was coming out of the weekly forms that was completely unforeseen -- cases of rape, stabbing, and severe beating -- as well as other conditions which were not showing up in the morbidity statistics -- dislocated bones, perforated eardrums, and deep, festering wounds. Dizziness and headache was frequently reported. Psychological trauma was evident. Official records showed no trace of these. There appeared to be two reasons: first, child workers apparently made their own independent decisions about when and if to seek health care (unlike younger children who were brought to clinics by a parent) and were especially reluctant to acknowledge injuries caused by violence. Second, the service providers and the targeted health campaigns directed their services primarily to those under five and to women of child-bearing age. The child workers fell in between. The only occasions on which they were likely to get even cursory health appraisal was in school, and care only when an injury or illness was so serious that a bystander intervened.

These findings were deeply disturbing. Many of the conditions that were now coming to light were indeed related to either the work or the work environment, and clearly justifiable under the project. But they opened up a vast array of programme options, ones which were notoriously expensive and time-consuming, and which required highly technical skills.

It was on the basis of these results, that the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) offered to fund a much larger, more rigorous study. This study was carried out by senior members of the University of the Philippines' School of Public Health. The results, which came available near the end of the second year of the project, are presented in detail in Part II.

## *Action: First Aid and Food*

The team had been handling health crises by bringing the child to one of the clinics that operated at certain times and days on Smokey Mountain or to the nearby government clinic or hospital. However, they saw a great many small injuries -- cuts, scrapes, and burns -- which to the child were not cause for concern, but which could have used attention. And they had no idea what to do in those times, fortunately rare (3 per month), when lifesaving skills were needed: a child who, working at night, had dropped off to sleep while waiting for the next dump truck to arrive and was run over by a bulldozer shifting garbage; a child caught in the cross-fire between two rival groups, a child in convulsions, a child with an arm torn by compound fracture.

The staff contacted the government health agencies to see if they would put a nurse on the Youth Center team. They could not ... because there already was a clinic close enough to Smokey Mountain. They then contacted the NGOs through the Health Coordinating Council. Yes, they would be willing, but were too short-staffed to have anyone there full-time. They too advised that the Community Workers should just bring any hurt or sick child to the clinic. But a large proportion of the injuries were occurring at times the clinics were not open -- weekends, evenings, and night. And there was still the fact that most problems were minor -- so minor the children said -- that they would not go for care.

Again the issue of confidence was evidently more critical in protection of the child workers than any other, and in fact, it was only through the children's constant contact with the Youth Center staff that these conditions were even coming to light. The team decided to test its now customary solution -- local resources -- by applying it to the health problem as well. A search was made to see if, by any chance, there was anyone on Smokey Mountain who had medical training. Surprisingly, the search turned up several, mainly young people who had been trained as medical technicians, laboratory technicians or practical nurses, but for various reasons (primarily marriage) were not now working in these fields. They went through the same intensive community screening process and period of trial work as had the other workers; in the end, 3 were hired and their in-house training on "Youth Center skills" began.

The additional staff enabled two new services to be added to the Youth Center: first aid and food. The medical technicians were qualified to treat most minor injuries and ailments; in an emergency they could stabilize the condition enough to allow transport to a hospital, and in serious but less urgent cases, knew where to refer and, what was even more important, since they knew how to navigate the otherwise bewildering medical institutions and procedures, would accompany the child to seek care. Their solid, familiar presence was reassuring to the children when they were most at stress. The med techs were also more accurate observers of the health condition of the children, picking up conditions, such as eye and skin diseases, that others had overlooked.

The health workers also began to talk to the Youth Center children about what they were eating. They discovered that many of the working children returned home after the other family members had eaten, finding little more than cold rice, if that, to eat. During the day they might buy a package of chips or a small meal from the nearby vendors. None of this was adequate for

a growing child. Under their insistence, the project embarked, somewhat reluctantly, on a lunch programme.

The reluctance was due in part to concern that food would act as a lure to get hungry children to come up on the dump who might not be otherwise scavenging, partly to concern about creating a "hand-out" mentality among the children, and partly due to the sheer logistical difficulties of setting up a clean kitchen on top of a heap of garbage.

The team, however, devised an ingenious solution. From the Family Profiles several parents had been identified who, although deeply concerned about their children and conscientious in other ways as well, were themselves unable to secure work. The team hired, on a rotating basis, three mothers to shop and cook for the Youth Center, and two fathers to act as guards during the evening so that those children who worked at night could be let into the Center for protection. The water carrier added another barrel per day to accommodate the additional requirements. A gas burner, plates and utensils were bought. These arrangements took care of the logistical problems.

To cope with dependency and the magnet effect, the lunch was offered at the same rate as the meals being offered by the vendors. There were two differences, however. Part of what the child paid for the lunch was actually put into a personal "savings account", which s/he could draw on when the need arose; and the menu was prepared by the med techs to accentuate its nutrient content. All meals contained fish and at least two vegetables in addition to a large portion of rice. The lunch was available only to Youth Center registrants.

The lunch programme started in May. In June over 40 lunches a day were being served, and subsequently stayed in line with use of other Youth Center services, fluctuating according to the school schedule and events on the mountain (dumping was halted for a time).

***Action: Tetanus Immunization Campaign***

While scavenging at night, two boys, aged 10 and 11, cut themselves on a bit of wire. Both fell ill with tetanus; one pulled through, the other died. The two boys had both been in school, doing fairly well. They had been attending the Youth Center; they were "our" children.

We were all shaken. But the Youth Center health workers felt personally responsible and resolved that this should never happen again. Tetanus was an easily preventable disease. It was an occupational illness of child scavengers. They vowed that they would see that every at risk child was vaccinated. But the logistics of this operation were staggering. Over 2,000 vaccinations would have to be given (the Rapid Assessment had indicated there were at least 1,000 child workers and each had to be given one dose and then a booster somewhat later). Since at any one time, only 50 or 60 children would be at the dump, this meant an almost continuous vaccination programme with impeccable record-keeping to ensure that no children were missed.

The tetanus immunization campaign seemed an ideal opportunity to attempt to enlist the active involvement of the government. It was a discreet activity, one that could be undertaken in a pre-established place and time, and was well within health agency mandates. The Department of Health had already offered vaccines and manpower support.

Through the vehicle of the now routine "parent dialogues", the staff tested parents' willingness to support a major immunization effort, using this as an opportunity to discuss the risks of scavenging. This was to be the first volley in a phased strategy to help them understand that scavenging was not good for children. (The gentle approach was very important when dealing with Smokey Mountain residents; they were extremely sensitive to being "directed" and would passively resist or even actively oppose messages that came to them in that fashion. And too, there were those who were ashamed and already worried about their children's work, who would simply be placed in a greater bind of guilt if no clear positive opportunity for action were given them.) The act in this case was a simple one: encourage your child to accept vaccination.

The families did give their approval. The logistics were worked out for transporting and holding the vaccine and procuring the needles. The children were informed through sessions at the Youth Center. The Department of Health nurses arrived as promised. And here everything stopped.

Yes, the nurses would vaccinate ... but certainly not in the unsanitary conditions of the Youth Center! Yes, the children were more or less willing to get vaccinated (each knew someone who had died of tetanus) ... but would not go down to the clinic! And anyway, from the staff's point of view, it would be a logistical nightmare to convince hundreds of children to stop work and then try to bring them all down to the government clinic. Neither side was going to budge.

In despair, we reported our failure to the next meeting of the Health Coordinating Council. But instead of the expected "I told you so", one of the NGOs on the Council, "Youth With A Mission" (YWAM), said they had two new nurses in from Australia that they would be happy to lend to the project, if we would do all the rest of the work.

The campaign started with 3 straight days of vaccination at the Youth Center. We had music, banners, and photographs. All the staff came with sleeves rolled up and were pushed to the head of the line. We were all vaccinated, trying valiantly to show how wonderful the experience was. The Youth Center "regulars" joined in, and any other children who were willing. From then on, every Wednesday and an occasional Saturday, 2 Youth Center health workers and a YWAM nurse donned high rubber boots and squelched out on the garbage to vaccinate, there on the spot, those who were more reluctant. It was a jovial and efficient team: while joking and teasing with all around, one worker would swab a white streak down a grimy little arm, while the other recorded name and age, and the nurse then did a quick and expert jab, and the bystanders cheered.

The anti-tetanus campaign was a success; the lunch programme was a success; the first aid work was pretty good too. But to say that we were addressing "health" would be to fool ourselves. We had made no start yet on the occupationally-related health problems. We made

a mental note: 'rehabilitative health' would be an essential element in our new model.

***Research: Why do the children drop out of school?***

The Rapid Assessment showed that over 80% of the scavenger children were enrolled in school. There seemed to be no problem there. If there was anything the project had to do in the area of education, it would probably be a campaign to get the remaining 10-20% into school.

But here again, the Youth Center was turning up cases which did not fit the "facts". There were lots of books in the Youth Center, but few children seemed to be able to read. Also, the Youth Center daily records showed that there were quite few children on the dump during the first two months of the new school term (May, June) but thereafter the numbers rapidly increased. And they were there, out on the dump, at all hours. They were enrolling in school but it seems that they were not staying in school.

The Youth Center workers thought it might be worthwhile to find out what was really going on in the area of education. They decided to do this with "key informants" (people who were especially knowledgeable and truthful). Key informants were selected to represent the three major facets in this question: a) the children, b) those who taught them, and c) the NGOs who financed their schooling. (Parents' views were already reflected in the Family Profiles.)

(a) Children. Focusing first on the children and particularly on those who would most likely belong to the 10-20% who were out of school and might be the target group for the project's education work, the Youth Center workers found that, yes, these children would like to go to school. Why did they not? The initial reason was as expected: their families needed their earnings or could not afford to send them. But with careful probing other answers emerged. It turned out that many thought they were now too old. How could a 15 year old sit in a first or second grade class? And then, even when they had gone to school, they could not seem to keep pace with the rest, the remark "maybe I'm just dumb" kept coming up again and again. This refrain of "falling behind" seemed to reverberate from everywhere.

(b) Teachers. The Youth Center workers knew that most Smokey Mountain children attended one of four schools in the area. They interviewed teachers, many of whom also remarked on this tendency of the Smokey Mountain children to fall behind. The teachers also observed that, although they did not generally keep daily attendance records, it seemed that these children had a much higher rate of absence than the others. Then too, some slept in class, and others were obviously hungry. The teachers, with classes of 40 or more, were just too busy to give these slower ones the added help they needed, and sooner or later, most just seemed to drop out. Then too, the teachers admitted, the children of Smokey Mountain smelled bad. Consequently, their peers would deride them, and that led to them dropping out as well.

(c) NGOs. The NGOs who worked in the education sector provided "scholarships", which since primary tuition was free, consisted of money for clothes, books, paper, and sometimes snacks (which often served in place of lunch). The NGOs did not coordinate on this, nor necessarily focus on high need children (such as working children). Only two provided

"homework help", and that on only a very limited basis.

The key informant interviews showed there was an educational problem: the child workers were enrolled, but were not going to school, and those that were going, were not doing well. They showed that there was one critical point when the child wavered between full-time school and full-time work and then dropped out; this was usually about age 11. To retrieve them, intensive efforts would have to be made starting about the age of 12. However, to prevent this occurring, efforts would have to be made well before, starting about age 8. Furthermore, they also showed that school was no deterrent to scavenging. Since primary school operated on a shift basis of 4 hours each, half the day was always free.

All children were having educational problems. It looked that we would have to include 'remedial education' as another of the elements of our model.

***Action: Educational Trips***

School summer vacation was coming up in Manila, and with it a number of children's activities sponsored by various groups. A teacher in a private school who also volunteered with us at times, Mary Ng, knew about a number of these. She contacted those in charge to see if they would accept children from Smokey Mountain. First, she arranged a visit to "Nayong Pilipino", a large park complex where houses and handicraft-makers from all over the Philippines were installed. Because she knew the museum administrators, the children were allowed to see things which ordinary visitors did not.

At first, the children were not at all comfortable in this alien setting: grass, birds, strange objects, and so many people. But finding the museum curators friendly to them, as few outsiders had ever been, and as they later rolled and played on the ground outside, they relaxed a bit. (For some, this was the first time to ever sit on grass.)

With each new exposure it became easier, but still there were challenges. When the group visited an open-air zoo, as part of an exercise to help them appreciate the natural world, we had to explain to several boys why they could not throw rocks at the caged birds when, for them, killing birds was a favourite sport on Smokey Mountain.

Another time, the group attended a children's play at the international school. Several of the children got up on stage with the actors, the most poignant a little boy who came up to pet the lion in a Wizard of Oz sequence, not realizing that they were supposed to just sit still and watch. A little later, the Community Workers who were with them became suspicious when so many children were going to the bathroom. On investigating, they found that the children had carefully stripped the facilities of everything removable. They gathered the children together in a circle outside the restrooms and explained patiently that just because the things were there did not mean the school had no use for the toilet paper holders, soap containers and waste baskets. Together, they replaced all of the objects.

The big opportunity was the Cultural Center of the Philippines' summer art programme for disadvantaged children. In this 3 week session, children could learn to draw and paint and express themselves in ways they had never done before. The CCP was pleased to see our request for 30 places, because Smokey Mountain, the worst slum of all, had never before taken advantage of outreach programmes for the poor. It was a big experiment on all sides.

To help the children be more at ease in this adventure, we started a new practice (and one which was to continue throughout the project) of enlisting "*bantay bata*" (child carers) from among the families of the Youth Center children. There was a dual objective: there would be people familiar to the children always with them; and the *bantay bata* themselves would be exposed to new ideas.

Again, the challenges: finding transport for 40 people from Smokey Mountain (we had to use local jeepneys ... and ILO received 1,200 invoices of 3 pesos each, (fares going and coming for 40 people, each day for 15 days), getting everybody smell-free clothes so they would feel comfortable with the other children, and arranging lunches for all ("entertainment expenses" was an item that could not be handled in the Manila office but had to be cleared through ILO, Geneva). But when mothers and fathers were invited to the graduation at the end, their pride -- but most of all, the children's pride -- told us it was all worth it and that we were going in the right direction.

Now the Youth Center was full to bursting with children and meetings and ideas. There was a sense of exhileration. The children were being read to and played with. Volunteers were coming in on occasion to help them with their homework; educational games were tried out. The savings program was going well and more children were "banking" their earnings with the project for the time when they wanted to buy clothes or school supplies rather than having it eaten or drunk up by people at home. (The children helped to set the rules concerning who could withdraw the money, when and for what.) On the children's request, a place had been set aside inside the enclosed area where they could leave their "collections" without having to worry about their being stolen.

Despite occasional grumbling about the Youth Center absorbing too much of their children's working time, the families were even showing support. There were now eight Community Workers (three of whom were health workers), four parent helpers, four professional staff, and on the sidelines, two volunteers (American women).

## 3. REMOVING THE CHILDREN

The idea of creating a satellite to the Youth Center had been surfacing lately with increased frequency. We thought that if we could find a suitable location, we could begin to experiment with the elements that would lead to children agreeing to stop work. So that the children would not be tempted to scavenge, the new programme would have to be away from the dump itself, yet close enough to Smokey Mountain that children could easily come.

We again began canvassing the area, in each of the *barangays*, outside the dump, near the schools, in the schools, back to the NGOs again. What was comfortable was too expensive and too far away. What was on the mountain was too small. Finally, a four-room apartment opened up in a rickety building at the foot of Smokey Mountain, right at the junction of the main road coming down off the dumping area. It would be ideal.

Prolonged and acrimonious negotiations now took place between the venerable International Labour Organisation in Geneva and the landlord of a slum tenement in Manila. This elderly gentleman had never heard of the United Nations. He was accustomed to clients who left without paying and therefore insisted on advance payments, appreciating a little money under the table to smooth things along. He saw no reason to sign the 10 page official contract which, with its numerous caveats and non-discrimination clauses, just confirmed that the ILO was a shifty bunch that was determined to weasel out of the deal. He hired a lawyer (his nephew). We enlisted the ILO legal departments. We bought him dinner, admired his garden, and became friendly with his wife. He produced an ultimatum: he had drawn up his own contract and we better sign it or get out. We signed. The ILO turned its head.

Immediately it came to be the meeting place for children and *bantay bata* going off on their summer field trips, and a relatively smoke-free place for staff meetings. At last an (unofficial) office could be set up. While the ILO and the Department of Labour argued over whether project funds could be used to purchase furniture, the Parish lent us some long benches from the chapel; families sent down extra chairs; the volunteers collected used toys and books from the clubs, churches and private schools in town; and some fathers who had carpentry skills put together some storage cabinets and tables. A guard was hired to watch over these treasures.

### *Action: A Place for Learning*

What would this new programme be like? The main idea behind the Learning Center at the beginning was to strengthen the children academically so that they could re-enter or remain in school. But the means for doing this were equally important. We wanted it to be done in a pleasant manner so that the children found learning fun. We wanted it to be done in a caring way so that children's confidence in their learning abilities were bolstered. Finally, we wanted it done in such a way that the learning absorbed as much time as possible, so that the children would not be tempted to scavenge. The objective of this scheme was by no means clear yet: to try to get the children into safer work? to improve their present lives? to send them all back to school?

The CCP graduates were the first ones admitted to the new programme. Then other Youth Center children who were part of the 102 in the family monitoring programme were offered the chance to join. In spite of nice plans, new children kept coming in, some tagging along with siblings or friends, others sent by mothers or neighbours, still others who came in attracted by the noise, singing, and clapping going on in the building. We tried to re-establish some control. Children must have a two week probationary period: during the first week they were supposed to just sit in and observe, while the Community Workers got more information about the child and his/her background; the second week was a test to see if the child was coming regularly. The Community Workers and other staff would then meet to decide if the applicant should be admitted.

We had solved one problem: finding a place for our programme, and children to participate in it. But now we had a bigger one: what were we going to do with all these little kids ... or rather, little kids, medium-sized kids, and big kids? Having them for one hour in the Youth Center was a lot different from having them for four hours straight at the Learning Center. What do we teach them day after day? What kind of activities should there be? How do you accommodate all the different ages and levels? And our, by now, perennial question: Who will do the work?

Two volunteers from the American Women's Club in Manila, artists themselves, solved part of the problem. It was they who had arranged for the highly successful art training at the CCP summer programme. After the summer programme was completed, they simply continued with the classes on their own at Learning Center. With their own money, they bought paints. The classes made use of the used computer paper from the main ILO office. Within a short time, the art classes were working on cloth, scraps from the dump. For many children, it was the art that drew them to Learning Center. For us, it was the art classes which sustained Learning Center during this otherwise very disorganized period.

Before starting, we had assumed that the Learning Center would be a simple nonformal education programme, teaching literacy, numeracy, and life skills. We had devised a simple literacy test -- having children read from the text books of various grades -- as a preliminary baseline when a child first entered the Learning Center. And indeed, the results were showing that the most urgent need of most children, regardless of grade level or age (although almost all at this point were in the 7-12 year old range) was for the rudiments of reading and mathematics.

But what the children <u>wanted</u> was not literacy and numeracy classes; they wanted 'homework help'. The children who were in school were very anxious about their school assignments; they were afraid of ridicule. Consequently, we set up tutorial sessions, when children could come in and get help with their homework. But the problem here was that often the Community Workers were not themselves knowledgeable enough to help, particularly with mathematics.

We also had assumed that we would be able to sub-contract an NGO to provide the instruction. From our NGO meetings we knew that one of the NGOs, Binhing Pag Arap, wanted to set up an education programme to get Smokey Mountain children who had dropped out back

into school; they used volunteers from various schools around Manila. They used formal educational methods. Although they were not terribly keen to get involved with, what seemed to them, a big ILO-government programme, they agreed to try it for awhile.

They took great pains to synchronize Learning Center studies with what was being taken up at school, placing high premium in ensuring that the children understood and mastered the new lessons. In effect, the Learning Center lessons were school-based, and closely tied to the "minimum learning competencies" in each grade level. This approach was fine in the beginning but we noticed that the children were getting bored and overloaded with all the lessons being reviewed and discussed once in school and then again in the Learning Center.

The organisation of the programme also worked all right in the beginning. But when school exams, vacations, special projects, etc. came up, our student instructors began to drop out or skip days. Like so many other offers, volunteers were willing to help on a casual basis when it was convenient for them; they were never willing to commit. Then too, we were finding that managing the necessary number of student teachers was a headache in itself. Binhing Pag Arap decided it would rather go ahead on its own and we were left with nobody to teach.

We decided to try a new approach: hire more Community Workers and have them teach the children using the traditional "nursery" style of education with a lot of play, games, art and singing. This broke the boredom and the children became more lively. But they did not learn much. Also, we had to work twice as hard to find interesting ways of teaching about the solar system, or fractions or verbs. This was very draining, and there came a point when the children themselves, so used to the formal educational methods of the schools, were asking again for more formal and academic lessons. They did not think that learning and fun could be combined.

We realized we could not swing like a pendulum from the formal to the informal and back again. We tried another approach -- one that was intended to engage the children's minds by having them plan their own activities and to translate their own learning into concrete projects where they could put into practice the new skills that they have been introduced to. For example, after studying the mechanics of sounds and hearing, the children were then helped to make their own instruments out of scrap materials, and then in turn, learned about rhythm, notes, and songs.

While the children were quite enthusiastic about this, the old problems of evaluating progress, curriculum, and ensuring impact was still with us. Were we really helping these children with their education? Were the new facts, skills, values and experiences that we provided daily being absorbed and internalized into their own knowledge, attitudes and behaviours? Although we professionals could draw up a course outline, listing topics and tips for how to present them, we were still dealing with para-professionals, who needed much more in the way of what to say and how to say it. They did not feel comfortable or confident without the actual content and materials being available. We would have a discussion with them where we agreed, for example, that the topic would be 'how to write letters', and what the objectives and subtopics were that should be taught. But the Community Workers had no experience in looking up "business letters" in the reference materials we had in Learning Center nor in finding envelopes; they had probably never written a letter themselves. We tried instructing them where

to find these things, marking the pages, xeroxing the pages, making a guide, or sitting with them individually and literally teaching them what to teach. Teaching children requires a lot of creativity and technical expertise and to expect such from our untrained Community Workers we knew to be unfair. Some of the new educational approaches we were trying left leeway for miseducation, where the Community Workers unknowingly fed the children wrong information (there was one argument, for example, between the children and the Community Workers on the number of planets) and all the approaches left us exhausted. In spite of all our efforts, there was always an air around the Learning Center of our being unprepared, and no doubt the children could sense it.

Somehow, we managed to continue for several months, working each day on the curriculum for the next, developing our own materials and lessons. But another thing limiting our effectiveness was that, as we found out when checking one day, the children were still bringing in more and more from the community (rather than through the Youth Center) and the Community Workers were continuing to allow non-scavengers and not to enforce the discipline of attending the classes regularly. Although the number of children was staying the same, the drop-outs were simply being replaced. It was obvious that we would never have much impact on children who came only sporadically ... the Youth Center was there for that purpose (casual play, while accepting the children working), but it would never help them to change their future ... which was what Learning Center was trying to do.

Throughout, we had been visiting the local schools to talk with teachers and principals about the programme in general and the needs of specific children. We encouraged parents to join us, and it became a rule that after every grading period, the parents had to come to the schools to get their children's report cards and discuss their progress. Our aim was to forge a link between teachers and parents -- common in other places but almost unheard of on Smokey Mountain. In the teachers' meetings, we had also been able to arrange children's schedules so that those going to school in the morning went to Learning Center in the afternoon and vice versa. This reinforced the 'no scavenging rule' because there was just enough time to prepare and shift between school and Learning Center but not enough to scavenge. However, it also meant that Learning Center was doing a double shift. It was starting at 8:00 AM and not ending until 5:00. Staff meetings and parents' meetings carried on after that. That meant that the Community Workers were working about ten hours a day, and those of us who lived outside Smokey Mountain were putting in about 14 hours, as commuting through Manila's traffic would easily take two hours each way. The three professional staff were overseeing the Youth Center (and all of its programmes -- child and family counseling, daily lunches, and health care), the budgets and reports, the meetings with government agencies, NGOs and community, and parents, and the Learning Center (and all of its programmes -- the art classes, field trips, homework help, and the education programme), at the same time as we were training the Community Workers. We had to have help.

***Review: Midterm Assessment***

Eleven months into the project, we were so tired from trying to do too many jobs and resentful at the lack of support that we requested a "Midterm Assessment" to see if we should

change direction. A special study unit of the DOLE, the Institute of Labor Studies agreed to conduct the study; the ILO Regional Advisor was called to the Philippines to hear the report. The major issues in the assessment were, first, the allocation of counterpart staff and, second, our request to formally drop from the work plan several elements that had been part of the official project document (either we felt they would be impossible to accomplish in the time available, or were unlikely to be successful, in light of their poor showing during the trial period). These elements were:

. organizing a credit-training scheme to promote income generating projects for female-headed households,
. developing a community development plan for Smokey Mountain, and
. establishing the outline of a national policy on child labour.

Although no clear direction or consensus emerged from this assessment, there was nevertheless a sense of sympathy for our plight, and a clearing of the air. The government still was strongly in favour of income generating projects for families, so that element was retained, although given lower priority. The other two were deleted. The BWYW was directed to visit the field and to assign staff to work there. A new administrative arrangement was drafted whereby a policy and management committee at the level of the Undersecretary of Labour was set up to give closer oversight to the project. The BWYW was asked to function as the secretariat, and the Coordinator was given responsibility in the field, which acknowledged the *de facto* situation in which the ILO-funded Coordinator, Ms. Ostos, directed field activities while the BWYW head, Ms. Sabilano, directed work in the office. The requirement to give education and training to 500 children was reduced to 150 children. The government was asked to release its counterpart funds for the project activities. The project was chided for its lack of documentation.

Two counterpart staff were soon after assigned to work in the field. The Project Director began to hold monthly staff meetings in the Learning Center. We should have been happy. But instead of saving time, this new arrangement was costing us even more! It takes time to integrate new people into an ongoing programme. In the best of situations, they need to be brought up to date on the approach and history of the work, the research findings, and the experience with the children. However, this was not the best of situations as, being generalists with neither experience nor training in working with children (or communities), our new counterpart staff needed fundamental subject training as well. Furthermore, they were only available two days a week, and had been assigned by the Project Director, not to work on the existing programmes but instead to set up a new one: the income generating project for families! On their part, the new staff members felt like they were being treated as outsiders and were not getting the support from the professionals they deserved. Their titles indicated that they were of a supervisory level, but not even the Community Workers were treating them with respect. The income generating work did not get off the ground, and the staff soon stopped coming.

The situation was deteriorating rapidly and might have led to a staff strike, were not the Christmas season imminent, and attention was diverted to making preparations for Christmas at Learning Center.

ILO headquarters did take notice, however. The Smokey Mountain Project was a pilot project in more ways than one. Not only was it expected to be the pilot phase of a longer, perhaps more extensive project in the Philippines, but it was also the ILO's first and only child labour project. As foreign visitors came, the project was getting more and more visibility. Concerned that its investment was in danger of foundering, the ILO decided to schedule a formal evaluation for the next spring to determine what was going wrong. This would be a TPR (Tripartite Project Review) involving an external team of representatives from the Government of the Philippines, the Government of the Netherlands, and the ILO. This team would make a judgement about the future of the project.

One more task! The prospect of yet another review was almost the last straw for overburdened staff; just to prepare for this formal evaluation would be a formidable job in itself. We knew the team would want a lot of documentation and descriptions of the work, precisely what we had been so lax in putting together previously. We had roughly two months to get ready. Ultimately, most saw it as a chance to finally get our predicament resolved once and for all.

***Review: Tripartite Evaluation***

The Tripartite Project Review (TPR) team arrived in February 1991. For each programme sector of the work plan we had set up approximately a year earlier, we had compiled the statistics pertinent to that sector up to November (15 months after the project started). The five programme sectors were: child worker protection, child worker removal, capability-building (of government, NGOs and community), advocacy and public awareness-raising, research and policy-setting. This is where we stood:

a. **Child worker protection.**
The Youth Center had been set up, 814 children had registered and 80 had been referred to the Learning Center. In its health programme, 111 children had been treated, 368 vaccinated and 2,377 lunches given. In its recreational programme, 18 excursions had been held (586 attending altogether), 3 basketball teams had been formed and the Learning Center team had made the local championship finals.

b. **Child worker removal.**
The Learning Center had been set up, 44 children were attending regularly with 39 not scavenging in over 6 months. In the educational component, approximately 6 months worth of lessons had been designed and taught. In the art component, 637 T-shirts had been made. When sold, these had earned the children 64,910 pesos. Eleven parents' meetings had been held plus 4 classes for them, but no loans had been given out or income generating projects set up. Sixty-three children had received health care.

c. **Capability-building.**
The project had been instrumental in the organization of the health and the education NGO coordinating groups. Training had been arranged for community leaders (average 10 in each of three courses). Twelve community members had been recruited, trained

and hired as Community Workers.

**d. Advocacy.**
The community conference and informational meetings had helped to raise consciousness. News articles and a photo exhibit had been a start toward more general public awareness-raising.

**e. Research.**
A survey of agencies, Rapid Appraisal of 929 families, 180 Family Profiles, 35 Baseline Health exams, and feasibility studies for a scavenging cooperative, garments cooperative, small enterprises, and a family planning program had been conducted.

The TPR team conducted field interviews, reviewed our results, and had long discussions with all the project partners (NGOs, community, the local ILO office, and particularly our government counterparts). It scolded us for our "creative" use of funds and our go-it-alone attitude; it asked hard questions about the likelihood of tangible success within our time and funding limits.

At the end, the team met with the Minister of Labor, approving the work that had been done and recommended that, from now on, we should focus on the core elements of the project (learning, earning, health, and parent involvement) and not try to take on any others.

The TPR team expressed concern about the lack of government participation. It recommended that, since significant progress had not been made on this score since the Mid Term Assessment, the project should be transferred from the BWYW to the National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC), a semi-autonomous agency attached to the DOLE. The Council was thought to be a good option in that it had representatives of other ministries participating in its work and would be able to facilitate the involvement of other departments, particularly education and social welfare, in the project. It was also excellent from the standpoint that it was concerned with vocational training, and some years before, had carried out a "pre-vocational" training programme under World Bank auspices.

## 4. A NEW PROGRAM EMERGES:

Now that the general framework had been set and agreed upon, we had to flesh it out. We decided it would be best to put the project on hold for awhile and collect ourselves. We closed Learning Center, giving the children a break. This coincided with the start of school vacation and so was a logical point for Learning Center to stop as well. (Since school vacation does not mean vacation from work for Smokey Mountain children, however, the Youth Center kept on with its basic services.) It also seemed like a good time to do some serious training with the Community Workers.

Still, with dump trucks constantly rumbling by and Smokey Mountain's garbage baking in the summer sun beside us, the Learning Center did not seem like quite the place we needed for calm reflection. DOLE's Institute of Labour Studies offered "a retreat facility": we could use the spacious office of the Deputy Director (a post temporarily vacant) which had upholstered chairs, soft carpets, and an air conditioner! We brought in our computer for notetaking, chalkboards and easels for brainstorming, our file boxes with children's records and ILO financial reports, and hired a management planning consultant for two days to get us started.

The first step was to review our experience so far in the previous 'Research-Action-Research' phases and, in particular, the results of the research. We looked at our own goal -- achieving a replicable model for the protection of child workers and their removal from hazardous occupations -- and re-thought the whole process, reviewing our existing programme activities in light of this new goal, plotting out new activities where there were gaps and dropping old ones.

The second step was to give our two structures an official name. The term, "Youth Center" had actually already given way to the "Drop In Center", or DIC for short. It was Jaime Placides, one of the Community Workers, who coined the new name for the Learning Center: "Samayan ng mga Batang Nananambukan" which translates as "learning place for child scavengers" and whose acronym SABANA cleverly has meaning as well, "a place of safety". These two ideas -- learning and care -- were what we wanted our programme model to embody. Learning, because this was what childhood was <u>for</u>, caring because this was what all children need in order to grow.

The next step was to refine each of the four components of the SABANA programme and prepare the materials, activities, and organisational infrastructure necessary for each of them to become fully functional. To do this, the staff, which now consisted of 13 Community Workers, 3 professionals, and 3 volunteers, divided itself into groups, according to his/her area of interest: one group for each component (LEARN, EARN, HEALTH, and PARENTS) plus another for the Drop In Center and another for overall project administration; six groups in all.

For the Drop In Center group, the task would be purely managerial. Now that the DIC was running smoothly, it was time for it to start the process of devolvement to some other body -- either the government or the community. The job of the DIC group was to try to find permanent funding, staff, and a community organisation to oversee it for the long term.

For the SABANA administration group, the task was also managerial, but vastly more

complicated. It needed to develop accounting procedures to handle overall project funds as well as the proceeds of the EARN component. It had to establish a more formal staff training programme as well as to prepare to devolve the administrative tasks now being carried by project staff onto the Community Workers. It had to sort out the administrative and management responsibilities of the various partner organisations -- NMYC, ILO, and the NGOs currently or potentially involved.

For those groups working on SABANA components (the LEARN, EARN, HEALTH and PARENTS programs), their work was just starting. They needed to enlist the help of outside specialists, consultants and institutions in order to help them establish the professional-level procedures that would be required to put SABANA on a sustaining basis and enable it to handle a large number of children. They had to design the day-by-day lessons and find the people to carry them out.

This whole operation was going to be quite complicated, we knew, as the groups would be working simultaneously (and later, after SABANA re-opened, would be also trying to handle the children). Nevertheless, the psychological boost we had received from the TPR and the change of administration, plus the calm and comfortable atmosphere of the DOLE offices, put us all in an "anything is possible" frame of mind.

The following sections describe, one by one, what the working groups set in motion during this brief interlude. The results, in terms of detailed programs and final structures, were not achieved, of course, until months later. And in fact, the structures are still heaving and settling, adapting to more children and less money, to this day.

Again, it is important to reiterate that, although the work of the six groups and the programs they set up are described here consecutively, all six were, in fact, occurring simultaneously.

## 5. THE DROP IN CENTER

The original idea had been that Katipunan would take over the DIC and hence its Board had been closely involved in it at the beginning. However, this plan was ultimately not pursued because the Drop In Center with its constantly expanding client population, staff, and activities required more experienced and closer management than what Katipunan could give, in that the confederation and its Board were still highly involved with the land tenancy issue. Although this seemed like a failure on our part -- having to 'give up' on the community -- the project staff had been directly managing the Youth Center as part of the project for some time.

The new plan put forward by the working group was for the DIC to set itself up as a separate NGO, able to solicit and manage its own funds, and run by those who worked there. For by this time, the Community Workers had split themselves into the DIC staff (composed almost entirely of the health workers) and the SABANA staff. All attended the weekly staff meetings, but the DIC workers were becoming more and more autonomous.

The part of this new plan that they tackled was the problem of finances. The DIC, with its food, water, and first aid programmes, was expensive and had been a drain on programme funds for some time...not to mention the fact that recurrent expenditures like this are generally considered inappropriate for externally-funded pilot projects. A number of NGOs were already contributing to the costs of the Center and assisting in procuring toys and educational materials for it (e.g. American Women's Club, and the Japanese women's club known as "FILIPICAS"). However, although they were happy to contribute, none of these was willing (or able) to take on total financial responsibility for the work.

The little collection box that was kept beside the visitors' book at the DIC yielded enough for treats but not enough to sustain any of the work. Still, the many visitors who passed by the Drop In Center were invariably so deeply affected by what they were seeing that, when word got out that the DIC needed funds, two of these came forward as potential donors. One was a representative of the New Zealand branch of World Vision, a large international NGO; the other was from EZE, the German church-related development organisation.

Now on a firmer financial footing, the DIC staff found it easier to maintain the regular services to the child scavengers. But instead of solidifying into an "institution", as is often the tendency in such cases, the DIC distinguished itself by accommodating again and again to changes and events on Smokey Mountain. During late 1990 and thereafter periodically, the City ordered the trucks to stop dumping there. Although scavengers still continued to sift through the garbage for things that had been missed, the bulk of them followed the trucks to wherever they were dumping at the time -- along the sea wall, at one of the other six dumpsites, or just along the back roads and city street corners. On these occasions, the DIC staff, with a fine sense of adventure, put their operation on wheels and followed along as well. They used various methods of transporting the food, water, supplies and themselves but the most ingenious was the use of the *kariton*, the pushcart used by scavengers to pick up refuse from the city streets.

Due to the decline in dumping during the early months of 1993, more young children began to be seen on the dumpsite (of function of reduced income of the families). DIC established another major programme in the form of a 'non-formal pre-school' programme for 30 children ages 5 1/2 to 6 1/2. They used the usual screening, parent involvement, and orientation sessions as for SABANA.

When there was a lull at the original DIC, new research projects were begun using funding from outside. The first of these was an extensive environmental and physical health study of the scavenger children carried out by the School of Public Health at the University of the Philippines. (see Chapter I in Part II)

Dumping on Smokey Mountain was supposed to have stopped in 1993. An accommodation had been presumably been reached between the President of the Philippines and the Mayor of Manila. The area was to be levelled and new housing constructed, primarily for the present residents. However, dumping has continued up to the present, sometimes on Smokey Mountain itself or beside it, and in the six other dumpsites of Metro Manila. The Drop In Center expects to continue as long as there are still child scavengers. In recent months, the DIC Community

Workers have been training new Community Workers from among the scavenger community at one of the other dump sites, Payatas.

Recently, with the opening of a new dumping site, a second DIC has been established, offering the same services as the original: a subsidized lunch programme, free water, and first aid (including health education sessions on diarrhoea and food nutrients). It also added new ones: story-telling, the "huddle" (a group sharing experience developed for SABANA), and on occasion, arranging hair-cutting, fingernail-cutting, and even circumcision events (boys are often not circumcised until about 10 years old). A Learning Resource Center was established where approximately 40 children come on weekdays and 60 on weekends to do their homework.

Throughout these changes, the original DIC has been managed adequately by 3 Community Workers plus 3 parent assistants serving a total of 1,000 children (approximately 100 a day). At those times when research was being conducted, the staff brought in others from the pool of parents and community groups.

A completely unexpected and certainly unplanned role for the DIC has emerged at those times when there was a crisis on the Mountain. One rainy day, for example, a truck that was maneuvering its way up the slippery access road to the top of the mound where it would dump its load, lost its brakes and rolled back into the shacks around the edge, flattening a dozen homes. It was the DIC which organized work parties to salvage the possessions of the people, find them places to sleep, and later helped them get the shacks rebuilt.

It was in the case of two tragedies that the DIC staff demonstrated what a remarkable resource they had become. The first was a shooting rampage up on the dumping site that resulted in the death of one child scavenger and wounding of another. Immediately upon hearing of the shooting, the DIC team had gathered, extremely distraught themselves because just the previous day they had finally convinced the parents to let their child enter SABANA; this child was now dead. "If only we had worked harder..." they kept saying. Nevertheless, through that long night one staffmember worked with the bereaved family, using the counselling skills he had learned, while another arranged to hide the rest of the children in the group who had witnessed the incident in order to protect them from retaliation.

The second incident was a devastating fire that made 902 families homeless (of which 382 were DIC registrants). A 9-year was cooking rice for the evening supper while his mother was off visiting friends. The kerosene burner tipped over, the shack caught fire and quickly swept from house to house in the close packed community. In Manila, the fire departments often respond to a fire but will not start fighting it until paid. To slum communities like Smokey Mountain, they may not respond at all. Knowing this, the DIC workers raced to organize bucket brigades from the few standpipes at the foot of the Mountain to dampen homes in the path of the flames that had a chance of being saved, and for those that could not be, the soul-sickening task of tearing them down to create a fire break. In the morning, there were 8,000 families homeless.

DIC and SABANA staff took a prime role in the early hours of the disaster in organizing

emergency services for the victims and acting as the interlocutor between the barangays and the Dept. of Social Welfare and Development. Then they called for the "NGO coalition" to convene ... and it did! Apparently those early months of what seemed like fruitless networking had not been in vain. Although it had never before been able to function, apparently the idea of the Coalition and of its constituent groups had somehow managed to stay alive. And when it was needed, when people's needs for help finally outweighed the agencies' needs for individual recognition, there were able to work together effectively. With the Parish, Katipunan, and other community groups, the agencies formed themselves into workgroups for various purposes -- food, shelter, safety, etc. The DIC took upon itself the responsibility for reconstruction as they knew that this was likely to be the area most prone to delay, corruption, and disorganisation.

It was a pathetic and telling sight, on the second and third day after the fire, -- as over the whole devastated area were little clusters of people sitting on the ruins of their homes. They were guarding what few belongings they had left -- maybe a sheet of corrugated iron, or some building stones -- for fear that they would be stolen; and they were guarding their homesite for fear that the city government would use this opportunity to relocate them.

To help in the reconstruction process, the children were allowed to open their DIC and SABANA savings accounts to buy food and necessities for their families. The DIC staff, as their role in the re-building campaign, bought lumber in bulk, and monitored the distribution of other materials to ensure that it was done equitably.

The Drop In Center has apparently weathered fairly well the transition that occurred when the project ceased in 1993. At that point, it had already had over a year under its own funding and was familiar with reporting procedures and deadlines. The continued close relationship with SABANA has no doubt helped as well.

## 6. THE LEARNING CENTER

Administratively and programmatically, the SABANA presented a much more complicated case than the DIC. Although it was our hope for it too to be devolved to another agency or local group eventually, neither community workers nor donors would countenance that prospect at this point. A more realistic target was just to have the SABANA set up and running smoothly by the end of the current project period, which we assumed would then be extended into a second two to three year phase in accordance with the original programme design. Devolvement and replication was slated for this second phase.

The first step in improving SABANA's functioning was to deal with the problem of diversity. Those who wanted to join SABANA were of all ages -- from pre-school younger siblings to slouching young men in their late teens -- and ranged widely in terms of academic skill -- from those who had never attended school before and were completely illiterate to those who had dropped out only in secondary school. The family profiles had indicated that the critical ages for *preventing* children from dropping out of school were ages 8 - 11. And that the critical time for *rescuing* children from going into full-time work were ages 11 - 13. After the age of 13, it was very hard to get them to consider stopping work. Which set of children would we focus on? One programme would not do for both as the two age groups had different needs.

It was the Community Workers who insisted that there should be <u>two</u> SABANAs -- one for the little ones, the other for the adolescents. They argued that we would have no end of problems -- boredom, acting out, corrupting the "innocents", inadequate attention to those that need it -- if we tried to mix the two age groups. The little ones were still impressionable, the older ones already tough. Ultimately, the decision was made by sentiment. We knew the children; we knew we could not tell one bunch or the other that they were no longer welcome in SABANA.

SABANA was then divided into two parts. SABANA I was for children aged 7-12 that is designed to do everything possible to retain the younger children in school. It would be a half-day programme, either afternoon or morning, that would complement the half day of school ... and leave no time for scavenging.

The second part (SABANA II), for those above age 13 who have already dropped out of school and who are unlikely to return, would be remedial in nature. It was designed to give adolescents basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with the intention of preparing these children for formal vocational training. It would be a full-day programme, again designed to leave no time to scavenge.

Both SABANA I and SABANA II would have the same four components (LEARN, EARN, HEALTH, PARENTS), but the LEARN and EARN components of I and II would be implemented in different ways.

The LEARN component of SABANA I would focus on strengthening the child's academic skills so that s/he could keep up with the class. The curriculum would be specially developed to use all modes of learning: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile so that children who

tended to be blocked by the standard auditory modes used in school could catch up using other modes. Although homework help would be available, the main emphasis would be on reading and mastering all of its constituent skills.

The LEARN component of SABANA II would have two parts: vocational preparation and survival literacy/numeracy. The vocational preparation portion would introduce several basic trades (carpentry, masonry, metalworking, electricity, electronics) in modules of two or three months each. It was not intended to equip children with enough skills to get jobs, for to do so would be to encourage child work, but rather to give them a strong foundation so they could enter and do well in the standard vocational training programmes of NGOs and government agencies when they reach the entry age (16 or 18). The literacy and numeracy training would also have its own special curriculum, developed to correspond with the trades being presented in the vocational preparation modules.

The EARN component of SABANA I would be a hand-painted T-shirt business. This was chosen because skills and content could be constantly varied and because unlike almost any other kind of work, it offers the opportunity for self-expression. It could be seen as "educational" work.

For the EARN component of SABANA II we would try our hand at a hand-made paper business. The raw materials were available in abundance (waste paper, cartons, fabric, string). Stationery, posters and other items made of "natural" paper seemed to be selling well in the stores.

(The LEARN, EARN and PARENT programmes are described in greater detail in the succeeding sections)

Serving both SABANAs was the "Resource Center". It was filled with books, games, and lesson modules and was a good place for children to do their homework. Started by two of the long-term volunteers in the programme, the Resource Center was attractive to donors. Many gave books, one provided a salary for a person to staff it, and at one point, an employee of the BWYW took a leave of absence in order to work there. The few story books in Tagalog were in great demand.

**The SABANA Schedule**

*Weekly*

Monday was staff day. First, all the people working at SABANA and the DIC (approximately 15) joined to review the last week and discuss upcoming plans. Then they broke into smaller groups to prepare lessons for the week and to write their weekly reports. Children did not come to SABANA on Monday, although the DIC remained open with a skeleton crew. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to LEARN activities, while Friday and Saturday, the days when children were most likely to be tempted to scavenge, were devoted to EARN activities. (We experimented with combining LEARN and EARN on the same days, and with alternating them.)

*Daily*

SABANA I learners arrived at 8 a.m. or 1 p.m., depending upon whether they attended a morning or afternoon shift at public school, and spent about 3 hours at SABANA. This was their usual schedule:

First: breakfast or lunch

Second: The "Huddle", a time for talking, singing, planning (e.g. outside visits), problem-solving, and sometimes a talk by an outsider or a film. Most often it is a group discussion about particular needs or interests of the children, current concerns in the home and neighbourhood, problems, projects, issues. This period builds the team spirit of SABANA and provides a regular time for group counseling. It helps teachers and children alike to focus on overall objectives.

Third: "Running the Rainbow", going through the LEARN programme activities, either individually or as a group; doing a test; doing drills

Fourth: "Break Out", an exercise or active game

Fifth: "Ear Exercise", listening to stories live or on tape

Sixth: "Mouth Music", reading stories, performing plays, singing from sheets

Seventh: Homework Help, working on assignments or doing projects for school. Children can also play with educational toys and games or use the Resource Center.

SABANA II youth stayed at SABANA all day. Half the day, they worked on their vocational projects. The rest of the time their schedule was similar to the above.

## A. The LEARN Programme:

This section is a small window on the detail of the educational programme of SABANA. It first describes the framework for the functional literacy programme that was developed in the LEARN work group and subsequently taught to the SABANA I children. It also describes how the literacy component of the SABANA II programme was developed. And finally, it shows the way in which the SABANA teachers were trained.

### SABANA I

When we started our work we asked ourselves what the children living on the dump most needed to learn. Then we looked at what educators and curriculum designers had provided. We examined many sets of textbooks from officially-approved Philippine sources, American reading programs, internationally-produced programs. We borrowed and bought and perused many creative books, dull books, comic books, and literature anthologies. We studied level-by-level requirements of the national education authority which the learners must meet in the public schools. We read about independent learning schemes, peer learning and teaching, experience-based reading and writing, phonics, and diverse learning styles.

From these, we identified 49 separate skills that a child would need to be able to become an 'established' reader at approximately a 4th grade level. Since we were teaching at the same time as we were developing the curriculum, we opted for a modular-style programme that could be expanded and adapted according to the need. We designed and assembled a module for almost all of the skills that would be taught by the Community Worker, and then sets of cards with review drills for the children's individual use.

As the Community Workers worked with these modules, however, they soon found that so many different units were cumbersome to handle. The modules themselves were also rendered more complex by our attempts to incorporate the requirements of the Philippine Department of Education in the SABANA curriculum. We wondered whether it would be possible to reduce these into a few units which could be limited enough to be easily grasped by the new teachers, yet substantial enough to set in place the key skills that the Smokey Mountain children seemed to need. As we had learned from our earlier work with the children, it was literacy where their need was greatest, and literacy was getting lost in all these conflicting requirements. We had to keep our focus on helping the children learn the skills of learning and gain confidence and strength to survive in school.

This is where we began to really innovate. The 49 skills were boiled down to 5 core reading elements. These five are, in brief:

*1 and 2. Recognising sounds* and *Recognising symbols*
These two aspects may be called skills of "readiness" for reading. At the basic level, they are normally learned in play and kindergarten and are picked up automatically when children grow up with nursery rhymes and storytelling. At more complex levels they are the basis of poetry and graphic arts.

*3 and 4. Connecting sounds and symbols* and *Comprehending*
These two aspects refer to the process of understanding the connection between the markings on the page and the sound and the realities they represent. The process happens differently with different people. All the activities aim toward comprehension.

*5. Writing*
Writing is the other side of reading. From the simplest act of tracing letters of the alphabet to the professional level of writing articles for a newspaper, expression complements understanding.

Using the five basic skills, we built a curriculum which we called the "Rainbow" since it was based on the concept of graduating levels of color. The curriculum was in the form of a "spiral" wherein the 5 core skills were taught again and again, but each time at increasing levels of difficulty. The curriculum spirals upward and outward, becoming more and more complex as the learner progresses. At each new level of the spiral the same skills are taught, but in a more sophisticated way. The learners start at the red level and progress to the orange and yellow and so on through the rainbow to purple, mastering more and more thoroughly each of the five elements which contribute to reading. The notion of a spiral curriculum draws on the ideas of the educationist and philosopher, Jerome Bruner, who believed that some element of any discipline can be taught at any level and that the skill of teaching was to find the appropriate way to structure the learning situation for each level.

"Running the Rainbow" was the name for the activities in which the children learned these skills. It was treated as a game; the child moved from one colour (level) to another until s/he had gone through them all and won! All SABANA children started at the beginning (the red level), a practice which was designed in part to reassure those who knew very little that they were not stupid and to provide a way of evaluating the basic skills of all SABANA entrants. They could then proceed through the rest of the colors at their own speed and pace. For most, the process would take about a year. Children who were working on one colour were encouraged to work as a group and to help each other. The teachers sat with the groups as needed.

The lesson plans for the rainbow activities were kept in file boxes that were coded by color (according to level), and by symbol (according to the skill involved). The boxes were arranged on color-coded shelves in the Resource Center where the children could get them.

**Learning Styles of Smokey Mountain children**

Children have different ways of learning; some learn better by hearing, some by reading, others through building models. Working children at Smokey Mountain, for example, are used to looking sharply for recyclable materials on the dump and so they have developed an eye for detail and the habit of searching for hidden resources. An art teacher who has worked with them says their skills in noticing and reproducing detail are extraordinary. In designing the curriculum, we knew that the more ways the brain can get information, the better. Therefore, we tried to employ as many learning styles as possible in each lesson. These were:

1. Through the senses of the body
   Seeing: teaching through shape, color
   Hearing: teaching through music, talking
   Touching: teaching through texture, pressure
   Kinesthetic (position of the body): teaching through movement, dance, posture

2. According to the introversion/extroversion of the learner
   Alone, looking inward
   Interacting with one or more other persons, cooperatively, competitively

3. According to the object or task
   Looking at the parts: their detail, relationships, analysis, logic
   Looking at the whole: its pattern, effect, esthetics, synthesis

See the Appendix for a chart of the "rainbow spiral curriculum" and a prototype unit illustrating activities for the different learning styles.

**The Learning Environment**

We had to think about the learning program for working children in the context of their total life. The hours spent in the program are a fraction of the time the children are learning from life in general. This space of time may be significant for them but it is just one among many other spaces -- time with their peers, parents, other friends, families, and classmates in "real" school. Becayse of this, we needed to be sure that the learning program was constantly being related to these other parts of the children's reality. Anything that was important to the children we considered to be within the scope of the learning program. In the controlled "safe" space of the SABANA, the learners needed to be free to talk about, write about, read about, think about, and gradually feel more confident about, all their relationships.

Out of this grew one of the most interesting parts of the LEARN programme -- the "huddle" and other times that were set aside for the children and teachers to talk about their lives and their needs. (They also used these times to tend to the practical business of eating, washing themselves with clean water and soap, and cutting hair and nails. These were not added on as extras, but were an integrated part of the programme.) To these discussions, the children brought tales from the dump, ranging from the hilarious to the hair-raising, quandries about life, and questions, questions, questions!

The teachers drew heavily from these talks when planning the content of the curriculum (stories, songs, poems, situations). One example was the ABC of words drawn from the life of the child scavengers -- B for *buslo* (basket), C for cockroach, etc. Games of the neighbourhood, rather than foreign games, were included in the learning modules. An outstanding example of situating the curriculum in the context was a drama that the children wrote and performed under the guidance of the Philippine Educational Theatre Association. It was a tale about Smokey Mountain told by the rats which lived along the waters of the North Harbour that bordered the community. The "rats" were able to tell things about their fears and experiences that children,

of course, could not.

## *SABANA II*

The older children whose education had been negligible were generally included in some fashion in the SABANA I LEARN sessions. This did not, however, solve the problem of those who were fully literate and wanting to move ahead toward their grade level.

The Community Worker teachers were, by and large, not able to help them take these next steps due to their own limited education, nor were there enough Workers to staff both SABANAs fully. The extreme staffing constraints that the programme experienced during the initial months of SABANA were handled in an interesting way in the latter ones. We contacted the principals of the local schools where Smokey Mountain children tended to go, asking them if they had any teachers who would be interested in assisting SABANA after hours and on their days off. Two principals responded enthusiastically. Not only would it be a source of additional income for some hard-pressed teachers, but would be an opportunity for some of the best teachers to use their creativity, which was somewhat restrained in the tight curricula of the double shift public schools. We saw an additional advantage: the teachers could become a tangible link between the school system and SABANA, facilitating the children going back and staying in school. It also would be a means of educating the school system on the problems faced by the Smokey Mountain children and demonstrating to them for, first, adjusting their services accordingly and later developing new programmes within the schools for the working youth.

Four teachers were recruited for 2 days a week each. They worked with the Community Workers to develop lesson plans and backstop them as they taught the SABANA II youth, as well as directly teaching those children who were already at a higher academic level.

The work group which developed the SABANA II curriculum, designed a remarkable set of instructional materials which integrated the vocational training aspects with academic and/or literacy skills training. These modules were called SILKs (SABANA Integrated Learning Kits). They were designed to serve as a vehicle for the SABANA II youth to be able to learn and apply literacy skills while they learned carpentry, sheet metal work, masonry, mechanics, electricity and ultimately electronics.

The SILKs used the findings of the psychological studies (see Part II: Technical Studies) to design remedial techniques for the specific difficulties of the scavenger youth, namely:

- the inability to plan ahead (many children would jump into a task without pausing to think of how to approach the problem);
- the inability to approach problems systematically (instead using trial-and-error);
- the inability to visualize and construct whole images from their parts (associated with their difficulty in integrating intellectually learned material); and
- the inability to absorb or understand new materials right away.

In the face of negative experiences with schooling, many of the older children still know that

education has value and would want to re-enter school if they could. School is seen by them as an opportunity for their playful, creative side to come out. It was a challenge, therefore, for SABANA to be able to provide something to the child to maintain this joy in learning while giving her or him the skills to get out of scavenging permanently. Those who designed the SILKs aimed to provide the beginnings of enjoyable learning experiences so that the child could discover for him or herself that there is more to life than just scavenging.

**What is in the SILK?**

There is a SILK for each trade being taught; each has a number of lessons in it, and each lesson contains a number of activities. Each activity has a fairly detailed guide for the tutor. Objectives are stated, as well as instructions (illustrations were intended as well, but although necessary, they were never developed.) A lesson stems from a stimulus which relates to a concept in the vocational preparation programme. Since each activity teaches skills in literacy, gradually the child's reading competence is developed. However, it weaves naturally in with the vocational work so that, on the surface, it is not necessarily apparent.

**Salient aspects of the SILK**

The SILK is goal-oriented. But the goals are not just those of the programme, but of the child as well. The SILK tries to develop intrinsic motivation within every child so that s/he moves forward without always waiting for external rewards but on her/his own initiative.

The SILK is teacher-led, but not teacher-centered. As the activities are intended to be taught by Community Workers who are not professional teachers, thematerial has been developed in such a way that in itself it serves as a teacher's guide as well as training material for the learners. We believe that children are still the central actors in the activities, exporing and discovering new skills and insights; they are not passive recipients of lectures.

The SILK teaches values. Knowing that the scavenger children need a lot of help in developing appropriate values and attitudes for life, the SILK has been used as a tool to help them see that it is not only "head" knowledge that makes a person, but that the heart must also be able to feel -- and not just for oneself but for others also. Some of the values that are explicitly included in the SILK are:

| | |
|---|---|
| self-regulation | systematic planning |
| cooperativeness | concern/respect for others |
| expressing | recognition of others' rights |
| polite listening | courtesy/respect of elders and peers |
| use of polite language | written/oral presentation |
| openness to criticism | self-evaluation |
| love for nature | thankfulness for blessings |
| obedience | |

Because life is not compartmentalized, the SILK approach to learning is also not compartmentalized; the SILK provides for a learning style that is dynamic and continally

enriching. It situates the literacy/numeracy lessons in the vocational preparation programme and makes them relevant to it.

See the Appendix for a sample SILK module on masonry.

Most of the SABANA II children have been out of school for quite some time. It took us awhile to realize that, in expressing their desire to go back to school, they were yearning not just for education, but for the structures and strictures of the formal school system. It seems that being in a classroom with an adult teacher to guide them is familiar to them as the way one is "supposed" to learn and somehow is a boost to their morale. They have said that the feeling they get when others see them as "regular students" gives them the motivation to dress up, keep clean, and 'go straight'; they want to project themselves as ones with a goal. In addition, and perhaps even more important, is their preference for formal-type instructional methods, such as having to write legibly, observing correct standards of punctuation, spelling, etc. For these reasons, the LEARN programme of SABANA II has evolved to be much more structured than for SABANA I. Still, a wide variety of informal education techniques (poems, songs, drama, and personal creative expression) are included in the SILKs to stimulate the children intellectually.

**Training the Teachers**

At SABANA, teacher training was a continuous process. There were three activities that were essential ingredients in this. These were: (1) workshops on methods, in which the Community Workers who were being trained as SABANA's teachers were treated as professionals and had a chance to share with other teachers, (2) observation of other educational experiments, and (3) regular planning and evaluation with sympathetic supervision and teamwork.

*Workshops on methods.* Just as for the child learners, the learning process has to be fun also for the Community Workers who were becoming teachers. The thing that did the most to make it fun for the teachers was attending workshops where they learned how to put action and music and dance and colour into their teaching. By participating on a par with professional teachers, they gained confidence and self-respect. On one occasion they were invited to give a pedagogical demonstration for a workshop for a prestigious private high school in Manila. The organizor of the workshop welcomed the SABANA teachers and made them feel important within the network of creative teachers that he supported. The sense that they were a part of a modern trend, and were recognized among professional teachers helped the Community Workers and gave important exposure to the project.

*Observing other educational experiments.* Twice the Community Workers went to observe "START", an NGO project run by a Lutheran charity outside Manila. The teachers of this programme demonstrated the methods of 'experience-based learning' and 'peer learning'. They gave SABANA a set of activities for learning English. Some of the SABANA teachers visited a public school which was also using peer teaching, a technique in which the teacher is seen as a resource person and manager of the learning situation, while the actual instruction happens in small groups of six children with a slightly more advanced child teaching the lesson.

*Regular planning and TEAMWORK and sympathetic supervision.* The workshops and other exchanges gave us all much needed spurts of inspiration. But it was the daily lesson preparation and weekly planning and evaluation sessions that contributed most to stability and steady progress. Detailed lesson plans were created to guide the community teachers through the modules. A retired supervisor from the Department of Education, who was a specialist in curriculum design, joined us as a part of the team. She instructed, encouraged and inspired the community workers in their teaching. She was a rock of stability and her presence was reassuring to everyone in the project.

## B. The EARN Program

The objectives of the EARN Programme were to

. provide the child with money to contribute to his or her own needs;
. develop practical production skills and an understanding of business management
. provide exposure to structured work
. promote values of discipline, efficiency, pride in quality production
. encourage the habit of savings

EARN is essentially an educational programme. It is using the medium of work to inculcate values, skills, and knowledge that will be useful for the child in the future, A major developmental constraint operating on the Smokey Mountain children is their lack of good work role models. They are accustomed to seeing adults work when they feel like it or only when they need the money, spend the money immediately and on non-constructive or unhealthy items, and to chafe against any supervision or direction. Without an alternative image, the children will grow up with the same employment problems as their parents.

EARN seeks to instill new, more desireable work skills through two means: a highly structured programme (hours, times, tasks) and an accompanying values education effort. The work skills it tries to inculcate are:

Understanding and use of work safety concepts
- reading signs, symbols and precautions
- knowing first aid
- keeping physically fit

Understanding and incorporating work attitudes and ethics
- meeting standards and quality control
- thrift and savings
- hard work, patience, perseverance, consistency
- discipline
- cleanliness and orderliness
- care for materials
- punctuality
- time management
- precision and accuracy

Enjoying work
- aesthetic appreciation
- teamwork and cooperation
- self-expression and creativity

Alternative, safe work offers a vital, if not the most critical, key to child worker removal. But it is also extremely difficult. It was made even more difficult in the case of children whose work brings in a comparatively high income, as in the case of scavenging.

Because of the economic hardships that most families on Smokey Mountain were experiencing, and the bind that they are in given their background and attitudes, we recognize that there is no easy way for child scavengers to simply turn their backs on scavenging. For a number of reasons, and for some, starting at a very young age, the children became involved in scavenging. As they became experts in picking up and sorting out which materials to retrieve and sell to buyers, they gained money and developed feelings of (important to them) independence, self-reliance, responsibility for their families and so on. What we see now is a whole complex configuration of factors (economic, emotional and social) pushing child scavengers to continue scavenging.

While work exposes them to serious physical and emotional hazards, abrupt withdrawal from work would leave the children with a dangerous vacuum in their lives. What would they do their non-school time? Drugs and drink abound on Smokey Mountain and gangs are active in the surrounding area. How would they feel about "letting down" their families? Where would they play and meet their friends if not on the dump? To withdraw the means by which the children feel productive and worthwhile is to leave them dangerously vulnerable. They might also go hungry.

The SABANA EARN programme is a direct response to this need of child scavengers to generate income. It incorporates two aspects of work: an opportunity to make money for personal and non-routine family needs, and (from the role that child work played in traditional society) an opportunity to gradually become acquainted with and equipped for adult occupations. In this way, it is both immediate and developmental.

It is not generally feasible to find a work "alternative" that is as remunerative as what the children did before. If there had been such, they would have done it themselves. But SABANA looked carefully at the whole complex of benefits that scavenging work provided for the children and determined that, for most children, the wage was one part but not the exclusive factor in their decision. The team undertook a painstaking process of dialogue with the children about their earnings and what they bought with them, and found that in large part, the money went for their own food, clothes, entertainment, and school expenses. In a similar series of dialogues with the parents, the team found that the children's money "helped out" on a daily basis, but was really "needed" when there was a crisis, such as for medicine when someone was sick, since in 80% of the families, there was another breadwinner. This person was not always working, but (and this is where the team took a moral position) given this was Smokey Mountain and the dump was always there, that person could work instead of the child.

By offsetting some of the expenses that the child had, the team reasoned that the wage that most children had to have could be substantially less than what they were getting from scavenging. The average daily wage of a child scavenger was, at that time, 50 pesos. By removing the personal expenses: of food (by offering free food to the SABANA children), of entertainment (by providing "events" and opportunities for group fun in SABANA), of school (by ensuring that all were covered by the education-related NGOs' scholarship programmes that provided for supplies and uniforms), there remained the cost only of clothes. By removing one of the family expenditures: of health care and medications (by enlisting the family in the

Smokey Mountain Health Coordinating Council's drug cooperative), the families' needs were somewhat lessened. When this scheme was put to the children, the SABANA registrants decided that it actually made sense, and that they could get by with 30 pesos per day in wages. The reaction of the families, of course, ran the full range from enthusiastic support to adamant refusal.

The next task was to find an income generating activity that would net the children 30 pesos per day in wages -- still a substantial amount. The team assigned the criteria:

. clean
. safe
. not repetitive (which would be mind-deadening)
. not strenuous
. educational

Although a number of doubtlessly well-meaning individuals offered to "hire" SABANA to do piece work for their factories, assembling the same Christmas ornament over and over again at breakneck speed for 5 hours at 6 pesos an hour was not our idea of appropriate work for children. What they were interested in was labour that was cheaper than machines or adults. We refused.

The only work that we have been able to think of that fits all criteria is art. And in particular, art for the luxury market.

SABANA I decided to do hand-painted t-shirts, and when it was set up roughly 9 months later, SABANA II to take up hand-made paper. Deciding is only the first step. No one in SABANA knew anything about producing these items. It was in searching out artists, marketing agents, design consultants, suppliers, outlets, and teachers that the real opportunities opened up. Almost all who were approached were enthusiastic about working with ex-scavenger children. Although not all could quite stomach being so close to Smokey Mountain, there were enough who could to keep a steady stream of volunteer consultants in SABANA to teach the children the techniques of art and decoration, and teach the team the techniques of marketing and managing.

During the period of the formal project, the EARN programme neither completely paid for itself nor ran smoothly. In fact, EARN was always the biggest headache of all the programme sectors. But it was also the winner. The Smokey Mountain t-shirts with their colorful unique designs are seen widely. The children were proud of their names on the bottom. And the Smokey Mountain hand-made paper has been prominently displayed in national exhibitions (President Aquino visited the booth one year). SABANA is known on the outside, not for its education, but for its unusual income generating activities.

### C. The PARENT Programme

Although SABANA is primarily and ostensibly for the children, at the same time, it serves as a shared experience, a common ground on which the project staff and the families can meet. It is a place where parents can discuss their problems and aspirations for their children.

The aim of the PARENT component is to assist and encourage the parents (or other significant adults, such as grandmothers, uncles, who are stand-in parents) to become effective providers and role models for their children. Most importantly, the SABANA is a venue for educating the families and community regarding the rights and safety of children.

More specifically, the objectives are:

. to get parents to allow their children to participate in the DIC and SABANA programmes;

. to ensure that the parents do not relinquish normal parental responsibilities to SABANA (such as providing meals);

. to engage the parents <u>with</u> SABANA in the rehabilitation and strengthening of their children;

. to help parents understand and internalize that scavenging was dangerous to their children at present, and was dangerous to their children's future;

. to get parents to release their children from scavenging, and then to monitor them so that they do not return;[7]

. to help parents understand that it is not right that their children bear the responsibility of supporting the family;

. to assist parents in taking back onto their own shoulders the responsibility of family support;

. to help parents cope with their children's behaviour in non-violent ways.

Almost none of these objectives can be approached directly. These messages have to be woven into discussion in the course of meetings, classes, field trips, and one-on-one talks. They have to be repeated over and over again. Above all, the tone cannot be condemnatory or the parents will simply "turn off" and become unapproachable. Even worse, since they cannot respond to our criticism by retaliating directly against us, some will retaliate instead against their

---

[7] (we took the position that it was alright for the parents to scavenge; although dangerous for adults, they had the judgement to manage it, but more importantly, their mature bodies were not as likely to be affected by the contaminants)

children.

*Activities.* There was only one set of activities that was carried out directly "for" the parents -- a series of classes on topics that they had identified. These included: how to make and use home-style herbal remedies, parent effectiveness training, health topics of interest, and marriage enrichment. Due to the press of time, these are not now being held. However, they are an easy way to involve an outside group or a government agency (as was done in the case of the parent effectiveness training, where the Dept. of Social Welfare and Development presented a course that it had already developed.)

All the rest of the activities were couched in terms of their children. There were several types of these:

a. Home visits.

These had grown out of the original Family Profile activity. No longer were they primarily for data-gathering, but instead a means of dealing with difficulties or to seek help or just informational. The difficulties might lie with the parent (extreme punishment, leaving the children alone) or with the child (poor school attendance, acting out).

Certain Community Workers are particularly good in the counselling role, and are enlisted whenever a family needs psychological support. The CWs also continue to make home visits when a child applies for admission to SABANA. Although the families of all SABANA children are supposed to be visited weekly, the press of time means that those with special problems are visited more often. Nonetheless, home visits have remained a substantial part of the CWs work schedule and the programme as a whole.

b. Parent meetings.

Periodically, parents are invited to SABANA. This is usually associated with some specific event, such as children entering school or receiving report cards. It is an occasion when anything can happen. Some have been wrenching encounters when a parent, overcome by his or her helplessness to do what is right by the child, sobs openly. Others have been loud and angry disputes. Some meetings go on for hours.

Although initially we wanted to have monthly meetings, we have found that this is too often and attendance dwindles. We find it better to wait for a reason, and then make an all-out effort to get all parents to attend.

c. Parent Assistants.

The DIC had started the practice of involving parents in providing services. However, SABANA could not afford to actually hire them as the DIC had, and furthermore did not wish to because to give a job to one but not to another would cause hard feelings within the group. An effective compromise, at least for awhile, was to hire a parent for a month or two to help out

with some task, such as preparing the children's snacks, weighing them, or listening to them read, then hiring another one. This brought them in as integral parts of SABANA so that they became familiar with it, and seemed to give some sense of prestige to the participating parents.

d. Parents' Group.

One of the fond hopes of the team was to groom the parents of the SABANA children to act as a Board of Directors for SABANA. In order to make policy decisions about the centre, they needed to be fully informed about what it was doing and what it was trying to accomplish. They needed to have access to financial information and personnel decisions. SABANA staff also hoped that the Parents' Group would become the "outreach arm" of SABANA, drawing more children and parents into the programme and providing information to the community at large. Toward this end, parents who had been particularly interested and active in the monthly meetings were sometimes involved in the training sessions for the Community Workers. Staff also met with the nascent parents' group for some time, but this ultimately became too time-consuming to be pursued.

During the period of this case study, the parents were not able to move toward this new role. One could speculate that this was in part due to the 'culture of poverty' of Smokey Mountain which fostered passivity rather than leadership, factors which are described more fully in the economic study in Part II.

## D. Administration

After the Tripartite Evaluation, when control of the project passed from the Bureau of Women and Young Workers (BWYW) to the National Manpower and Youth Commission (NMYC), NMYC immediately assigned a team to the field. The field team consisted of: a Project Manager to take over direction of the project from the ILO Coordinator and three trainers to run the SABANA II programme; financial and secretarial support was to be provided at the main office.

The staff were pleased ... but a bit stunned. True enough, for over a year and a half we had complained about lack of government involvement, but now the thought of sharing control was not so appealing. We grumbled that such an abrupt 'take-over' of a project already in mid-stream, by people who had no experience with child labour, and who knew nothing about the model being tested was going to cause no end of delays. However, for the most part, it proved otherwise. Those who were assigned by NMYC were some of their most experienced field workers; they were congenial, concerned individuals and they knew a great deal about vocational education.

To help the NMYC staff to begin to feel the same impelling emotional connection to the children that had made it bearable for us to continue working at the dump, we tried to involve them in the direct work with the children and parents. An arrangement was worked out whereby the newcomers were "paired" with older staff so the former could be seen to be in

charge, and therefore not lose face, while they were learning what to do. Again, when NMYC insisted that official requirements necessitated that project funds be passed through government rather than directly from ILO to the project, and that elaborate reports be prepared, we did not argue but literally walked them through the whole process of ordinary purchases (such as buying water) and trying to fit the resulting transactions into the official forms. A compromise emerged: two sets of books. One set was kept by the NMYC Project Director for reporting to the government; the other was kept by the ILO Coordinator for unofficial, daily use and ILO reporting.

Often, however, the NMYC managers had other demands on their time unrelated to the project. This meant that much of the actual supervision of the Community Workers and the running of the DIC and SABANA continued to rest where it always had.

One area of disagreement remained substantial, however. What was to happen to SABANA when the project period was completed? To us, the most feasible approach seemed to be to devolve the project to an NGO (or several), or maintain it under the multi-agency "council" of NMYC. However, a recent government directive had called for as many activities as possible to be decentralized; accordingly, our project should be handed over to the local job training office in the City of Manila. Not only would this office supervise it, but ultimately be prepared to take all responsibility for staffing and financing it.

There were several problems with this. Child workers on Smokey Mountain were not a high priority nor a political constitutuency of the City of Manila. Therefore, the City would be unlikely to appropriate the necessary funding for the project. Even if it were continued -- and that was unlikely in that the Mayor was in favour of putting such children in orphanages in the countryside where they would be out of public, particularly media, view -- the project would be divided up between the local departments of health, education, social welfare, etc. (the same ones which had been unable to provide services when requested to do so earlier). Finally, there would almost certainly be no place for the Community Workers, partly because of the lack of a staff slot of this nature in the city government roster, and partly because most would not qualify, since they did not have a high school diploma. Who would work with the children??

What had been a rather theoretical dispute became a very real one, when near the end of the second year of the project, the Netherlands government indicated that its funding priorities had shifted from urban to rural work. It was a blow. There would be no "phase two"; no time for the model to prove itself; and no time to devolve the project properly so that it could continue to serve the child scavengers.

But we had had so much experience with roadblocks, walls, and failure by then, that we figured that there might be a way out of this one as well. We began to look for NGOs that might either be able to fund SABANA or to assist the municipal government in administering it. Nobody was interested. We asked the NGO (Binhing Pangarap) that was trying to develop a back-to-school programme for older (non-scavenger) children on Smokey Mountain to see if it would take on the SABANA II LEARN programme. It thought awhile but then refused,

as it wanted to pursue its own scheme. Some did not want to take on such an ambitious a venture. Most were not willing to work with government in any way. There was one that we knew would be perfect -- Educational Research Development (ERDA) -- because it had a community-based philosophy very similar to ours, were especially accomplished in working with community people and had already worked closely with us as part of the education group of the NGO coalition. No, they were not interested either because they had too many other activities at the time.

We decided we would have to "lure" them. The staff knew that ERDA had good financial management capacity. So we asked if they would mind auditing our books. They agreed and sent over a veteran bookkeeper to spend a week going through ours. She got to know us ... and the children. We approached ERDA again. Would they mind training the DIC staff so that they could keep their own books in good order? It would only be two weeks. They were pleased to assist again. The DIC workers charmed the trainers with their enthusiasm and the range of activities they were attempting up on top of the dump.

Then we approached ERDA the third time: because of the imminent loss of our funding, we were going to have to devolve faster than we had expected; would they work with us all for three months or so to train the Community Workers in management and NGO administration?

How could they refuse? A corps of ERDA's top trainers started weekly intensive sessions at SABANA and an ERDA staff member, hired with project money, moved in to streamline day-to-day administration. By further trimming of our budget, we were able to set aside enough funds then to offer ERDA a contract for the succeeding year to "help" the NMYC (or City) administer the work. SABANA was saved!

Although the dispute was never technically resolved over whether the local government or an NGO would ultimately take over the project at the end of the two year period of ILO implementation, it was covered nicely by both parties saying that they were pleased to collaborate. Until now, the municipal government still does not have the staff nor resources to run the project, so by default it is now fully managed by ERDA. Because of its importance for demonstration purposes, the ILO itself contributed funds to support the work of ERDA for another 18 months.

Since international funding has ceased, the programme has continued but at a reduced level, commensurate with the staffing and budgetary constraints of ERDA. It has has to curtail its 'outreach' work, particularly attempts to replicate the work in other dumpsites and to embed the concepts and approaches in the ongoing child labour work of the government.

## 7. THE SMOKEY MOUNTAIN MODEL

Below is a brief outline of the Smokey Mountain model (its goal, rationale, and key elements) as it looked at the time the ILO project was officially closed at the end of three years.

*The goal*

Child work is bad if it hurts children now, or if it harms their chances for the future. This is the gist of ILO Convention 138 concerning the minimum age for employment. Scavenging on Smokey Mountain was "bad" for children on both counts. It deserved to be stopped, but what made 'removing children from work' an inadequate goal was that the alternative was much worse! Not working meant not helping the family, not going to school, and sometimes not even eating.

The goal that this model seeks to achieve is: **to improve the children's present well-being and future life chances.** A helping group must ensure that its efforts do not make the children any worse off than they were before. Only then can it seek to heal the damage that has been done. And healing is the ultimate aim.

*The strategy*

The key question that must be answered before any child labour strategy can be developed is: 'why are the children working?'. In the Smokey Mountain case, all of the research had pointed in one direction: **the children are working because they feel they have to.** In some instances it was financial pressure, others a sense of duty, and far too often it was plainly coercion by parents. The scavenger children of Smokey Mountain were, in effect, "forced labour", since as children, they were still enclosed within and dependent upon some sort of family. And it was this family that implicitly or explicitly required them to work. As children, they were still too young to know the alternatives. And without an alternative, they had no choice but to work.

The rationale, then behind the Smokey Mountain Model, is that to "force" them to stop working would only add to the pressure they already experience. Therefore, the more humane way to stop their working was to do the opposite: to remove the pressures from the children.

Four major sources of pressure on the children were identified through the early trials and errors of the project:

(a) the fear caused by the danger of the dump
(b) the fear of or pressure from the family
(c) the inability to cope with school
(d) the need for money (for the child's school or food)

*The components*

The activities of the Drop In Center and the SABANA were designed to address these four sources of pressure. The DIC placed greatest emphasis on the first two, whereas the

SABANA concentrated on the second two.

*The role of the Drop In Center in this Model*

The Drop In Center was the 'intake valve' for the program. Its aim was to serve as a constant presence at the dumping site, monitoring the child workers, watching over them, providing them with safe refuge, and when sufficient trust had been established, urging them to enter SABANA. Due to its location at the worksite, those who staffed the DIC were in a position to observe and have contact with all the child scavengers, as well as the adults associated with them. Therefore, the DIC also had responsibility for all collateral activities of the project, such as advocacy to the public at large and awareness-raising with the community, and particularly all research work which entailed having access to the total population of working children. These roles were necessarily secondary to the main role of the Drop In Center: 'protection' of those children who were still working.

The elements comprising the Drop In Center programme were:

1. Research into the needs of the children

2. Retreat and rest area, with (a) a 'safety deposit' place for their bags of collected garbage and (b) protection from adults when the children were out in the work area

3. Clean water to drink

4. Lunch programme, with a good amount of healthy, clean food

5. First aid with (a) tetanus immunization, (b) dressing of wounds, and (c) referral and accompaniment to a care facility for serious injuries

6. Psychological counseling including (a) intercession with families, (b) monitoring high-risk children (e.g. battered)

7. Recreation, with (a) structured and unstructured games, (b) books, and (c) the basketball teams

8. Outreach, including (a) public education, (b) theatre, (c) liaison with City officials and Smokey Mountain leaders

The justification for a protective program such as the Drop In Center was often questioned. 'If child labour is illegal, and in this case where it is also very dangerous, how can an agency accept that these children are working and allow them to continue? Isn't this condoning child labour?' This would be true, if something could be done about it ... but in most places, it cannot. No programme (even police action) can remove all the children all at once nor can it keep watch 24 hours a day to see that they stay away. In fact it could be argued that it is

unjustifiable to ignore the majority of child workers while they are waiting their turn for intensive help. For this reason, the DIC work was geared to delivering services on a large scale.

*The role of SABANA in this model*

SABANA was conceived as a 'half-way house' between the isolation of Smokey Mountain and the world outside. It role was to be a conduit to funnel children out of work and into school. Its aim was to remove the children from work by gradually removing the various types of pressure that burdened them, and then to 'heal' or rehabilitate them so that they would be able to survive once they had stopped work and thrive in the new environment of school. It sought to do this by strengthening them physically, psychologically, and educationally.

Why did we want to get the children into the mainstream, and not into a special institution of their own? The main reason was practicality. In the case of Smokey Mountain, there were at least 1,200 child workers at this dump alone, and many hundreds more at other dumps and on the streets, not to mention those children who worked in other trades. No institution or agency, other than a government, would ever be able to handle such a large number of children. Nor could any agency, other than government, sustain a programme until the children had grown up or cope with the additional ones that each year would be tempted into work by the force of circumstance or the lure of money. The important role that a project could fill, such as the ILO/DOLE project in this case study, was to bear the risks and costs involved in experimenting, adapting and ultimately demonstrating a workable and financially feasible way of getting child workers back into the government system.

The elements comprising the SABANA programme were:

Health:

The aim of the health component of SABANA was to strengthen the children physically and psychologically so that they could be better equipped to cope with the outside world, as well as rehabilitating those suffering from specific disorders. It had four main elements:

1. physical assessment followed by either (a) referral, or (b) treatment of identified disorders
2. physical health maintenance consisting of:
   . record-keeping,
   . height/weight monitoring,
   . exercise (calisthenics),
   . high-nutrient feeding (one meal and vitamen/mineral supplements),
   . immunization
3. psychological assessment to identify how well the child was functioning emotionally and any specific conditions that might need special care
4. psychological health maintenance consisting of:
   . exercises to build self-concept and establish healthy and supportive relationships,
   . play (such as the basketball team),
   . exposure visits to help the child become accustomed to and know how to act in the world outside Smokey Mountain

Learning:

The LEARN component focused on the barriers created by the learning problems of the children, and the gap between their current level of educational functioning and the level expected for their age. It also consisted of four elements:

1. educational skills assessment
2. parent/teacher visits
3. literacy and numeracy training
4. homework help

Earning:

The EARN component focused on the pressure caused by the child's need for money. Its aim was to provide an educational alternative to the hazardous work of scavenging. The "wage" was calculated on the basis of the opportunity costs due to loss of scavenging work, plus an analysis of what the child used the money for -- to buy food, to buy clothes, to cover school expenses, or to feed, clothe or educate family members. It consisted of money (1/2 the previous daily income) to pay for those items for which no suitable substitute was available, plus payments in kind for those items (e.g. food, school expenses) which could be substituted. The cash portion was secured in substantial part from the sale of items which the children had made. Most of the children elected to retain the cash payments in a bank account set up by the project. The primary aim of the EARN component was to train the children in job habits (punctuality, honesty, accounting, orderliness, etc.) and only secondarily to provide income.

Parents' participation:

The PARENTS component focused on the need to restore the adults' sense of responsibility for their children, and their obligation to provide for their material and emotional care. It is a child's right to be cared for by adults ... not the other way around. The specific aim of this component was to help the parents participate in the rehabilitation of their children. In exchange for the programme accepting the child in SABANA, the parent and the programme signed a contract wherein the parents would agree to three things: (a) to provide breakfast for the child, (b) to make sure that the child comes to SABANA each day, and (c) to keep the child from working. This component consisted of:

1. Parents' meetings (bimonthly)
2. Parent classes, such as parenting and home health care
3. Family excursions
4. SABANA Assistants (parents helping with SABANA activities, such as lunches, classes, and cleaning, and to act as guardians on excursions

*The 'Model'*

Together, the Drop In Center and SABANA made a complete package. The one protected the child workers, the other rehabilitated them. The one was extensive, the other intensive.

Although the model is complete, it contains only the essential elements. Other activities, such as parent training or income generation, could be added but have not been demonstrated to be critical to the effectiveness of the program. For projects with limited funds, or for a program just starting out, an overlarge and bulky structure might very well be too complicated to administer.

## PART II: TECHNICAL STUDIES

The most ambitious research effort of the project, started early in the second year, was a baseline assessment of the child scavengers' physical and psychological health, and the environmental and socio-economic factors that might be influencing it (four separate but linked studies). The work was intended to serve two purposes: (a) to evaluate future progress or impact of the DIC and SABANA programmes, and (b) for refining the health component of the SABANA programme. As it turned out, though, it was a particularly powerful device for advocacy and public awareness-raising too. Unlike the previous qualitative research that project staff had undertaken, this study was a quantitative study conducted on statistically-drawn samples of the DIC and SABANA populations. The physical and environmental portions were designed and overseen by specialists from the University of the Philippines, College of Public Health and was financed with a special grant that had been given by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The psychological portion was designed and conducted by psychologists from the Ateneo de Manila University, Psychology Department and was financed by the project.

This study was doubly important because it was virtually the first of its kind. Very little in-depth work has been done on the health of working children, particularly those in hazardous occupations. Thus it not only generated important data but also developed the methodology in order to obtain these data. Standards for evaluating children's health risks are just now emerging; methods for getting behavioural, attitudinal, and cognitive information from children are still rudimentary. Those that are available have to validated for local norms and adapted to local cultural patterns. The barriers, however, do not justify not proceeding. On the contrary, the rich data that were obtained about the child scavengers were achieved in a relatively short time (9 months) and for modest cost (total for all substudies: $22,000).

### I. Physical Health Risk Assessment

*(by Ronald Subida, MD, School of Public Health, University of the Philippines)*

To identify the study population, a listing of all known child scavengers (900) was obtained from the DIC. Since it was difficult to obtain statistics on the prevalence of respiratory and nutritional problems on Smokey Mountain, 36 children were first studied to determine what sample size would be representative of the full population of child scavengers. Based on these findings, a sample of 250 child scavengers was chosen using a table of random numbers. Of these, only 231 (92%) agreed to be studied (primarily due to fear of blood extraction) and only 96 provided stool samples.

Both parents and children were interviewed regarding their health knowledge, attitudes, and habits, and both were interviewed with regard to the children's recent illness episodes. The questionnaire used in this study was the Pilipino translation of the American Thoracic Society "Self-Administered Questionnaire for Children on Chronic Respiratory Symptoms and Illnesses. This was translated into Pilipino, back-translated, pre-tested in a barangay near Smokey Mountain for comprehensibility and acceptability, modified accordingly and then re-validated. The interviews were conducted at home by the SABANA and DIC Community

Workers, after receiving specialized training from the School of Public Health.

The children were given a physical examination by physicians of the School of Public Health and the following tests were carried out: pulmonary function, chest X ray, blood tests, physical examination, height and weight, urinalysis, stool analysis. For the pulmonary function tests, the Vitalograph S-model Spirometer was used; it was calibrated each time before use and was adjusted for temperature and pressure. The tests were performed by a trained technician. The expiratory manoeuvre was carried out while the child was standing and was repeated at least three times, with the best of the three selected. Height and weight measurements were compared with the predicted values for 'normal' subjects based on Filipino standards. Blood tests were conducted on 10 ml. of venous blood for haemoglobin, haematocrit, mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration and blood lead levels. The physical examination was conducted by physicians; special attention was given to the neurological system.

## *8. Physical Health Profile*

The early health work in the DIC had given insight into the wide range and variety of health risks to the children, and some indication of the impact these risks had upon the health of the children in general. This is good enough for targeting the problem and of making a plan to address it. On the other hand, SABANA, as an intervention programme, was not dealing with generalities, it was dealing with real and individual children. Not every child had a perforated eardrum or a skin disease or a mental problem, only certain ones. For SABANA to be effective in designing its interventions for the rehabilitation of the children (and especially in evaluating their impact later), it needed more quantitative data. Were almost all children malnourished and if so, was it first or second degree malnutrition? Were all children mentally deficient or only an occasional one? Was it the girls who had experienced sexual abuse or the boys?

It was because the health departments did not have a 'health profile' of the Smokey Mountain community, much less of the child worker age group, they continued to target their health programmes to common illnesses (colds, bronchitis, upset stomach). Without knowing the specific hazards, unique to scavenging, they could not launch effective public education campaigns or more focused health programmes.

Another set of questions concerns the causes of the identified health problems. Scavenging is obviously a hazardous occupation; but then living on a garbage dump is also unhealthy. Which is the greatest risk to the child...living on Smokey Mountain or working on Smokey Mountain? This is a fundamental question for programming. For one thing, if a project were to address only work hazards it would show no impact if the risks were environmental...or conceivably if the risks were common to the urban poor in general. It would be an expensive and futile enterprise. For another, many Smokey Mountain families insist that, although the area leaves something to be desired, their children are actually more healthy than others because they work hard and have enough to eat, unlike in many other urban slums.

All of these have to do with the causes which are responsible for the particular health profile of the child workers. To treat the symptoms is certainly justifiable as a humanitarian effort, but if the underlying causes can be identified and addressed at the same time, so much the better.

The causes could be of several different kinds. They could be due to behaviour (e.g. poor hygiene), lack of knowledge, corporate or individual attitudes, characteristics of the environment (air, water, soil), features of the workplace, features of the work itself, etc.

The following section presents the health profile of the Smokey Mountain child scavenger as obtained from the University of the Philippines baseline survey, described above. Causative factors, where evident from the study are included in this section.

The general perception in the community is that child scavengers are quite healthy. When asked about their views, 84% of parents affirmed that their children who are working were strong and healthy; furthermore, and even more important, they believe (81%) that as long as the child is strong and industrious, there is nothing wrong with scavenging. In fact, although they realize a child can be injured on the dump, 77% feel that they could get exactly the same injuries playing around the home. This seeming contradiction in thinking is probably explained in terms of beliefs about susceptibility. Although aware that there are dangers, the parents do not think that their children are vulnerable to them; therefore, there is no need to worry.

Another factor that may be operating here as well are the parents' beliefs about their ability to affect the outcome. Many people try not to worry about things that they have no chance of influencing. For example, 68% believe that there is nothing they can do to maintain cleanliness in this area. Although they realize that filth causes illness and scavenging causes injuries, they feel it is inevitable.

Still another factor is that many feel, because they are poor, other measures are useless. For example, 76% say that they are too worried about getting enough food to worry about sanitation, or other health matters. And perhaps for this reason, they insist that living in Smokey Mountain is not different from living in other parts of the city (76%), that their own health is just fine (60%) and that of the community is satisfactory as well (70%). Oddly, 73% say they while they would care for the family's health, they would not care about the health problems of others in the community.

The actual health status of the child scavengers, as shown by physical examination, laboratory tests, and reported illness, is somewhat different than what their parents describe.

a. skin conditions

Skin diseases, including rashes, hypopigmentation, fungal infection, and boil were present at the time of examination in 30.4% of the children (n=194). A majority of households (62%) believe, however, that skin diseases are natural to children.

b. injuries

Fifty percent of the households report injuries to their children while on the dumpsite. Most common are cuts and burns. Physical examination showed that lacerations and wounds are present in 17.5% of the children at any one time, most due to contact with open cans with sharp edges, glass, and similar objects while scavenging. Many of these are infected due to constant contact with dirt, and since wounds are seldom cleansed. Perforated eardrums are present in 6.5% of the cases. The majority of households are aware that accidents and injuries are dangers associated with scavenging, a few noting drug addition, rape, loss of weight and poor food quality as additional hazards, but others consider that there is no danger at all (3%).

Although almost 90% of families understand that tetanus is serious and could lead to death, a large percentage (54) do not view immunization as desirable, as they think it makes the child sick.

There had been 5 child worker deaths reported during the previous year. These were due to a fall, drowning while washing plastics in the river, being run over by a bulldozer, and at least one other, not in the sample, was of a child scavenger who was shot while working at night, and at least another 5 died of tetanus.

c. neurological functioning

Hyporeflexia, or slow reaction, specifically of the lower extremities was evident in 3.6% of the children. Additional nerve conduction velocity studies are recommended to examine this further.

d. pulmonary functioning

Pulmonary conditions are among the most common health problems reported and observed. Chronic pulmonary symptoms are defined as occurring for most days during three consecutive months of the year. Of the child workers, 22.9% had chronic cough, 18.2 % chronic phlegm, 25.5% wheezing, and 19% wheezing with shortness of breath.

Parents confirm the children's reports, reporting that 31.2% of the study children had bronchitis during the past year. Official figures for the National Capitol Region for bronchitis in the 5-9 age group is 1.07% and for the 10-14 age group is .5% (a rural study area, however, shows a higher rate of 24.3%). For pneumonia, the figures are also high (25.1%) among the scavenger children, as compared to 0.3% and 0.09%, respectively, for the two age groups as registered in the National Capitol Region statistics. The NCR figures may be underestimated since only those who go to the health units or hospitals would be recorded, but nevertheless the differences are remarkable and quite large.

Other respiratory illnesses are reported as follows: 28.6% had asthma attacks, 6.9% had whooping cough, 18.2% had ear infection, and 8.7% had an allergic attack. Only 5 out of 171 given the chest X#ray were found to have either a healed scar or minimal pulmonary tuberculosis. Thus it seems that PTB is not so much of a problem in this population. When questioned about what the long-term effect of scavenging would be on their children, 73% of parents saw it as contributing to ill-health in general, and 23% that it increased chances of lung

diseases in particular.

A good indicator of pulmonary function was the spirometric examination. Three parameters in spirometry were used in this population, namely FEV1%, FVCV, FEV1/FVC%. Compared to the normal values, the child scavengers do not evince particularly low pulmonary function, however, if the distribution of the three parameters among the children is taken instead, there is a considerable evidence of decreased pulmonary function. This suggests that, when a child scavenger does get a respiratory disease, it is likely that the air passages will be more obstructed, and the condition more serious than with other children.

e. Blood pathology

The most distressing finding of the study, perhaps, is the elevated lead levels. The mean values of the child scavengers are far above the World Health Organisation guideline of 20 ug/dl for adults, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) standard of 10 ug/dl for children. Of all child scavengers, 72.6% are above the WHO guideline, and over 90% are above the CDC standard. Results of a much smaller study of children from another slum area in metropolitan Manila, show average blood levels of 11 ug/dl.

The effects of high blood lead levels on children are very serious as documented by the CDC. At less than 10 ug/dl, there can be decreased intelligence, decreased hearing, and reduced growth. At 20 ug/dl, decreased nerve conduction is apparent, and higher levels, overt toxicity. In this regard, lead is considered a silent killer.

Although due to cost constraints, blood levels of mercury and PCB could not be analysed, it is extremely likely that these heavy metals, as well as other chemicals in toxic amounts would be found.

Regarding anaemia, only 10.4% have levels above the WHO cut-off point of 12 g/100 ml, and even these levels were not severe. As expected, the prevalence of anaemia was higher among girls than boys due to the onset of menarche.

On the other hand, the data revealed that more than half (55.2%) of the children were lacking in haemoglobin per red cell as shown by MCHC values less than 32%. This indicates that while anaemia is not yet evident, there is less haemoglobin available in the red cells.

f. Parasitism

Not surprisingly, considering the sanitary conditions in the community and work area of the children, 97.6% of the children (N=96) were harbouring ascaris, trichuris or both.

Over half the parents actually consider worms as essential for proper digestion; it is not considered a problem.

## II. Environmental Assessment

*(by Professor Elma Torres, Dept. of Environmental Health, University of the Philippines)*

The purpose of this monitoring study was to ascertain what environmental factors were present, and to what degree, that might be contributing to the health problems identified in the physical and psychological health studies.

Environmental assessments covering ambient air quality measurements and drinking water and river water quality determinants. Ambient air was done by measuring total suspended particulates (TSP), carbon monoxide and lead. The air sampling devices (SKC monitors) were calibrated and operated 1.5 - 3.0 litres per minute. They were installed at strategic locations around Smokey Mountain and monitored daily by the Community Workers who had been trained for the purpose. Analysis of air samples was done using the Standard Methods as recommended by the APHA.

Water quality was monitored bacteriologically and chemically. Bacteriological quality of water was assessed using standard screening methods of the Philippine Dept. of Health. Specific heavy metals, such as lead and mercury were analysed by atomic absorption spectrophotometry. Twenty samples were taken from drinking water supply sources and the two rivers bordering the dumpsite.

### *Environmental Profile*

The only source of the community's water supply is through public standpipes supplied by the city. The system is accessible considering that 90% of the households are less than 50 meters from the standpipies. As far as water consumption is concerned, almost 70% of the study households consume at least 100 litres per day, with a mean quantity of 160 litres daily. However, the average cost for such consumption is 143 pesos per month which is much higher than the regular rate being charged elsewhere in metropolitan Manila. The water charges are being managed by the local barangay officials, who may be compensating for the fact that, in the past at least, there were a significant number of illegal taps in the lines and of unpaid bills.

Quality of water supply in the area is far below national safety standards. Of 20 samples of drinking water,.90% tested positive for bacteria normally present in the wastes of humans and animals. Chemical contamination was also present, particularly for mercury, the level of which (0.002 mg/L) was twice the acceptable standard. Most families (74%) understand that diseases can be transmitted by contaminated water supplies. However, 87% also believe that so long as the water is clear, it is clean.

The rivers adjacent to Smokey Mountain, in which the children frequently swim or work (washing plastic bags and scavenging for recyclables), are highly contaminated. The organic content as measured by the 'chemical oxygen demand' (COD) reached a high of almost 5,000 mg/l. This is phenomenal given that domestic sewage would have only a COD of 3-400 mg/L.

Chloride (5,200 mg/L) and lead (average of 0.12) concentrations suggest that heavy metals and organics are leaching into the rivers making them undesirable for recreation or aquatic farming.

Air quality was focused toward determining the exposure of child scavengers to air pollution and the concomitant health effects; it was measured in terms of total suspended particulates (TSP), many of which were respirable, carbon monoxide (CO) because of the presence of incomplete combustion, and particulate-borne lead.

The TSP levels were extremely high (4,600 ug/cu.m), 25 times that of the National Ambient Air Standards and 4 times that Manila's highly polluted centre city streets. CO levels (55 mg/cu.m) are 5 times that of the standard, and over 3 times that of the City.
Families are generally aware (84%) that respiratory diseases, such as cough and bronchitis, can be caused by air pollution.

The study was limited, because of analytical capacity, to analysing only these three measures of air quality. It is unfortunately very likely that other products of combustion, such as dioxins and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, are also present. These are even more dangerous because of their carcinogenic effects.

## III. Nutritional Assessment

*(by Lucila Rubico, Dept. of Nutrition, University of the Philippines School of Public Health)*

The purpose of the nutritional assessment was to identify behavioural factors which might be contributing to the health problems being identified, as well as to establish indicators in the form of anthropometric measurements from which to measure the impact of specific programme interventions.

The nutritional status of the children was assessed using anthropometric, biochemical and dietary methods. In addition, the prevalence of parasitism was also determined. To indicate nutritional status, weight and height were compared with recommended weight and height for Filipinos for specific age. Based on percent weight-for-age, children were categorized into degrees of underweight using Gomez classification. Children were classified as underweight if they were 70% below standard, as stunted if their heights were below 90% of reference value for age.

Anaemia status was determined using cyanmethemoglobin methods, while packed cell volume (PCV) was obtained by taking the ratio of packed red cell to the total blood volume expressed in percent. Children were considered anaemic if the haemoglobin level was below 12 g/100 ml and PCV less than 32%. In addition, the mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration (MCHC) was calculated using HB concentration divided by PCV x 100.

Children's diet was assessed using 24-hour recalls obtained by Community Workers specially trained in the technique. All food and drink consumed during the past 24 hours was identified and amounts recorded in standard cups and measures, then converted to weights in grams and nutrient content of food was evaluated using the Food Composition Table. Percent adequacy of nutrient intake was obtained by comparing intake with the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for Filipinos. Parasitism was determined using direct faecal smear from stool samples.

### *Nutritional Profile*

Child scavengers consume a limited amount and limited variety of food. Children customarily ate two meals (lunch and dinner) a day -- although there were instances where one or both was missing -- with morning and afternoon "snacks" only if they were earning enough that day. The most common food for lunch or supper was rice and fish. Only occasionally were vegetables or fresh fruits consumed. The snacks ranged from plain bread to buns with egg or hotdog, noodles (pancit), or a chocolate rice gruel (champorado).

That the diet of the children was lacking both in quality and quantity is revealed by the low percent nutrient adequacy of almost all nutrients. Except for protein, intake of calories and other nutrients were less than the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA). More than half of

the children consume less than 80% of RDA for energy, while a higher percentage consume less than 70% of RDA for vitamins and minerals. The average contribution of protein (11%), fat (13.3%) and carbohydrates (75.3%) to the total energy intake indicates that children derive most of their energy intake from carbohydrates and less from fat.

Vitamin C is particularly low, with an average of 32.3% of RDA. Calcium is also low, with an average of 68.2%. Anaemia is not as high as might be expected given the recorded iron intake (67.6% of RDA). One possible explanation for this would be that children ingest iron as a contaminant of the soil; in that it is reportedly common for child scavengers to consume leftover food found in the dumpsite. It is interesting to note that iron is the only nutrient, including protein and calories, in which boys intake is substantially higher than for girls.

It was expected that, with the conditions prevailing on Smokey Mountain, malnutrition would be evident to some degree. However, it is considerably worse than expected. When compared with the statistics for the Philippines as a whole, Metro Manila, and the urban poor (first income quartile), the Smokey Mountain child scavengers have roughly twice the prevalence of underweight (weight-for-age), stunting (height-for-age), and combined underweight and stunting. The most dramatic differences were in the case of stunting, in which 13.9% of Filipino children as a whole had less than 90% of the standard height for age, compared to 35.9% of child scavengers.

Almost 80% of children suffer from varying degrees of undernutrition (according to the Gomez classification). Of these, 40.5% had weights less than 75% of standard weight-for-age, and are thus classified as moderately and severely underweight. Although a higher percentage of boys are moderately and severely underweight (41.3%), 8.6% of the girls have weights less than 60% of standard, and hence are considered severely underweight.

The other key indicator of nutritional status, height-for-age, shows a high percentage of children (35.9%) to be stunted (i.e. less than 90% of standard. Again, more boys suffered from stunting than girls. When both indicators (weight- and height-for-age) are combined, the data revealed than many children who were underweight were also stunted (19.5%).

*Implications for SABANA HEALTH component*

The death rate and morbidity rates among the child scavengers indicate that this is an extremely hazardous occupation for children. The nature of some of the risks, notably heavy metal contamination, are of particular danger to children because children's bones are still growing entailing greater uptake of minerals than among adults and because these substances damage the critical neurological development which is occurring during these ages. Moreover these substances are cumulative in the body. Already at age 12, the child scavengers had more lead in their bodies than would adults who had worked all their lives in battery factories.

The School of Public Health team held that "the results of the study clearly manifest a condition that calls for urgent and decisive action". They recommended a multi-sectoral

approach that includes attention to the root causes, noting that "sectoral interventions will only serve as palliative measures". The team also recommended concerted action among the various resource agencies available (NGOs, the government, the community).

Specifically with regard to the children, the team recommended they be given alternatives to scavenging as a source of income, and that a comprehensive health care programmes, including nutrition and health education, be instituted.

## IV. Socio-Demographic Indicators

*(by Alvin Salamat and Manelito Geronimo, SABANA Community Workers)*

The purpose of this study was to examine aspects of the lifestyle of the child scavengers' families, as well as their values, attitudes and knowledge about specific health problems, which might be contributing factors to the children's physical or psychological health status.

Interviews of 131 households, representing 1,228 individuals, were conducted by the Community Workers, under the direction of the project staff, using methods of obtaining economic and social data adapted from the Family Profile methodologies. The households were selected according to random tables from the sample of the 'Health Risk Appraisal'.

This study has shown that the mean household size is 6.4 persons occupied an average house. Average house size was 11 square meters, giving a crowding index of 5.9 persons per room in the house, or an available space of only two (2) square meters. (The recommended minimum is 8 square meters per person.)

The study household members are relatively young with 63% children, aged 15 and below. A little more than half of the members have 1-6 years of schooling, while 70% of household heads have the same range of educational attainment. At least 58% of the households have access to communication media, such as TV or radio.

Fifty per cent of the households depend on scavenging as their regular source of income. All of these households have at least one child scavenger. The mean length of time these children had been scavenging was 3.9 years, with 80% having engaged in scavenging for at least one year. Prior to full-time scavenging, the children undergo about two years of "apprenticeship" learning how to scavenge. Children's scavenging career starts as early as 5 years of age. Income even during the "apprenticeship" period can be as high as 50 pesos for an 8-hour workday. As children develop their skill, income rises to an average of 150 pesos and may reach as high as 200 pesos for a full work day.

## V. Psychological Health Status Assessment

*(by Lourdes Carandang, Ateneo de Manila University, Dept. of Psychology)*

The purpose of the study was to obtain a comprehensive psychological profile of the child scavenger, including his or her current level of functioning on the intellectual, socio-emotional, cognitive, affective and moral planes using clinical assessment methods. The methodologies used to obtain this profile had been tested on other groups of Filipino children who are difficult to reach and treat (street children, child prostitutes).

The assessment battery used was (1) a clinical interview, using projective techniques to tap the child's experience of the community (using the Smokey Mountain Kinetic Community Drawing), of scavenging (using the Smokey Mountain Thematic Apperception Test), of his/her family (using the Kinetic Family Drawing approach, and of the future (using the Wishes and Prayers projective); (2) the Coloured Progressive Matrices (CPM) and the performance subtests of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) to test the children's intellectual functioning; (3) the Bender Gestalt Visual Motor (BGVM) test used to assess cognitive functioning but only as a supplement to the previous two; (4) a locally-developed test for moral judgement, (5) a modified version of the Sack's Sentence Completion Test, and (6) The Philippine Children's Apperception Test.

A unique element in these tests, was an extensive period of rapport-building, both with the children and with their mothers. The tests were conducted on a sample of 10 child scavengers selected from the 'Health Hazard Risk Appraisal' sample, stratified so as to include both boys and girls within three age groups: 7-9, 10-12, 13-15. These sessions with the children were supplemented by interviews with their mothers, and in some cases fathers as well. The full battery of psychological assessments required weeks of work per child. Consequently, a larger sample was unfeasible, but it also may not have been necessary in that selected portions (tests which were proving to be particularly diagnostic) were also conducted with the larger study population.

### *Psychological Health Profile*

The image of Smokey Mountain is frequently used to support other people's political and environmental crusades, such as the need for effective municipal waste management and environmental protection, but increasingly, the views of the adult residents of Smokey Mountain are also being heard: that, for them, garbage is not a problem but rather a solution to their problems of chronic unemployment and poverty. However, there is another "hidden" population that also deserves to be heard: the children of Smokey Mountain They also bear the burden of poverty and insecurity as do their elders but their perspectives may not be the same. Too often children are "seen but not heard", pictured in tens of television documentaries to provoke sympathy and dramatize some cause. But they are the products of the same community context that present-day adults find themselves in...and they will be the ones to either continue or break the scavenging tradition in the future.

Children comprise half the community's population, but until now there have been no systematic efforts to listen to what the children have to say about their environment and how they feel about their situation. George Guthrie, an educator, pointed out the need back in the 1960's for Filipino children to be studied with concepts and methods derived from their own culture. He emphasized that until it was understood how the Filipino child is shaped physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially by his or her own culture, there is the likelihood of grossly misunderstanding what needs s/he has and how best to respond to them. Up to the present time, the child psychology research that has been done in the Philippines has largely focused on middle class children, and has been often superficial (short, 1 session studies).

Cognitive functioning

The standardized intelligence tests show that the percentile and IQ scores of nearly all the children are far below the existing standard norms set for children in the same age groups. The only exception to the entire sample was the performance of a 7 year old boy, who displayed average performance in both the CPM and the WISC.

Comparing the three age groups, the oldest age group (13-15) exhibited the lowest IQ scores. In fact, their scores suggest that their abilities fall on the low end level of intelligence expected of 11 year olds. These IQ scores are followed by that of the middle age group which are still below norms but slightly higher than the those of the previous group. Lastly, the youngest age group displayed the highest IQ scores among all. This trend suggests that the IQ scores of the children get lower as they get older.

Nonverbal intelligence as applied to more practical situation also indicated that all children are functioning far below what is expected of their age levels. While the children display skills at spotting missing details from whole parts (an expected ability, since this is essential to their scavenging activities), they display difficulties in other areas, namely: the ability to plan ahead. Many of them "jump into" a task without pausing to think of how to approach it. The inability to approach problem-solving situations systematically thus often results in haphazard, trial and error approaches, and the ability to visualize and construct whole images from their parts -- an indication of their difficulties at integrating intellectually learned material. Furthermore, many of the children seem to be slow in absorbing/understanding new material right away. They can grasp new cognitive tasks if patiently instructed, but mastery takes time and may need to go through several repetitions using concrete materials, demonstration, and close supervision.

These results should considered in light of several possible mitigating factors. First, the norms used were for foreign populations (this bias was limited to the extent possible by using only nonverbal intelligence scales). Second, the children have a practical intelligence which was not captured by the intelligence tests but suggested by the projective tests in that they are good at spotting missing parts, and are keenly sensitive to family and community contexts. In other words, they have grown to know, and to know well, what they must do, how they must relate with their families and others.

The trends showing an inverse relationship between IQ and age, nevertheless are alarming. This may be due to lack of learning and educational opportunities for these children as they get older, and that they are, in effect, 'stagnating'..

Childrens' attitudes toward the outside (family, community, occupation)

Responses from the projective tests show that family relationships are very important to the children at all ages, and the family plays a strong role in shaping the childrens' values, roles, and sense of socially acceptable behaviour. The youngest children generally view their families as a whole unit and are happy with them. In the older ones, however, their relationships have sharpened and are focused on specific people. All the children express closeness to their mothers. Relationships with fathers are marked by ambivalence and resentment. Physical abuse is most noted in the children of the middle age group. These findings suggest that parents can be tapped as their younger children's allies in the home, while mothers can be the focus of support for the older ones.

The tests show that a sense of family responsibility is inculcated at a young age and children are initiated early into household support. The young ones say they like and accept household responsibilities, that it is like being a little mother (or father). Underneath these claims, however, is some resentment about the lack of opportunity to play and of family arguments. This holds true for the middle group, but in the older group, family responsibilities have already taken on an added economic dimension and a sense of family obligation.

A similar evolution from the general among the younger children to the focused among the older children is evident in their attitudes about their community. The 7-9 year olds see the community as a place with 'negative' people and events (criminals, crime victims, violent fights, drug addicts, marital discord, orphaned children, and children without playmates). One child adamantly denied her painful interactions there and described it as a "beautiful" place.

All the 10-12 year olds, consistently referred to the present of violence and disorder in the community. They themselves had concrete experiences of this: fist fights, stabbings, betrayals, shootouts, and swearing. They also noted the frequent occurrences of bulldozer accidents, children and adults engaged in what they consider as wrong and unhealthy activities like gambling or inhaling solvents, and children going up to the dumpsite to earn a living at the same time that they enjoy each others' company there. Children in this age group have begun to include the lifestyle of scavenging in their view of the community, and to view scavenging as a contribution to community survival.

For the oldest age group, these negative incidents (violence, accidents, and illness) remain foremost in the children's observations of community life. In addition, all the children in this age bracket already refer to the community as one of scavengers who live on garbage.

As a whole group, the children's predominate view of the community is negative, punctuated by their own personal experiences of violence and physical danger. Second, there

is a trend among the children to inculcate the scavenging lifestyle in their idea of community life as they get older. As they approach puberty, scavenging is so entrenched in their experience that Smokey Mountain is no longer just a place where children earn and play, but has attained the identity of a scavenging community (and they presumably along with it).

Children of all age groups are quite consistent in their views about scavenging. All the children in the youngest age group said that they like to scavenge because in this way they can help out their mothers. Scavenging is an essential means to their own and their family's survival, with two of the children referring to it specifically as a nice experience because it allows them to give their mothers money. At the same time, however, all the projective tests showed outright rejection of the dumpsite because it is the site of a lot of violence, accidents and many illnesses. On a deeper, unconscious level, each child's rejection was uniquely projected: on child sarcastically remarked that people go up to the dumpsite because they want to stink like the garbage; a second one mentioned that she believes the dumpsite is not a place for children; and the last child, while rejecting the responsibility of scavenging, continues to do so because she feels helpless to do anything about her situation.

Among the 10-12 year old children, scavenging was unanimously perceived as a means to address the survival needs of oneself and the family. In addition, many of the children in this group also pointed to other benefits they get from going to the dumpsite: it satisfies their needs for play and companionship, and ignites their natural bent for treasure-hunting -- they might find gold and enjoy instant wealth. The children also express what they dislike most about scavenging: the stench from the dumpsite is intolerable and makes them stink;, it is physically tiring, and there are many dangers.

Children in the oldest group express the same feelings: scavenging is their way of helping the family survive, it satisfies their need to have toys, to be with friends, to become self-reliant and to find gold. Unlike the middle group, however, for these older ones scavenging is already intertwined with their identity, i.e. they are more accepting and aware of themselves as child scavengers. Although they also have negative reactions to the work, seeing it as an activity that tires out adults, and would prefer to do schoolwork than going to the dumpsite, they negatives are outnumbered by the positive features of scavenging.

On the whole then, there is a deep awareness among all the children that scavenging is essential to their families' survival despite its unfavourable social and physical consequences. The need to survive is the primary motivation of the children for scavenging. Given such a situation, the children begin to shoulder adult responsibilities at an early age. Still, this does not prevent them from satisfying the emotional needs appropriate to their developmental stage. Among the youngest children who main psychological need is to gain parental affection, scavenging satisfies the need f the children to win their mothers' favour. As they get older, the dumpsite begins to satisfy their emotional needs for play and companionship, until it gradually becomes fused with their identity in later years.

Second, the trends in responses shows that the percentage of children's favourable attitudes towards scavenging increases as they get older, suggesting that scavenging steadily becomes

more internalized as an acceptable way of life as age increases. This means that attempts to wean children away from scavenging need to being with the younger age groups.

Childrens' attitudes toward themselves

The younger children tend to view themselves as an industrious helper to the family, and to project positive feelings about it. One children even acknowledged a sense of intellectual competence at this age.

Despite these positive aspects on the surface, deeper issues are somewhat negative. Foremost among these is a tendency to deny unpleasant circumstances and feelings, followed by self-punitive tendencies resulting in a depressive stance, a strong emotional ambivalence and confusion, feelings of being an uncared for orphan, and the tendency to be negativistic and stubborn.

In the middle group, the most distinct socio-emotional feature is a liability for them: the difficulty of project into the future; them is followed by another weakness: being paralysed by feelings of inadequacy, incompetence and helplessness.

In spite of these liabilities, this group does have a sense of self-reliance and independence, and positive feelings about those among their family and friends who are nurturant caretakers. However, the number and strength of the liabilities far outweigh the children's emotional strengths.

In the oldest age group, two out of three displayed a sense of competence and the motivation to learn/master skills, the strong desire to learn or go back to school and have close friends, and acceptance of the adult responsibilities of being a family caretaker. They have an equal number of negative aspects, but lower than among the younger children; these include: the possible negative impact of the fathers's addiction on the child's future heterosexual relationships; feelings of intellectual inadequacy; constant feelings of being a victim; denial of depression; and a beginning curiosity about the real identity of one's father.

Taken as an entire group, one response remains consistent for all the children: that they outwardly feel good about helping out in caring for the family. While stronger incongruence about this self-concept may exist in the younger children, these feelings evolve into accepted responsibilities when the children become older.

On the surface, the gradual acceptance of being a family caretaker may be a socially acceptable virtue. However, in light of the many emotional liabilities that tend to outnumber the child's positive resources, this may in fact not be a healthy coping mechanism, for two reasons: First, the children reject any negative feelings they might have about the work, and second, they neglect many emotional needs that are appropriate and normal for their age. As a result, they feel incompetence, helpless, and yearn to learn more but feel intellectually inadequate. Scavenging does allow them a chance to play (unlike other types of work), but their obligation to support the family blocks other emotional outlets.

Childrens' aspirations

Many of the wishes of the little ones related to the family (to finish school, scavenge in order to help the family, have enough food for everyone, have a cleaner house), and only secondarily to themselves (to have a companion, to become beautiful by having cleaner clothes, and to be able to scavenge in order to buy things for themselves.

The middle group's wishes were more concrete. Those related to the family (again most common) were: to have a lot of food, to have peace and order in the family, for parents to stop fighting, for parents to care more properly for their children, and for one's father to become good and stop spanking. Those related to themselves were: to learn how to read, to be able to buy school materials, to become more obedient, to have enough water for bathing and drinking. Interestingly, only one child had a career-related wish, relating to the future.

Among the oldest children, family's well-being again predominated, some to survival concerns (to help the family be better off, to do well at school in order to save the parents from poverty, to become rich in order to afford a larger house with wooden walls and buy plates, to have all family members working), while other wishes focused on family relationships (peace, togetherness, fathers or relatives stopping their vices, others getting well).

Since this view of themselves as family caretakers is so important to the children, it means that any efforts to stop them scavenging must be taken carefully and with awareness of the effect the action may be having on the child's sense of self-worth.

Children's spiritual and moral functioning

Children of all ages were quite consistent in their expressed beliefs that patience, hard work and education would ensure for them a bright future. However, this conscious belief was quite different from the deeper realities of how the children actually viewed the future. Almost all in fact felt hopeless and despondent about the future. More disturbing, the older they became, the more the children tried to hide the extent of their true feelings. Only one child in the middle group and another in the older one displayed (both consciously and unconsciously) consistent attitudes of hope. These are also the ones to have a positive sense of self-worth. The link between the two is very significant, for it implies that developing a sense of hope in the scavenger children goes hand-in-hand with helping them to develop a positive self-image.

Even the little children have a good grasp of what is socially appropriate and what is not. At the same time, they are surrounded by instances of inappropriate acts being committed by those they know and love. (In fact, they all feel that more immoral acts are committed on Smokey Mountain than good and positive ones.) The children seem to handle this in an interesting way: they have decided it is alright to retaliate or punish an errant person as long as s/he is not killed. This reasoning apparently allows the children to recognize wrong acts

and punish them with violent means that they have grown familiar with in their daily lives, but without going overboard.

The shows us that one of the most important aspects of a programme are selection of adults who can serve as role models -- role models unlike others they see in the community who preach one set of rules but themselves act by a different set, causing complete confusion for the children at an impressionable age.

Policy and Program Implications

Programs for child scavengers need to be wholistic, integrated and person-oriented, in terms of (a) the children, (b) the child's support system, and (c) the SABANA workers themselves.

(a) In terms of the first -- caring for the children -- the results of the clinical battery have shown that while the intellectual abilities of the children lag behind as they grow older, they nevertheless still have intellectual potential in other areas. They also display an enthusiasm and thirst for learning new tasks. The learning activities of the programme should rest heavily on concrete demonstrations, i.e. demonstrations that use the five senses. The academic activities are not so important as building stronger foundations for cognitive thinking and cognitive mastery. To facilitate this, tutors need to go back to the basic sensory experiences of the children, such as using dump materials to demonstrate mathematical operations, using the children's experiences to teach language concepts, etc. Lessons need to be repeated and repeated for mastery. The children are slow to learn, but their genuine interest and perseverance can be patiently tapped and honed to help them understand and get used to new learning materials. The lessons can also be avenues for enhancing the chldren's sense of competence, and thus help them to have a more positive self-image in the process. But this can only be done if the same priority is given to the method as well as to the content of the learning modules.

Exposure trips are very important in stimulating the children's sense of wonder and creativity, widening their worldview, and showing them alternative futures. Although such exposures can have a negative effect due to the disparity between what the child sees outside and s/he lives with everyday, this can be mitigated if sharing sessions are held after each field trip to draw out from the children what they liked best and least about the trip and what they learned from it, then affirming these insights.

Group discussions are especially helpful in that they encourage the children to ask questions, to be assertive in appropriate ways, and constantly express their feelings through a variety of modes (visual arts, drama, games, etc.)

The scavenger child should always been seen as a whole person and assessed periodically through simple behavioural checklists to monitor her/his level of intellectual, socio-emotional, and moral functioning, behaviour in the family and at school. The results must then feed back into the design of the programme.

(b) A child's support system is particularly important for scavenger children given the strong socio-emotional and moral impact the dump environment has on the children. It can be strengthened in several ways. Play should be made a part of all other activities (e.g. the LEARN and EARN programmes) since at this point, scavenging is the only activity that satisfies the children's need for play. Play is especially important for the older ones, who still have the need to be playful, but have been constrained from an early age by family obligations and responsibilities. Particularly because the peer relationships are strong among the older children, they should be brought into the programme as a group, so they are not having to choose between their needs for belongingness and companionship and the activities that SABANA has to offer.

A counseling programme may well be needed for those children who have more serious problems. These should include the parents and/or other adults that the child is close to and whose support for the child can be enhanced.

One of the most important needs of scavenger children is deliberate efforts to help them develop morally and spiritually. This requires teachers who can impart a sense of hope and moral congruence to the children by: affirming their competencies, listening to their views in a non-judgemental way, helping them a <u>more optimistic but realistic</u> view of the future, focusing on recognizing their abilities and capacity to make things happen, drawing up reasonable rules and consistently following them, and empowering them through means that are more natural to the children's experience and modes of expression (e.g. play, stories, drawings, etc.).

If the gains made at SABANA are to be sustained when the child returns home, the parents or significant others must be made aware of the child's needs and socio-emotional and moral state and what they can <u>concretely</u> do to support the child's growth. It is especially important to tap the mothers' cooperation in this regard, since the tests reveal that most children have positive feelings about their mothers. At the same time, the mothers should be helped to form their own support system, since many of them carry out nearly all the responsibilities of parenting. The PARENT programme, with its periodic meetings, can be the starting point for this support system, especially if sharing is encouraged.

(c) The SABANA staff itself needs attention and strengthening, not just in terms of skill-building (basic child assessment and intervention techniques) but also self-awareness training and help in processing their own experiences. They need to be gently helped to perceive their own biases, and to not revert to treating the SABANA children as they themselves may have been treated in the past. The Community Workers can be a prime role model of wholeness and congruence. Burn-out prevention needs to be a key part of the staff's work. For example, periodic rest and recreation activities, respecting scheduled days off and working hours will allow all members of the team to re-energize themselves. Only a team which has the discipline to give its individual members time to relax and gather their energies can maintain a single-mindedness of vision and purpose and give a sustained, consistent sense of hope and empowerment to those who feel hopeless and powerless about their situation.

## VI. Economic Analysis
*(by Alex Marcelino, Consultant)*

The following description of the Smokey Mountain economy and its influence on the attitudes and behaviour of the children documents draws on the experience of the Community Workers Alberto Barnachia, Lita Colina, Wilma Degollacion, Tess Espena, Manuel Geronimo, Manuel Manarang, Jaime Placides, Alvin Salamat, Vilma Simbahan, Rosalie Vergara, and Lhiza Yanga, as well as interviews conducted by them in the Smokey Mountain community.

### Scavengers and the Waste Handling Sector

The term scavenger has been broadly applied to persons involved in the handling of waste products. One connotation is that of people who rummage through garbage heaps to retrieve items for their direct consumption (e.g. an article of food or clothing) or for re-sale. But those employed by public or private enterprises to remove and dispose waste have also been referred to as scavengers. Dictionaries also define scavengers as persons or animals that collect or dispose refuse or waste.

The existence and growth of scavenging is predicated on four basic conditions: a sufficient supply of waste that can meet industrial demand; a market of industrial users of recyclable waste; a pool of people willing or compelled to engage in the low status job of scavenging; and a marketing structure and system for the trading of recyclable waste.

### The Supply

This is being met by the increasing volume of solid waste being produced in urban centers, particularly Metro Manila. The rapid expansion of the population as well as industrial growth in the national capital region have resulted to an upsurge in the quantity and variety of paper, plastics, metals or glass being unloaded on streets and creeks. Compounding this is a weak solid waste collection and disposal system which has made the entire metropolis a rich hunting ground for recyclable waste.

The volume of refuse generated daily in Metro Manila, with its population of more than eight million people, is estimated to be 4,000 tons, 600 of which is dumped into creeks, burned or recycled by households and other waste generators. The remaining 3,400 tons is dumped into seven open dumpsites with Smokey Mountain as the biggest, receiving at least a third of the collected waste.

It is not only the volume but the quality of waste as well that make large scale scavenging not only possible but also profitable. The consumption habits of an expanding number of middle and upper class urbanites have enriched the composition of waste generated. These "quality" scraps are the prime materials for recycling into less expensive goods needed by the poor to meet the demands of urban lifestyle.

The increasing volume and continuing enrichment of Metro Manila's solid waste is not only significant in terms of ensuring a steady supply of recyclable materials that can meet industrial demand. It also defines the spatial dimensions of the scavenging system. Because solid waste is the source from which recyclable materials are extracted from, prime areas for seeking these are inevitably those spots where the biggest volume or particular types of refuse are found. When asked, for example, what they would do when dumping is stopped in Smokey Mountain, residents, including children, invariably give only two answers: either they continue to stay in the community since there is still a big heap from which to scavenge from or that they will follow dumping and establish residence in the new dumping area.

The biggest "asset" of Smokey Mountain therefore is that in just one area could be found the biggest supply as well as various types of solid waste that substantially meet the needs of the recycling industry. Thus, while scavenging operations exist throughout the metropolis, it is still in Smokey Mountain and in the general vicinity of Tondo where the single biggest concentration of scavengers, buyers and recycling-related warehouses could be found. As the main dumping area of Metro Manila, Smokey Mountain is virtually a magnet that has attracted majority of those that make up the scavenging system and where, through the years, scavenging as a profession and a system, has been built up. Even residents of Smokey Mountain who scavenge outside the community sell their collections to buyers based in and around the community.

However, Jaime Placides observes: "The volume of garbage being disposed into Smokey has definitely increased. This could be seen by the greater number of garbage trucks unloading their collection here. But while the volume has increased, it seems that the amount of 'quality' materials has decreased. Consequently, the income of scavengers now has relatively decreased."

What could be the factors that led to this? Jaime explains: "Well, for one, there seem to be more scavengers now than before so there is greater competition. Moreover, scavengers before were composed mostly of family heads and working students. The income they get is used to meet basic needs or to pay for college. But now, more and more people are scavenging not only to satisfy basic needs but to meet other 'wants' like drinking, drugs, luxury clothes, money for watching Betamax or a movie, and other things that are not basic. So those who really need the income in order to survive have to compete with those who are relatively better off and yet still scavenge to satisfy their improved lifestyle."

Manuel Manarang adds: "The increase in the number of scavengers is both inside and outside Smokey. In fact, more and more people here have transfered to scavenging in the streets instead of just waiting for the waste to be dumped here. They want to have first access to the waste at the source. More and more garbage collectors are also picking from their collection. This used to be prohibited since they have salaries anyway. There are also an increasing number of 'jumpers' or scavengers who have arrangements with the collection crew so that they can start picking on the truck before the trash is unloaded. So before the waste is finally disposed here, it has already been picked over at least three times."

Lita Colina has another perspective: "A notable development is the increase in the number of child scavengers especially after Bulihan [i.e., the place where the community residents were relocated in 1983]. Just imagine, as soon as the child is agile enough to manage walking among the garbage, they are already brought along by parents or older siblings to help out. And as soon as they are able to work as pickers, they can be as aggressive as adults in 'attacking' the mound of fresh trash that is unloaded by the trucks."

Alvin Salamat elaborates: "When we were child scavengers, we stayed behind the adults. We say to ourselves that it is the right of adults to have first pick. Anyway, when we get older, we can enjoy this right. But now, the present crop of child pickers surge ahead of the adults just as the truck body is lifted to unload its collection. Because they are agile and small, they can manage to squeeze through the crowd waiting for the truck body to lift, jump on the truck or on the sliding trash and start picking. That is why there are more cases now of children meeting accidents, being pierced by the *kalahig* of others or being buried under the thrash."

The Market

Waste become valuable again if somebody has a use for it. This condition has also been met by the increasing number of enterprises using recyclable waste materials due mounting prices of and difficulties in acquiring virgin raw materials. The economic crisis that the country has been experiencing in the last two decades has also put constraints on credit and financing facilities for businesses.

The traditional market for waste materials has been the large-scale manufacturing firms who have the capability to transform waste materials into new raw materials. Various case studies have illustrated this. One is on the Universal Paper Mills (Keyes, 1982): "Paper waste, which represents 70% of scavengers' total collections, accounts for 74.4% of raw material inputs for chipboard manufacturing and 27.3% for boxboard production. Universal's raw material inputs from scavenged materials represent one-fifth of the total volume used by Manila plants. In general, paper recycling plants in the Philippines rely on mixed waste paper for at least 13% of their raw materials." Metal scrap collected by scavengers is sold to dealers specializing in metal; they buy everything from wire to large chunks such as wrecked cars. The Union Steel Company in Manila buys metal scrap, melting it down and forming it into billets, which are then fed into the rolling mills to make steel bars. In 1988, the company was purchasing around 22,125 tons of scrap metal a month at P1.20 per kilo [or 4 cents at US$1=P27]. In terms of glass, about 60% of the ingredients for production of new bottles is recycled material. This material may come from junk dealers or intentional recycling schemes.

Apart from the modern manufacturing firms, small- and middle-scale firms and businesses have also started to turn to recovered waste. This is especially true in the past two decades as a result of government encouragement for consumer product and light manufacturing enterprises to expand. The keen competition among them makes low production cost, with the use of recovered items, imperative to business survival.

The nature of their recyclable material requirement, however, is different from that of the large-scale firms. Because they cannot by themselves transform waste into new raw materials, they acquire instead those items which have already been reprocessed or semi-manufactured and which they can then immediately use for their main product line. They also find it more economical to just leave the reprocessing of their recovered material requirement to their suppliers, i.e. scavengers and/or middlemen.

Manuel, who used to buy and reprocess plastic sacks, provides an illustration: "The plastic sacks I used to buy, sort, wash, trimmed of wayward strands, bundled and delivered to the fishport are used by the fish traders in covering the large pails where the frozen fishes are stored before delivery to various markets in Metro Manila. Now if it is only for covering the fish, why would these traders buy new sacks which would cost them P3 or P4 when I could supply them relatively good sacks for only P2 and even P1 for a not so good one but still usable. They can also buy 7 pieces of poor sacks for P1 and patch these up or use it to patch up the still good, strong ones."

This requirement is advantageous to scavengers and has induced the growth of a group of scavengers-cum-buyers who collect materials that need to be reprocessed. Manuel adds: "Pickers may of course do the reprocessing themselves and therefore get a higher income. For example, those who pick the rubber interior of tires can just simply wash these, cut it into elongated pieces and then it is ready for selling to the fish traders who use these to tie up the pails of fish. Another example involves tin cans which they can cut at the ends and then in the middle, wash and flatten, then sell the finished product to such enterprises as children's toy manufacturers."

"But the process is, of course, more intricate than just simply scavenging, then selling. It also requires more time and therefore no immediate income which, for many scavengers, is difficult. And so there are many who just leave this to others who may have the capital to buy and/or savings by which to survive during the time of reprocessing up till its delivery. However, the fact is that this is not really so much of a problem. When I used to buy plastic sacks, for example, I still scavenged and it is from scavenging that I was able to get the capital to buy sacks as well as meet the needs of my family. I think it is more the relative complexity of the buy-reprocess-deliver process that keeps individual scavengers from doing it themselves. The headaches may not be commensurate to the bigger income."

The increasing demand for reprocessed materials has also engendered the growth of home-based workshops that reprocess or semi-manufacture goods from waste. Teresa Espena or Tess, another community worker, gives examples: "There are a number of shops that serve as outlets of scavengers for various types of unbroken bottles. The workers in these shops then clean these bottles before these are delivered to drug, chemical or food condiment factories. There are also two workshops in the community which have machines to cut and form the ends of sardine cans and make these into small paint containers."

However, the reprocessing of recovered materials has also aggravated the problem of child labour. For example, women and children are primarily the ones that do the cleaning and

cutting of sacks, plastics or tin. Cleaning is done mainly along the banks of the dirty *esteros* that further aggravate the health risks faced by the children. On the other hand, because of their smallness and finger dexterity, children are also the ones mainly employed in these bottle-cleaning shops. They are also paid lower wages. The same is true in the paint container manufacturing shops which can be more accurately described as sweat shops.

The Labour Power

Although there is a supply and a demand for recyclable materials, the waste recycling process cannot be completed unless there is a pool of people who are willing to engage in the low status job of scavenging. It follows that only low status individuals or groups would engage in scavenging since it is unlikely that higher status people would be willing to work with waste. The question of the labour power in scavenging is therefore the condition that coincides with the conventional analysis attributing scavenging to poverty and scarce employment opportunities. Consequently, the pattern that brought people to scavenge is basically the same as that of other urban poor groups.

This pattern can be traced to displacements from rural areas as a result of changes in production systems and social relations that have become, in the last few decades, more disadvantageous to landless peasants. Aggravating this are natural calamities and armed conflicts that now affect almost all of the country's provinces. Threatened by hunger and bullets, thousands of poor peasant families are being forced to migrate to cities, especially Metro Manila, where prospects for improvement or for rising out of conditions of chronic poverty are deemed better. This movement is made easier by the development of relatively inexpensive means of transportation.

Lita describes in part the profile of the community's population: "Majority of the residents here left their provinces to escape economic difficulties. For instance, we have recently noted an influx of migrants from areas that have been hit by an earthquake, a volcanic eruption or droughts in the past few months. They chose to come here instead of just staying in evacuation centers waiting for relief assistance that do not come on time or are insufficient. On the other hand, probably a third of the population here is composed of families who fled their villages due to peace and order problems such as the armed clashes between government and insurgent forces."

But with low educational attainment, lacking in job skills, no capital and few social ties, most migrants found themselves similarly, if not more, disadvantaged in urban centers that have also been gripped by worsening socio-economic conditions. High unemployment rates and inflation eventually forced them to do any work even if poorly paid, of low status and hazardous. Along with them are others in confining situations, such as ex-convicts, who, like them, are unlikely to find employment in the formal sector.

Scavenging was one inevitable choice since it required no special skill nor substantial monetary investment. It was also a far better alternative to a life of complete destitution or of crime. And, in the long run, it also proved to be a better source of living than what they

left in their rural hometowns. Smokey Mountain, as the biggest dumpsite in Metro Manila, is of course the inevitable spot where scavengers can and have converged.

Lita illustrates this by describing the new migrants from areas recently hit by natural disasters: "Just as soon as they settled down, many of them started to scavenge. Learning the work proved easy. They were accustomed to doing back-breaking work under the sun. At the start, their main difficulty was adjusting to the smoke, foul smell and grime. But even this proved to be just a small concern compared to the life and death situation they faced and to the extreme hardships they experienced in evacuation centers. According to them, at least here, they can still be productive and not be totally dependent on relief. They also hope to even save some money to use in rebuilding their lives when conditions at their villages are better. But experience tells us that majority of them will choose to just stay here since the income they can get from scavenging is higher than what they get as tenants or farm workers." Indeed, quite a number of people stay to live in Smokey Mountain for relatively long periods of time. Several studies have noted that almost half of the residents have lived in Smokey Mountain for 11 years or more.

The fact that residents of the community, especially scavengers, choose to live amidst stench and flies is not really that surprising. Particularly when one considers that aside from the unlikelihood of their finding formal employment and that scavenging is one of the few occupations that would allow them to survive in the big city, people of Smokey Mountain, when they first arrived in the metropolis, had to also confront the problem of a severe shortage of low-cost housing facilities. Dr. Abad, for instance, cited a study estimating that only 12% of Metro Manila's population in 1972 could afford open-market housing.

Thus, oppressed by the double constraints on job and housing, they were forced to occupy unused public and private lands that is close to or right at the source of living. Smokey Mountain was again an inevitable and, in fact, ideal choice since it offered both space for setting up a shack and direct and unhampered access to their chosen source of living. And this is the come-on that has ushered in waves of migrants to settle in the community.

14-year old Grace, one of the SABANA children, provides an example: "I was only five when we came to Manila from Leyte [a province in the Visayas]. My father was a fisherman and, from what I heard, life was very difficult. There were always typhoons that reduced the catch. We had to pay rent to the owner of the boat he used. And so my parents decided to try our luck here. We traveled by sea because it is the cheapest means of transportation. When we arrived here, my father asked people in the pier where we could possibly stay. The people he talked to suggested Smokey. I guess because it is near the pier and the rentals here are much lower. We might even be able to build a house. They also said that money is not difficult here. So we went here. My father first worked at the fishport. But it was difficult because he didn't earn much. So he tried out scavenging. And he started to earn more. We were able to buy a house here and appliances. He bought a billiard table from which we also get income. Some of our relatives have also moved here, encouraged by my father. Our life is relatively okay. But he insists that we should learn to work and especially scavenging since it is through it that our lives became better."

Smokey Mountain therefore is both home and occupation merged into one. To some, save for being a dumping area, it may just be an idle hill of garbage. But to scavengers, it is land on which to build their homes and a hill that stores the "ore" by which they can survive. This is probably the characteristic that sets Smokey Mountain apart from other urban poor squatters whose source of living is not the land itself on which their homes are situated.

The Marketing System

With the growth of industries and consumerism, a demand for and a supply of recyclable waste has been created. At the same time, the labour intensive requirement of waste recovery has also been met by the increasing number of people with limited opportunities to work either in industry or in the formal service sector and are willing to engage in the low status job of scavenging. The remaining condition therefore for the recycling process to be completed is the marketing system and structure that links scavengers to the end users of recyclable waste.

This last condition has been met through a network of middlemen who buy the items recovered by scavengers, store and reprocess these scraps into materials that meet the requirements of end users, and, finally, deliver and sell these to the industrial users of recyclable waste. This network is basically divided into two groups. The first are the small receivers or buyers to whom scavengers primarily sell their collection to. The second are the big receivers or junk traders who purchase the goods accumulated by buyers from scavengers. It is then the junk traders that supply the end users their recyclable waste requirements.

Manuel Geronimo or Manny, another community worker, gives some details on the marketing system operating in Smokey Mountain: "It is quite simple: from scavenger to buyer to the *Intyek* and, if the *Intyek* does not operate a firm, to the factory. The *Intyek* are the big buyers outside Smokey. However, there are some variations. For example, there are also scavengers who are at the same time accumulating materials and/or buying from other pickers. These scavengers already have a specialization in terms of the articles they pick. And so, they sell part of their collection so they will have money for the day. A part they will store. If they have some money, and it is not difficult to get some capital, they also buy from other scavengers. Members of his/her family help out in cleaning or reprocessing these articles. When the volume of accumulated material is large enough, they then go straight to the *Intyek* or to the enterprise itself that need these materials. People usually do this when it is near Christmas so that they can get a higher income to spend for the holiday season."

Alberto Barnachia, another community worker, provides a description of buyers: "There are two ways by which buyers are categorized here. One is by the type of material they buy. And there are buyers for practically every type of recyclable waste, even those that are only seasonal such as sardine cans. The most famous and wealthiest, however, are the buyers of *bulasi* or those who buy mixed items such as bottles, copper wires, scrap iron, bones, aluminum, plastic, and others. Their fame in the community is not surprising because they deal with most scavengers since they buy mixed items. And because these materials are the 'quality' scraps, they also profit more. The other is by their style of buying. There are the

stationary buyers who have junk shops and the scavengers go to them. Again, these are usually the buyers of *bulasi*. And there are the buyers who go up the dumpsite and compete with each other in attracting scavengers to sell to them. These are the smaller buyers, those who buy items that are seasonal, and the buyers of the taller milk cans."

Vilma Simbahan, community worker at the DIC, adds: "Some of the buyers reprocess the scraps they collect before delivering these to the businesses or firms that require these materials. Examples are those that buy plastic sacks for use in the fishport and unbroken bottles for delivery to drug laboratories. But most buyers simply accumulate the materials until such time that they are able to meet the quota requirement of the *Intyek*. On the other hand, there are *Intyek*s who are actually only bigger buyers and maintain bigger warehouses although they usually deal only with one or two types of materials. They are the ones who deal with the large factories. There are also *Intyek*s who own the firms that need the materials."

Scavengers, Buyers and End Users

In broad terms therefore, the scavenging-recycling industry is organized into a hierarchical structure with the scavengers at the lower stratum and the middlemen and end users occupying the next successive higher strata. And as a result of increasing economices of scale, i.e. trading and adding value to bigger quantities of recovered materials, the higher one goes up in the hierarchy, the higher the profits and incomes are.

Though middlemen do cut into the possible incomes of both scavengers and end users (i.e., buying low and selling high), they perform critical roles in the system. On the part of the end users, for instance, it is more economical and efficient to just deal with only a few traders who can regularly supply a big volume of specific types of scrap materials they need instead of negotiating daily with hundreds of individual scavengers selling only a sack or two of materials.

It is of course possible for end users to simply employ scavengers. But by dealing only with the middlemen, the factories are absolved of any obligation towards scavengers. They also have more latitude to bring down prices since the responsibility of passing this on to scavengers or otherwise ensuring an undemanding labor force falls on the buyers. And with lower production costs, factories are able to maintain good labor relations with their formal workers.

On the other hand, most scavengers also feel that it is more convenient and economical to just deal with buyers. Manuel says: "Factories buy only in big volumes and only the specific type of scrap material they need. So, in the first place, scavengers will not be entertained if they go to the factory with only a buslo or two of, say, powder containers or broken glass. But even if we assume that factories will deal with scavengers, it is still too much trouble for each scavenger to segregate, for example, powder containers from broken bottles, clean these, and then go to Johnson's to sell the powder container and then to San Miguel to sell the bottles. Better then to just leave these to the buyers."

Jaime adds: "But let's say a scavenger is persistent and goes directly to the factory and therefore gets a higher price for his/her delivery. This added income, however, will only go to extra expenses like transportation or snacks. It will also just pay for the income that s/he would have lost as a result of losing time that could have been spent on scavenging. In other words, the net income will more or less be the same whether one just scavenges and leave the sorting, cleaning, accumulation and delivery of scraps to buyers or if one does both scavenging and selling direct to the factories. Most scavenger would therefore prefer to just concentrate on scavenging."

Scavengers also feel that it is far more preferable for them to have the flexibility to choose which scraps they will pick. Wilma Degolacion or Wilma, a community worker, elaborates: "If the buying price for a certain type is high at a certain period, the scavenger can concentrate on this during that time. But when prices go down, they can shift to other types or just collect assorted items. It is up to the buyers to cope with these fluctuations. And if prices remain the same, the scavenger can suit his/her picking choice according to his/her mood. If s/he is bored with one thing, s/he can easily shift to another."

Alvin notes: "But if scavengers go direct to the factories or wholesalers, assuming that they will be entertained, they are tied down to just a certain type of scrap, irrespective of changes in the buying price or their mood. They cannot just shift to another type and, consequently, another factory when prices or their mood changes. The companies they used to sell to may not deal with them anymore the next time prices go up or their mood changes. In other words, buyers give them that freedom and latitude to do what they want. And for many scavengers, this freedom is as important as the income."

Aside from facilitating the marketing of recyclable materials, the network of middlemen, particularly buyers who are the ones closely in touch with scavengers, also perform an important social role. They not only provide scavengers the outlet for their daily collection but also tools and credit to their cash-strapped clients. Equally important is the leadership they provide in harnessing and organizing the disparate, solitary labor of scavengers.

## LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROCESSES IN SCAVENGING

With an increasing and seemingly inexhaustible supply of solid waste, an expanding market for recyclable scraps, a growing army of people compelled and willing to work in direct contact with waste, and an established system for buying and reprocessing recovered waste, scavenging has grown into a distinct and, for families of poverty, a viable occupation. What is needed now is to look at the specific processes and structures that consolidate the scavenging system and determine its material and psycho-cultural reproduction.

### Types of Scavengers According to Location of Work

Categorizing scavengers can be done in various ways and may be based on the location of scavenging operations, the kind of materials scavengers seek, the time when scavengers

usually work, and the style of work of an individual. But because the main consideration that guides scavengers is where and how to have access to waste, the basic factor by which to distinguish between various groups of scavengers is their location of work and in each location could be found the three other distinctions. Moreover, the place of work also determines the specific means of production as well as labour and social relations involved in scavenging.

There are three basic types of scavengers based on the location of their operations. One is the dump pickers who work at the final dump sites such as Smokey Mountain. They are called *tambakero* (i.e. one who picks from a garbage pile/dump) and further sub-divided, particularly in Smokey Mountain, into *sudsod*, *sagad*, *sunog*, and nanlilibis.

The *sudsod* (the term is associated with the act of bulldozing thrash after it is unloaded from the dump trucks) are pickers who work with freshly dumped garbage and collect just about any type of recyclable waste depending on their specialization or mood. The *sagad* (i.e. scraping the bottom or pushing to the maximum) are also *sudsod*. They also pick basically the same material. The difference is that they continue to pick from the bulldozed waste which a number from the *sudsod* consider as *bulok na basura* or rotten waste and prefer not to pick from this as it seems particularly repulsive. Crossing lines however is common especially when there is a lull in dumping or when there are fewer trucks disposing waste forcing many *sudsod* to work as *sagad*.

The *sunog* (literally, burned) group refers to those who work on that portion of the dump where waste materials have already decomposed or have burned from internal combustion. Metal scraps are the recyclable materials recovered from this part of the dump. The *nanlilibis* (coined from *libis* which means hillside or lower portion of a place) are those who work on that part of the dump hill, usually the lower slopes, where easily degradable waste has fully decomposed and turned to dust. This is the portion that contains the waste materials dumped during the first few years after Smokey Mountain opened as a dumpsite. Since there were not so many scavengers then, the likelihood is great that quality metal scraps, especially bits of gold and other jewelry, have not yet been picked and remain buried in the soil. These then are the materials sought by the *nanlilibis* who are literally and figuratively mining the mountain.

The most numerous of the four is the *sudsod* group. It is also in this sub-group where most child scavengers could be found. The relatively inexperienced or the most needy continue to work as *sagad*. The least in number are the *sunog* and *nanlilibis* groups especially the latter. But not just any scavenger could engage in their work as it requires special skills. They can also shift, as oftentimes they do, to become *sudsod* especially when they need quick money.

The second type are the street scavengers or *basurero* (i.e., one who works with garbage) who work on the streets picking at source, i.e. from household garbage cans or neighborhood garbage depots, before these are collected by refuse workers. It is interesting to note that *basurero* is also the term used to refer to refuse workers who, like street scavengers, also roam the streets although primarily to collect garbage.

Street or itinerant scavengers are subdivided into three groups based primarily on their means of accessing waste and transporting recovered items. These are those who 1) travel by foot and simply use a sack or basket to place their collections into; 2) also travel by foot but use pushcarts or *nangangariton*; and 3) use a "sidecar" or non-motorized tricycle. All of them pick just about any type of recyclable waste, depending on their specialization or mood. But because they have the "right" of first pick, they prefer quality materials that command a higher selling price. This is especially true for the sidecar sub-group most of whom, if not all, are highly experienced pickers. The fact that they were able to buy a sidecar or that the buyers loan them this (for a higher rent or quota) are indicators of their ability. Those using sacks are usually beginners in plying the streets. The most numerous are the *nangangariton*.

A third type are the water or estero pickers or the *bangkero* (i.e. one who works in a banca) who try to take advantage of the relatively big amount of waste (about 10%-15% of total waste produced in Metro Manila) deposited in rivers and *esteros*. They are the least numerous among the three types not only because the volume of waste they pick from is less compared to those in streets or on dumpsites but also because the retrieval process is more difficult and cumbersome than the first two.

There are two subdivisions in this type. First are those using a banca (or, among children, a sturdy board like those made of styrofoam) to reach recyclable materials floating on the waterway, usually plastics and unbroken bottles. Second are those working on the edge of waterways to scoop sediments off the *estero* bottom. They pan the sediments to recover broken glass and metal scraps.

All three types could be found in Smokey Mountain with the majority being dump pickers and water pickers the least in number. Children are also present in all categories. In the sub-groups, however, children are concentrated more on the *sudsod* and *sagad* groups among dump pickers, the *sako* and *kariton* pickers among street scavengers, and those who use bancas or boards among water scavengers. The other sub-groups require relatively special skills and/or require much physical effort that children could not meet as yet.

A fourth group, the crew of trucks that collect the waste as well as "jumpers" (scavengers who make a deal with the collection crew for them to pick through the collection before it is dumped), has also emerged. However, they are looked upon with some contempt by many of those in the other groups. Refuse workers, for instance, are seen as using their position as legitimate employees of the city or a contractor to give them undue and unfair advantage over the others. Says one scavenger: "They already have salaries, why would they still deny us the only resource we have. If their wages are low and they want to scavenge, they should do it in their free time. And they have a lot of free time. They can, for example, scavenge with us while waiting for the driver to dump the collection which usually takes some time anyway. Moreover, the time they spend picking and sorting while they collect slows down their main work."

The greater scorn is reserved for the "jumpers" who are seen as *magulang* or a person who gets one up over others through unfair means. The term itself is contemptuous. Says another:

"Like in the case of the crew, picking from the truck is so much easier than competing on the dump. That is why it is unfair. Many of the jumpers are relatives or friends of the crew. That is why they are permitted to pick on the truck either on the way to the dump or while the truck is waiting for its turn to dispose off its contents. There are also the 'tough guys' who not only threaten their way to pick from the truck but also 'jump' on open-back delivery trucks to steal materials to be delivered by that truck. That is why the term 'jumper' is used to refer to both scavengers and these crooks."

Other Categories of Scavengers

The second method for categorizing scavengers is according to the type of material they retrieve. In Smokey Mountain, scavengers identify six basic types. There are those who concentrate on the *bulasi*, a scavenger term for mixed items such as bones, unbroken bottles, containers made of plastic, scrap metal, aluminum, or kitchen utensils that can be fixed. Second are the *iskrap* (from the word scrap) pickers who concentrate on items such as broken glass, tall milk cans, unusable tin cans, some kitchen utensils, or plastic. Third is the *aluminyo* (from aluminum) pickers, not because they pick aluminum but actually *garapa* or small bottles/vials used by drug companies and the expensive kind of bottles which are not broken. Fourth are the PE pickers who specialize on various materials made of plastic. The fifth go for all types of sacks and are called *sako* pickers. The rest is a mixed one and this include, for example, those who concentrate on certain materials the demand for which is seasonal like sardine cans or cooking oil cans.

These types of scavengers based on material sought cut across the three earlier groups according to location. In the subdivisions, however, would arise differentiations. Those who use bancas among water scavengers, for example, specialize on plastic and unbroken bottles floating on the river. The *sunog* and *nanlilibis* would concentrate on metal scraps. Street scavengers would usually concentrate on the *bulasi* inasmuch as they have first access.

Distinction is also made between those picking at night or during the day. This third categorization, however, is used basically among the dump and street scavengers many of whom prefer to work at night primarily to gain first access to the waste. Households and other waste generators usually put out their refuse at night, an opportunity not lost to street scavengers. But because it is more difficult and, in some areas, dangerous to work at night, fewer street pickers work on this shift.

At the same time, refuse workers are also less motivated to pick from their collection at night because of difficulty in seeing . Consequently, the quality of waste disposed at final dumpsites is relatively richer at night making dump scavenging more lucrative at this time. However, scavenging at night is also more difficult and requires special skills making it less attractive to most others who would prefer to work during the day. Says Jaime, "Only the 'expert' scavengers can and do work at night."

The fourth typology is based on the individual's work attitudes as reflected in his/her style of work. In Smokey Mountain, labels are made on four types of scavengers. One is the *sugod*

(literally, to advance or attack), referring to those who are highly competitive and agile when picking. They jump into the garbage just as it is being unloaded oftentimes elbowing others to have more space around him/her from which to pick from. They also do not stay long in one heap and moves right on to the next truck unloading its haul. There are also the *sisid/namamatag* (literally, to dive/flatten) who patiently and fastidiously sift through the garbage disposed. They usually do not leave the heap to transfer to another unless s/he is satisfied that all or most valuable scraps have been picked. Another is *pawis-bayag* (literally, perspiration on the scrotum) to refer to the extremely industrious scavenger who works straight for hours with minimum rest almost everyday. The last category is the jumper, an indication that scavengers treat this group more in terms of attitude than a "legitimate" type of scavenger.

## The Labour Process

The pattern of operation among the three basic types of scavengers are similar. They generally work independent of each other. With the use of a *kalahig* (a hooked-tip metal spike), they pick through garbage heaps and place the extracted item into a container. While at it, scavengers also have a keen eye for spotting items that can be of use to their family. They then sort their collection into types and grade of recyclable waste. After sorting, materials are bundled or placed in baskets for cleaning and reprocessing (for the enterprising scavenger) or for sale to buyers.

Among the *sudsod* and *sagad* sub-groups of dump pickers, the process starts when garbage trucks arrive and unload their haul. Even as the garbage is being dumped, scavengers are already at it, rummaging through the thrash with their foot-long *kalahig*, piercing the selected material with the spike tip and placing it inside a sack or *buslo*. There is a high sense of competition with the *sugod* being the more prominent as s/he would even jump into the pile of thrash sliding down the truck as its back tips over the haul. During a lull in dumping or when their sack/*buslo* is full, each picker has a spot around the dumpsite on where to place their collection. Spouses or younger children are made to guard the pile and help in sorting it out. At night, pickers use flashlights or lime-fired lamps to see his/her way through the mound.

The *sunog* and *nanlilibis* even work more independently as there are relatively few of them working in a bigger area. The *sunog* picker walks about the top of the burned-out portion of the hill and with his 3-feet long tool similar to the *kalahig* pokes at the dusty soil in search for metal scraps. On the other hand, the *nanlilibis* starts his work by damming water seeping through the hill. Once there is enough water, he then pours a pailful over the hillslope to reveal the metal scraps imbedded in it. The picker then scoops up that muddy part and places it into a sieve for further washing and separating of metals, very much similar to gold panning operations. Most of the pickers in these sub-groups are male adults.

Although the above pattern is also operative among street pickers, they have greater flexibility in accessing waste. And two approaches have been developed. One is called the *rota-rota* (from route) wherein scavengers roam the streets, usually based on a set route that they have found to be lucrative, picking from one garbage bin to another or from thrash

thrown at the roadside. Many of them prefer areas near or at downtown/commercial, industrial/port and market districts since waste discarded here have higher quality than in neighborhoods. The second is making deals with neighborhoods or business establishments for them to collect the generated waste for transfer to garbage depots. They can then pick on the collection before they unload it at the depot. Most street scavengers also work from early to mid morning and from late afternoon through the evening since these are the hours when garbage is put out by waste generators.

Except for working on or in the water, *estero* pickers also follow the same pattern. Those working in bancas also use a *kalahig* to retrieve floating plastics, bottles or sacks. Those working on the edge of the waterway improvise pans by attaching a handle which they then use to scoop sediments off the bottom. They then wash the mud to find bits of glass and metal scraps.

Social Relations Among Scavengers

Scavenging is basically a solitary occupation, i.e. production is an individual enterprise. Although some work in pairs (usually a spouse, child or friend who can help sort and guard the collection), group work involving other scavengers other than those close to them is not the rule. And when group cooperation is needed, such as travelling in band among street pickers for security reasons or burning a mound of trash among dump pickers to facilitate recovery of items such as metals and bones, groups dissolve after the activity or distribution of whatever spoils are generated.

The solitary nature of scavenging is due mainly to the simple tools and techniques required for gainful production. Jaime elaborates: "There are only three things needed for one to start picking. A sturdy body because one has to go on foot and stand up most of the time. A *kalahig*. And a sack or basket. Of course, one can pick just by using the hands. But that is more difficult because one has to bend lower and back pains can be more severe. Moreover, one is more susceptible to cuts, not to mention health threats, by using the hands. Anyway, the *kalahig* is inexpensive and easy to learn. And as one gets more experience, s/he can simply shift from a sack to a basket which holds more materials. Those who are able to save money among the street pickers can also buy a sidecar. But pushcarts are usually provided by the buyers. But when one goes down to the barest minimum, it is only a sturdy body, a *kalahig*, and a sack or basket and one can start work."

Alvin adds: "Learning the techniques in scavenging is just like going to school. You also have to pass through the elementary grades up till you get your Masters degree. An 'elementary' level picker does not know yet the value of various materials and tend to pick the easily retrievable. They also usually just use a plastic bag. When one begins to specialize and use a sack to hold the collection, s/he is into high school. When specialization moves into facility in picking *bulasi*, for example, and one starts to use a *buslo* (or basket), that is indicative of the college level. When one is able to scavenge at night, holding the *kalahig* with the right hand, if right-handed, and the flashlight and *buslo* on the left, that is already into the Masters. There can also be a 'doctorate' such as when one is into *sunog* or *nanlilibis*."

Manuel also has this to say: "These levels are not age-determined. A 20-year old who is just starting to scavenge will be in the elementary even though a 13- or 14-year old may already be in the 'Masters', although this is rare. Of course, income is directly proportional to one's level. But even if one is only at the elementary level, one can already earn enough to buy food for the day. It is this potential for immediate earning even at the 'elementary' level that places the real school at a disadvantage to scavenging as far as many children here are concerned."

The one-on-one nature of marketing recovered items also reinforces the solitary nature of scavenging. Scavengers are not employed by middlemen and are dealt with by the latter on an individual basis. Although several pickers may be tied to a buyer due to incentives provided to them, such as pre-payment of goods or loans for emergencies, the pickers' relationship with each other is ephemeral since their only bond is dealing with the same buyer who, in turn, deals with them individually. If one has a problem with a buyer, s/he can easily move to another buyer and the bond with other pickers is quickly dissolved. The debt of gratitude of pickers to the buyer, due to the incentives, is in fact a major deterrent for any group action by scavengers towards their buyer.

From a broad perspective, the scavenging system and structure promote individualism and competition as well as a high degree of mobility. With simple tools, they are free to choose when, where or for how long to work, which material to pick, and to whom they will sell their collection. Under these conditions, there seem to be not much compelling reasons for pickers to work collectively. Observations bear this out as one sees the competition among them: pushing and elbowing among dump pickers or rushing to a garbage bin among street scavengers before others pickers do. There is no division of labor as anyone can go about the work without depending on the work of another. In fact, it is advantageous for one if others perform low. When selling their collection, they can choose from a number of buyers and shift from one buyer to another in case of problems.

However, there is also cooperation among scavengers. As pickers gain experience and start to specialize on certain materials, a condition is created wherein personal bonds between two or a group of friends are transformed into work cooperation. For instance, among the children in the SABANA, there are 'gangmates' whose members seek different types of material. So each member, aside from picking the material s/he specializes in, also picks the materials his friends prefer. They then exchange picks when it is time to pile up their collection for sorting. They also take turns in guarding the group's collection, sorting these out as well meanwhile that the others continue working. This is also true among adults.

These friendships extend beyond the work milieu. Scavengers also retrieve items that they can use and share with friends. For instance, many SABANA children who used to work together would partake of the *pagpag* [literally, to dust or dry off, but is a scavenger term for food scraps that are considered still safe for human consumption after some washing and/or re-cooking) that anyone retrieves. Pickers also recover old clothes, discarded laundry bars, or just about anything usable which they usually share with friends and neighbors. These acts are some of the reasons that make children and families want to choose to live in Smokey

Mountain inspite of the poor living conditions.

What could be gleaned from the above observation is the need of scavengers to be tied to a social network that gives them security and stability in the face of two major forces that seem beyond their control. One is fluctuations in the scavenging trade. Manny elaborates: "Even though scavenging seems a sure thing since there is always a supply and demand for recyclable materials, some are not predictable as far as the daily life of pickers is concerned. For example, dumping may be shifted to another place making it more difficult for pickers. This happened here in Smokey a few months ago when most dump trucks went to another site and causing the incomes of pickers to dip. Street scavengers may also be barred from streets because they litter the place or are just plain eye sores. The most fearsome, of course, is when dumping is stopped here or when scavenging is outlawed."

Another is the status of most scavengers as squatters. They are subject to removal and relocation as what happened to Smokey Mountain residents in 1983 when their houses were demolished and they were relocated to Bulihan where chances for survival was almost nil. And since they are not "legal residents", they may not also receive the social services usually given to a community. Zeny (Ostos) gives an example: "When we negotiated with Manila officials for the city to set up schools and clinics in Smokey Mountain, they asked us where Smokey Mountain is since it is not in the map. When pressed, they just said that there is no need for this since there are a number of schools and health centers near the community where children and residents could go to. But the problem is that these schools and health centers are inaccessible to the residents especially during the flooding seasons. Besides, there are 20,000 people in the community which is a rather sizeable population."

Having a social network therefore is of critical importance to scavengers. It may be the difference between further decline or survival. It secures their existence even if such a social network may even actually cut into their income. An example of this is the marketing relations in scavenging.

Marketing Relations in Scavenging

After a work shift, scavengers are ready to bring the recovered items to buyers. Some pickers accumulate their collection until such time that they have enough materials that they can sell directly to the end user or a bigger junk shop and therefore fetch a better price for it. This is especially true during periods approaching a major occasion such as Christmas, *fiestas*, or baptism of the newly born. But most scavengers sell their collection on the day itself that they recovered these.

Most scavengers sell their collection to one buyer except when the buyer does not handle a certain type of material. But the choice of a buyer is based on a number of considerations. Manuel elaborates: "There are many buyers just on Smokey. There are several buyers practically for each type of material alone. And there are buyers who buy mixed items. Pickers may also go direct to factories or the big junk shops in the vicinity of Smokey. The primary basis for choosing the buyer is, of course, whether one pays a higher price for a

material."

"But because prices are almost uniform for a certain material, other considerations would include not using tricks to underweigh materials, extension of *vale* [i.e. prepayment] and loans, willingness to buy even the most seemingly useless material or maintaining a stable buying price for 'weak' items, or provision of equipment such as pushcarts. The buyer might also be *galante* [from gallant] and *mabait* [i.e., kind] in offering small comforts to scavengers such as drinks during the hot season, giving gifts during special occasions, helping individuals or families during emergencies, or shelling out funds for community activities. Prominence in the community might also be a factor as shown by two of the biggest buyers here who are also the *Barangay* [i.e., Village] Chairmen."

Apparently, the incentives and amenities provided by buyers is the primary factor that ties a picker to a buyer. It usually starts when the buyer extends assistance to the picker in exchange for exclusive, though informal, rights to the materials recovered by the pickers. In fact, the debt of gratitude that this transaction implies on the part of the picker could even allow the buyer to discount prices or underweigh materials.

Actually, this mutual obligation arrangement is also true as one goes up the hierarchy of the whole scavenging-recycling industry where the key to success is being able handle more materials and, as a result of increasing economies of scale, generate more profits or income. For scavengers, this simply means spending more time and effort at the dumpsite in order to collect as much material as possible.

The situation among buyers and end users, however, is different since they must compete with each other to attract business. For buyers, this means providing incentives to pickers not only to attract but also to ensure the allegiance of scavengers to always sell to them. The same is true for the larger buyers/junk dealers and end users who must also extend capital and other necessities to the small buyers and junk dealers respectively in exchange for a commitment to fill in their scrap material requirement at a set price and volume.

Obligation System in Scavenging

This practice--wherein members of a higher stratum extend assistance and other forms of amenities to those of a lower stratum, in return for an "obligation" of the latter to sell materials to the former--is the most important feature that binds and perpetuates the scavenging-recycling structure and system. Through this incentive-obligation arrangement, there is an assurance that the exchange between members of each stratum is, in the long run, still mutually beneficial even though the actual market transactions may be unequal, e.g. buyers under-valuing scraps sold by scavengers or end users lowering the base price of materials delivered by buyers.

Inevitably, the scavenging-recycling structure and system are based on economic strength and social position since those in a higher stratum must have a larger working capital than the last with which to provide incentives and handle more materials. Thus, although scavengers

can themselves be buyers, most find it difficult to become one. Manuel, who used to buy plastic sacks, says: "To engage in buying, one must have the capital to extend assistance to pickers and then to buy, accumulate, store and transport scraps. Most scavengers do not have the capital or credit source for all these. They may not even have money to cover basic necessities unless they sell their collection for the day. Ane even for those who might have the credit source, s/he will have to weigh the advantages of being a buyer with the disadvantages such as becoming deeply indebted and/or the headaches associated with becoming a buyer."

Most scavengers, if asked, would state their desire to become buyers. And indeed, a number of scavengers have been able to save and/or borrow enough money to start buying operations. And for many, their standard of living also improved. Says Manuel: "It is not really that hard to become a buyer. Pickers earn enough to save some money. You will just have to see the amount of material being stored by many in preparing for Christmas. The income from that would be enough to start simple buying operations. And there are many credit sources here."

And yet, it seems that most prefer to just continue being scavengers. Adds Manuel: "Inspite of the relative ease of being a buyer, most scavengers prefer to just deal with buyers instead of becoming buyers themselves. I myself, although doing some buying, would still scavenge as a primary source of income. True, many pickers live on bare subsistence level and might not have the capability to raise enough capital. But it is not just the lack of capital. Many find buying full of hassles. In much the same way that there have been many who have attempted to become buyers, about as many have also folded up bankrupt or just simply having had too much problems."

"For example, by just being scavengers, they don't have to worry about raising and maintaining enough capital. Or go after those who don't pay loans. Or paying their own, usually bigger loans. Or go to all the troubles of negotiating with and delivering scraps to factories or wholesalers. Or find themselves in a tight spot when prices set by factories go down and yet they will still have to keep their buying price and other incentives high enough to keep scavengers selling to them. Or employ and manage their own laborers. As buyers, personal time is not really under their control as they have to wait for scavengers who can come anytime to sell their collection."

"On the other hand, as scavengers, all they have to worry about, if at all, is when and how long they will work. Basic tools like the *kalahig* can be made easily. For the more expensive tools like a pushcart, these are usually provided by the buyers. Selling their collection is not a problem since buyers are all over Smokey operating at all times. Finally, perhaps more importantly, if they are short of money because they are sick and cannot work or in case of emergencies, they can run to their buyers to ask for credit or some other assistance. On special occasions, they can also expect gifts from their buyers."

Apparently, the impact of the "incentive-obligation" system between buyers and scavengers goes deeper than just defining their market relations. It also spells out and strengthens patterns

of interpersonal relationships that further consolidate the scavenging structure and system.

Vulnerable as they are from the lack of personal and material resources to survive in the harsh city life, scavengers enter into a patron-client relationship with buyers similar to the landlord-tenant ties from their rural past. The relationship may be unequal inasmuch as the package of amenities that buyers provide is also the ticket by which they can regularly and openly reduce prices of or underweigh materials sold by scavengers. But in much the same way that scavengers are obligated to sell materials to them, buyers are equally, if not morally, obligated to assist scavengers.

And it is precisely this guarantee of assistance, on top of the sure if underpaid income from the sell-buy transaction, which gives scavengers the security of being able to meet current material necessities. In the face of the instabilities brought about by social and economic position of scavengers, the concreteness of such support compensates for the unequal and exploitative nature of their relationship with buyers. This is also probably the reason why many scavengers are willing to forego the promise of future financial gains of being buyers themselves in exchange for the barely adequate but consistent and very real livelihood opportunities and other assistance that buyers provide.

Alvin elaborates: "Very often, the personal side in the relationship between scavengers and buyers turn out to be more important than the economic side. For many scavengers, the possibility that they can run to a certain buyer when in need is probably the more important factor in choosing which buyer to deal with. For example, you may hear scavengers complain that a certain buyer is quite stingy, shortchanging them when buying. And yet, they stick to that buyer simply because s/he is *galante* when when they need credit or assistance or when giving gifts. They may forsake the additional centavos or pesos offered by another buyer in exchange for the amenities, camaraderie or security that their extablished buyer already offers."

Entrenchment of Scavenging in Smokey Mountain

Now that the Smokey Mountain community is entering its third generation of scavenging, an attitude has emerged that views scavenging not only as a means of survival but as a source of security and a profession that is even preferable to most other jobs. Says Jaime: "My father used to be a fisherman. But he didn't earn enough from it so he shifted to picking. As I grew up, I also learned how to pick. It wasn't difficult. When I finally had my own family, I was able to support them through picking, in much the same way that my father was able to support ours. This is not unique as many families here have similar backgrounds."

"The uniqueness probably is that I stopped scavenging and will surely not let my children work at the dump. But this is because I have a meaningful job. If not for this, I would still be scavenging. I have tried other jobs also. But the sense of freedom and the higher income from picking always brings me back here. That is why the meaningfulness of the project is just as important as the salary which is actually small compared to what I can get from

picking. But this sense of service, of being able to help the children and the community, a sense that has been developed in me as head of the scavengers' association and after undergoing several leadership training programs, makes me stick it out with the project even if we are more financially strapped now. I think I speak for the other community workers on this."

Manuel adds: "My father scavenged before me. I also scavenged and even ventured into buying sacks. I also tried working in a factory. But between picking, buying and a factory job, I would choose picking. Buying has so much headache and responsibilities. In a factory, the wage is low and I am subjected to so much oppressive people and rules. But I could not turn my back anymore from community service, not after being chairman of the Katipunan [one of the local community federation] and playing an active part in resisting the plan to relocate us again. It is this nagging thought that I have to do my bit for the community that prevents from leaving the bigger responsibilities and hassles that goes with the project, not to mention the lower pay."

Alvin interjects: "Community workers are, in a sense, really unique. Almost all of us have undergone seminars and trainings on community involvement and leadership. But what about the other pickers? They are tied down to picking, day in, day out. They don't have alternative jobs, like we do, that are meaningful enough for them to leave scavenging. Other jobs are low paying and/or oppressive. They also cannot offer their children alternatives since they don't have the means to. All they can do is encourage children to go to school. But when their children see their playmates from here go to school with more money from picking, the children are enticed to try it out themselves. And it is so easy to go picking. One or two hours and you have more than enough for the *baon* [i.e., allowance]. If the child has not saved enough, maybe three or four hours and s/he would have enough for a relatively costly school project."

Lita takes her turn: "Many of our parents here at the SABANA have testified that they have tried their best to stop children from picking. From scolding to even spanking. But they report that they just could not control their kids once the children goes out of the house and just sneaks to the dump. When the children go home, they could not really get angry when the children give them some money. It is obvious that parents, much as they want to stop their children from going up the dump, just looks the other way. They cannot give their children money for baon, school projects, snacks, or watching Betamax, anyway. And in the final analysis, the money that the children give them is welcome relief to their economic woes."

Pride in Scavenging

Manny says: "Smokey Mountain is like one big piggy bank. Money is just inside the hill and it is constantly replished. All one has to do is to pluck it out. This is not difficult. One just needs a *kalahig* and sack and income is always available. Of course, a higher 'salary' comes later, when one can already discriminate good materials and be quick in retrieving it. But this 'promotion' does not take long. In less than one year, one's income can already be higher than that of most factory or agricultural workers who are usually paid way below the

minimum wage. Aside from this, scavenging also offers the bonus and excitement of 'hitting jackpot' by finding jewelry or large amounts of cash."

Income from scavenging can indeed be high and readily available allowing scavengers to indulge in some of life's pleasures anytime they choose. Manny used an imagery to illustrate this to a project consultant: "Do you know the difference between ordinary factory workers and scavengers? I'll tell you. Factory workers often drink only 'stainless' [i.e., gin] and usually during the weekend, after payday. But scavengers almost always drink the more expensive beer. And because they just have to go up the dump, pick scraps, and sell these to buyers right on the dump itself, they can have a drinking spree anytime they want to!"

It came as no surprise therefore that no one took the offer for 20 job openings in a construction site that the project team promoted in the course of experimenting on employment-generation schemes. Reasons cited included "pay was lower than what we could get from scavenging", "the income will further be cut down by food and transportation expenses", or "we would be away from the family for extended periods of time".

The perceived and real advantages of scavenging give scavengers and other residents of Smokey Mountain a source of self-pride. Gil says: "When I see a not-so-old beggar in Smokey, I am always tempted to dress him down by saying 'You look able-bodied, why not scavenge!'" This sentiment is echoed by children in the SABANA; when asked what he feels about children begging in the streets, Jun-Jun said: "I pity them because of the harsh life that they lead. I often want to tell them to scavenge instead. This is more honorable and they won't be causing trouble or discomfort among the motorists."

The contributions of scavenging to the environment and economy also do not escape the attention of some scavengers. Says one: "People just sometimes don't realize it. But if not for us, commodities would be more expensive since these will be made using new but more expensive raw materials. But then the rich don't really buy recycled items. So our work benefits really the poor like us." Adds a former child street picker "enrolled" in the SABANA: "There are places we could not enter because security guards won't let us. Maybe because we are dirty and work with garbage. But we don't dirty up the place and even help remove garbage."

Conflicts Faced by Scavengers

Obviously, scavengers are caught in a paradoxical conflict. Despite their feeling proud about their source of living they are also anxious and ambivalent over holding a job looked down upon by society. The people of Smokey Mountain know that scavenging is not seen as 'respectable' as far as the outside world is concerned even if, among themselves, they consider it more honorable than a life of mendicancy or crime. Children, for example, would skip going to school because classmates joke them about their smell, their job or just for being from Smokey Mountain. And yet, when in the SABANA and asked what they feel about their home and work, everybody would say that they are not ashamed. It is not uncommon to hear them spite their classmates with statements like 'We might be smelly but we always have money and

even help support our families unlike them who just depend on their parents' or 'We might be dirty and poor, but we do honorable work'.

This perception held against pickers is not surprising given the negative cultural value placed on waste and on people associated with it. Reinforcing this negative perception is the view that scavengers are not providing a service, unlike refuse workers.

Interlocked with and compounding the anxiety over their work is another conflict: the constant threat of ejection and relocation since they have no ownership rights to the land. To the residents of Smokey Mountain, the community and scavenging have offered to the poor and powerless a ready source of security against the harsh climate of the city. Inspite of the filth and ostracism that Smokey Mountain and scavenging connotes, these, however, have also given them a source of dignity: as a people who have survived in the face of adversity and tremendous odds. But to the outside world, they are squatters--eyesores and a health threat, a breeding ground for addicts and criminals, and parasitic--and have to be relocated for their own and society's benefit.

And just as in the example on children torn by having to defend their work and community from the ridicule they get from classmates, the conflict over investing their all on a land that is not theirs also has its bitter parallel. Says Manuel: "Having been born here, I grew up witnessing the extraordinary struggle of Smokey Mountain residents to improve their lives and the community inspite of meager personal and material resources and inadequate government attention to our needs. Our success may be modest. But, for example, nobody has ever died of starvation here. In fact, in the early 1980's, as economic conditions started to deteriorate throughout the country, as urban poor families in other communities were struggling just to make ends meet, scores of households here even managed to build concrete or semi-concrete houses and to accumulate appliances usually associated with the middle class."

"Scavenging and having the waste materials right under our feet were, of course, the means by which we were able to survive and, for not a few, even prosper. It is not an exaggeration to say that this has been a primary attraction for other urban poor families to come and settle here."

"But all that we worked for in two or three decades, to the last household, simply evaporated when, in 1983, we were ejected and relocated to Bulihan with the promise that we can have better houses there and that there will be jobs waiting for us. However, when we arrived there, we found only toilets for each lot but no houses. Promised jobs never materialized. For those who were able to find work, the pay was not enough to meet family needs. Many starved and children had to scavenge for food or left-overs in the canals. There was even a joke that became popular then that goes 'Of what good are the toilets when we cannot use them since we don't have food.'"

"Because of this, many of us decided to go back to Smokey to scavenge. We went home to Bulihan only during weekends to save on transportation expenses and be able to work longer. Some even stayed for longer periods and just sent money to their families through

those that go back to Bulihan regularly. Not only our economic situation but also family life were deeply affected during that period. The situation in Bulihan never improved and this eventually forced families to start returning to Smokey and by 1986, almost all of the families were able to reestablish their homes here."

Double Burden of Smokey Mountain Scavengers

Five years after returning from Bulihan, the people of Smokey Mountain have managed to restore the community. Says Vilma: "It was, of course, like starting again from scratch. But we were confident that we had better chances here than in Bulihan. Yes it is more crowded now. But still, we have slowly bounced back using the income from scavenging and the help of humanitarian agencies."

Adds Manny: "One will of course see that most houses are still dilapidated although already fenced. But this is because the threat of another Bulihan still hangs over us. We don't like to experience again that painful sight of your house, for which you spent thousands of pesos, demolished in an instant. People therefore prefer to just buy appliances and other things that are easily carried and transported if and when another demolition and relocation happens."

The problem arising from being squatters or holding a job looked down upon society are, of course, not exclusive to Smokey Mountain people, particularly scavengers. There are millions of squatters in Metro Manila who are also threatened with eviction. There are also other jobs that also require and bestow low status.

But what makes the Smokey Mountain case peculiar is the amalgamation of land ownership and work issues in just one area making the double burden particularly formidable. Says Jaime: "The reason why relocation leaves such a bitter taste to our mouth is because it means not only being uprooted from what we know as home but also being cut off from our source of living, not to mention weakening the bond that has been established among us who have lived and worked together in one place for years, through thick and thin."

Resolving the issue, however, is not easy. Some outsiders, particularly the authorities view the gigantic heap of rubbish as a health and environmental hazard. Allowing it to remain, they feel, is tantamount to condoning illness, malnutrition, and environmental pollution in the country's premier capital region.

And so, the threat of eviction from home and work remains.

Caught in these seemingly endless conflicts, the people of Smokey Mountain feel powerless. Dropping out from school and retreating to the secure confines of the community and their work may be one such reaction of child scavengers to this powerlessness. But in a more general way, this may also be seen in the way residents perceive themselves to be controlled by rather than controllers of their destiny. Jaime, in elaborating on the ejection and relocation threat to the community, provides an illustration: "Bulihan is such an unforgetable

period. Nobody here who experienced this will ever agree to another relocation."

"If left to ourselves and as long as we are able to stay here, we are confident that we can survive even if the announced plan to stop dumping here pushes through. There is still a mountain of garbage to pick from. We can also scavenge on the streets or at the new dumping place. The outlet for our collections is not a problem since most buyers are here or around Smokey Mountain. Ownership of the land therefore is not only a question of having a secure home but also maintaining our access to the bonds that have ensured our survival in the past."

"And yet, we also know that we don't have any control on this because, technically, we are 'squatters'. What we can only hold on to and hope for is that authorities will honor the promise of Imelda Marcos granting us ownership of the land or that of Pres. Aquino for on-site development without ejecting us. But then again, we have also been witness to unfulfilled promises and plans that never really took off the ground. So many of us feel that they don't have any choice but to just hope and wait."

Tess notes, however, "We have our pride, though. Outsiders bring us food at Christmas because they think we do not have enough food to eat during Christmas. They should come here and see that we can also celebrate Christmas with some style. That is why pickers here, as early as October, already set aside part of their collection so that they will have money to celebrate Christmas properly."

Even children in the SABANA react to stereotypes such as news stories about the violence in Smokey Mountain. Testifies Andoy: "Most of the violence here is done by people from the outside."

Smokey Mountain residents are less distrustful now of outsiders than they were before. With the increase of migrants to Smokey, the entry of many agencies providing welfare services, and frequent visits by various individuals and groups including tourists, people here become more at ease with people who do not come from the community. And yet, there is still that strong element of outside-inside. Either they are apologetic about the conditions here or are belligerent in reaction to the misconceptions about the community. Whatever the case, there is still that sense of being different.

Scavenging as a Security/Coping Mechanism

Inevitably, the refuge that they retreat to from the scorn is the community and their work. Says Manuel: "Why not? We have been able to survive and even prosper through our own efforts, inspite of the inability of society to provide us with the means to survive, means that conform to society's values. We owe it to our cooperation as a community and to our work here."

Indeed, as a community standing on a hill of garbage and primarily built on extracting materials from that dump, their basic association is with themselves and with the waste itself. And in an environment of poverty and scarce employment opportunities, the people of Smokey

Mountain find their security from scavenging and the social relationships within the community and the scavenging system.

The unhampered access to the dump is of course the first line of security for the people of Smokey Mountain. Alvin says: "Scavengers out of Smokey are only able to work on the streets and/or canals. And being out in the open exposes them to various conditions that may impinge on their work. They can be mugged or compelled by criminal gangs to pay 'tax'. Shopowners in commercial districts may already have arrangements with certain scavengers or buyers to get the recyclable materials from them at specific times. There are neighborhoods or districts, especially in upper-class areas, where although the refuse is expectedly 'rich' but which also have regulations preventing them from entering these areas. Because the work is unacceptable or since they may have to work at night, they may also be arrested for vagrancy. They are also vulnerable to being hit by a speeding vehicle. These problems are non-existent in Smokey."

Having this seemingly inexhaustible resource, pickers are also able to grapple with feelings of powerlessness or of not being controllers of their destiny, since the nature of scavenging gives them that sense of control. Says one scavenger: "In scavenging, I am my own boss. I can work if, when and for how long I want. Unlike in a factory, I don't have to deal with strict regulations and oppressive supervisors. On top of that, I earn more."

Obviously, for scavengers, security and self-esteem rest on factors other than holding a job. This would seem justified, even though as a society we might wish otherwise. For how can they get self-esteem and security when the odds seem stacked against them. Lita says: "Not a few of Smokey Mountain residents have criminal records and this has generated a negative reputation that affects all residents since companies are unwilling to hire anyone from the area."

Seen from this perspective, one can better understand the way that scavengers handle and keep a job. On the one hand, scavengers have always expressed their desire to find a more "decent", regular job. Children in the SABANA, for example, would always say no when asked if, when they eventually become parents, they would permit their own children to scavenge. Responses from adults are invariably the same, hoping that they would be the last one to scavenge in the family. Scores vie for slots in skills training programs or in credit programs to start income generating projects. As one parent says: "Of course I still desire to raise my family through means that are not as repugnant as scavenging, a job that my children can be more proud of."

And yet, observations seem to show that scavengers' motivation to hold on to mainstream jobs is weak as shown by an erratic work history, often filled with many short-term jobs, and a high degree of turnover and absenteeism. The parent of a SABANA child, for example, stayed only one week in his job as bulldozer operator (with an income comparable to a whole day of scavenging) due to "differences with the supervisor."

From the scavengers' standpoint, job security is also seen as particularly ephemeral. Says

one parent: "After graduating from a training program, I was able to land a job in a factory. But then, I was in a low priority for retention when the factory had to lay off workers. Those who have worked longer, of course, had seniority." Said another, "I had to endure almost two years of being a casual employee, being paid below the minimum wage and not having benefits. When we demanded our rights, I was one of those laid off."

But scavenging seems also not to offer job security such as when dumping is stopped on Smokey Mountain. Alvin gives an answer: "That is what people here like about picking. One can easily adjust to a situation. Just like recently, when dumping was dramatically reduced here. What the people did was to follow the new dumpsite or shift to the streets. They can walk to the new dumpsite or take a ride with the dump trucks. There are various ways to cope. You cannot do that when one is laid off from a factory."

Security from Social Relationships

Aside from the security provided by the ever-available income from scavenging, pickers in Smokey Mountain also derive security from two types of social relationships. One is the camaraderie, cooperation and companionship provided by other pickers and the residents as well as the services and other administrative advantages available or found in an established community. Second is their relationship with the buyers.

Children and parents in the SABANA, for example, cited a host of advantages out of the nature of and social network in Smokey Mountain: there is always the *Bumbay* (a reference to loan providers of Indian descent); it is easy to secure a loan because money is always available; rent is low; close to work; children can have scholarships; cooperation among neighbors is better than in other urban poor communities or even with relatives; people help out each other.

Alvin adds: "It may appear that there is so much individualism and competition here. For example, one cannot escape noticing the crowding and elbowing when the trucks arrive here at the dump. But the sense of being part of a big group, knowing that your 'fierce competitors' will also be the first one to gladly help when you meet an accident or are in dire straits, compensates for this. There is also the assistance from buyers. And since we live and work together, everybody understands each other. There are also quarrels of course. But which community doesn't have quarrels?"

"In fact, this has even given rise to some negative traits. There are some here, for example, who do not scavenge anymore and just rely on the handouts of neighbors. And people apparently don't mind giving some small amounts to neighbors or friends who cannot scavenge for some reason or, sometimes, have stopped working altogether."

Communal life in a community of scavengers particularly one that has already played host to three generations is one distinct advantage of Smokey Mountain scavengers over other pickers in Metro Manila. Says Jaime: "Other scavengers, most of whom are on the streets, most likely have higher incomes than many of those working here in the dump. But the

cooperation and assistance present here is more than enough compensation for the lesser income."

It is probably this need to have a sense of being part of a group that understand each other's life and work that prompted scavengers in other parts of the metropolis to also form their own community of scavengers. But these are generally small compared to Smokey Mountain and therefore do not enjoy some of the advantages of a big, established community such as availability of social services and mutually-supportive activities of indigenous community groups. And for the last decade or so, this has been another distinct "advantage" of Smokey Mountain which, due to the apalling living conditions, has led individuals and organizations to give money and goods to the community.

Again Alvin notes: "I think other communities do not receive the same amount of assistance that Smokey gets. This again provides some sense of security to the people here. But, like the case of those who stop working and just rely on hand-outs of neighbors, the security provided in knowing that there will be organizations who will give assistance to the community has also given rise to a dole-out mentality."

## CONCLUSION

When it comes down to the bottom line, is child work really so bad? Isn't it better, as many Smokey Mountain parents say, for the children to be doing something constructive instead of hanging around getting in trouble? and isn't it more important to have food on the table today, instead of worrying about some vague health condition that might (or might not) surface years from now?

Smokey Mountain children are tough. They work hard, they go to school, they help their families. Is working in the smoke a few hours a day really going to hurt them? Besides, even if they got better grades or stayed in school longer, where would it get them?

The answer from the *Pilot Project on Child Scavengers* was YES it does affect them. After working on the dump for 4 years (which is the average of the SABANA children), most of the workers are physically and mentally damaged in some way. They are less able to learn new skills now and likely, less equipped to undertake sustained, concentrated work in the future.

The findings about child workers on a garbage dump cannot be generalized to other groups of child workers (house servants, for example). This study draws conclusions only for this occupation and this age group, and its conclusion is that child work in this occupation is completely unacceptable. It is unacceptable because too many of the risks come from factors that can neither be controlled -- air, family violence, contamination -- nor protected against. The risks may be tolerable for mature bodies and minds, but not for children who are still growing and who have poorer judgement.

If we had known at the beginning what we know now, what would have been done differently? The answer is, that we would have done the major health risk assessments earlier. And then, on the basis of their findings, we would have undertaken a more aggressive public awareness, and particularly parental awareness campaign, right from the beginning. Finally, we would have insisted on enforcement -- community-based enforcement. No one guessed that there was danger of this degree to the children. If hard data demonstrating the risk had been available earlier, it is very likely that all involved (the children, their parents, Smokey Mountain factions., the dump managers, the government agencies, the City) would have understood the need to remove and keep the children removed from the dump site. It is not necessary to remove the mountain itself....what is necessary are two things: the community "base" from which to reach the parents, leaders, and children, and information that makes sense to them.

# APPENDIX: THE "LEARN" PROGRAMME FOR CHILD SCAVENGERS

Developed with the Community Workers and Project Staff
of the Pilot Project on Child Scavengers at Smokey Mountain, Manila, Philippines

by Ann Avery

This learning program was designed to be used, not in a formal classroom, but in a community-based non-formal education programme. Its aim is to teach children to read and to improve their general learning skills and although it was created specifically for the Smokey Mountain community, we believe that other non-formal education groups could find the framework and methods to be usable in their situations.

This program can be used by untrained teachers, assuming as it does that all those who teach are constantly learning how to teach. Of course, one master teacher or guide would be of great help to guide the process of developing teaching skill and developing activities to fit the cultural context.

The program supports the public education system, since the aim of the entire project is to equip and persuade the children to abandon the hazardous occupation of scavenging and return to the educational structures of society.

## TEACHER TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

To be sustainable and relevant, a community-based non-formal education programme needs:

* a community organization through which the program can be sponsored, community workers,
* means of maintaining contact with the formal education system,
* curriculum consultants and trainers for the community workers,
* a method for continuous teacher training, and
* a method for developing new learning activities appropriate for its learners. community needs.

The document, "Helping the Hard Ones" Several of these are part of the experience of Sabana and reported on in other documents. The last two of them are the key characteristics of the teaching program described here:

The methodology we propose is for community workers or tutors to practice these units on each other in staff meetings, then to try them out with their children. In this way they will become familiar, little by little, with the four sets of teaching skills explained below. After they finish a unit, in their regular staff meetings they will talk about how the children responded and how they could develop other lessons to take the children the next steps in

mastering the skills of functional literacy, for learning how to learn. At the same time they will explore ways to promote the children's self-respect and respect for others, their creative expression, and their pleasure in learning.

WHAT WE LEARNED WHILE PRODUCING THIS CURRICULUM

1. **Time and resources**. Curriculum writing takes a very long time. Many educationists say it is prohibitively expensive to custom-build a curriculum for a project. I would agree. And in precarious situations, like a garbage dump, it may take longer. Power cuts, storms, floods prolong the time.

2. **Realistic objectives regarding feedback.** A curriculum writer requires feedback and it is difficult to get it from overstretched teachers during regular working time. Therefore it would be more feasible to create a few lessons well and with feedback than a large number of modules that are not thoroughly used, evaluated, and revised.

3. **Sufficient bulk of curriculum**. We were constantly hearing that the community workers were running out of curriculum. What is the solution to this quandary but to produce more? Obviously it is to buy or borrow more from someone else and adapt it to the local situation. An example of this happening was the huge success of a particular book of creative activities which one of the friends of the project bought. For weeks skeletons and large fish seemed to be exciting to the youngsters, once their instructors imagination had been caught by the books' illustrations.

4. **The framework of skills to be learned**. The more the teachers understand and use a model of necessary skills, the better. As we said above, the national curriculum requirements of minimum competencies was too complex and detailed to be easily remembered, so we created a simpler one on the principle of a spiral curriculum. This model was important but should be presented in such a way as to make teaching simpler, not more complex. Instead of the 5 skill framework with 5 levels for the spiral curriculum which we used, I would recommend designing modules for only 4 skills (hearing sounds, recognising symbols, connecting sound and symbols, and vocabulary), incorporating writing into each of the activities where it could reinforce the acquisition of the skill targeted.

5. **The Learning Resource Center.** We learned that the community workers were reluctant to let any book that had been donated be spoilt. At one point there were stacks of unopened books, totally irrelevant, that they were reluctant to throw away. The lesson is that in setting up such a centre, care should be taken to make everything in it become immediately usable, especially in the case of donated materials. Cutting pictures out of hardbound books is perfectly permissible in such a case. There should be no mystique of the sacred and untouchable book.

5. **Staff training.** We were conscious throughout the project that one of our major advantages was having teachers who knew the community inside out. While their understanding of the children and community was great, their own education was

comparatively limited. Fairly early on they participated in workshops introducing them to contemporary theories of the various types of intelligence and various styles of learning. They were made to feel that they were on the edge of modern educational practice and they were treated collegially by other teachers.
Our community workers were extremely pleased with their new-found capacities for creative teaching and their constantly developing skills in teaching using all the senses. This was a major success. I would replicate this aspect of our model without hesitation and back it up by concentrating on the curriculum for training the community workers (teachers) more than on that for the children's learning activities. In fact, the teacher training curriculum uses the children's learning activities as illustration.

**6. Technical assistance from outside the community.** Often help comes from unexpected places. We found it was worthwhile to tell anyone we met what we needed. Every contact with an institution has the possibility of leading to a contact with an individual who has the expertise and the willingness that a project needs. We found two very strong women who were invaluable supporters and initiators through contacts with two institutions who were unable to help us structurally.

The technical expertise of experienced teachers *is* needed to build curriculum. Community workers could not have done that alone. For one thing, they did not have time to develop the curriculum, occupied as they were with resonsibility for other aspects of the project.

**7. Relationships with local donors and organisations who are willing to help.** With help from volunteers or donors, indeed team members, comes the expectation of feedback to the partner, to say what the money was used for, to say what the results were. Giving feedback and creating new proposals are important but it is hard for those immersed in the field work to give them time. A recommendation: recruit a volunteer to work with someone or a series of persons from the community to be responsible for this important aspect of the project.

## Styles of Learning

Styles of learning vary. In this curriculum we have systematically included the seven of them.

We think that working intensively with these six units will give the teachers confidence to adapt other materials to their own situation. They will be continually developing the educational environment that will help them and their children to learn what they need.
Children can learn in each of these ways:

1. According to the body senses
   Seeing: teaching through shape, color
   Hearing: teaching through music, talking
   Touching: teaching through texture, pressure

Position of body: teaching movement, dance, posture

2. According to the learner
   Alone, looking inward
   Interacting with one or more other persons, cooperative, competitive
3. According to the object or task
   Looking at the parts: their detail, relationships, analysis, logic
   Looking at the whole: their pattern, effect, esthetics, synthesis

**Examples: learning the alphabet through shapes and sounds**

Let us take learning the letters of the alphabet and their sounds as an example and look at how the learner can approach the task in different ways.

Relate the learning to experience of the learners.

Choose a whole word or phrase that has meaning to the learner, such as *Mahal Kita* (I love you) or *Bong* (a popular nickname) or *Inay* (mother). Then start to look at the letters.

Look at the whole.

Count the letters. Draw the shape of the word. Cut the letters apart and put them back together. Choose the letters from a pile of others. Find the same letters in the newspaper and cut them out and paste the name again.

Look at the parts.

Which letters are repeated? What is the first letter? What is its sound? What other words start with this soundd? What foods? What colours? What places?

Take two or three words, enough to give you five or six different letters and make two flash cards for each of the letters. Then play "1-2-3 Pass" (see Unit 3 for details) and "Concentration".

Learn with others sometimes

Play games like "1-2-3 Pass". Drawing letters on one another's back will be done with partners or small groups. A group can be given a joint task, like finding all the words on a page with a certain letter of combination of letters in it, or having a scavenger hunt for names with certain letters in them.

Work alone sometimes.

Draw an illustration of a phrase. For example with the help of the leader, the group can list a number of illustrations of the letter they are studying (such as "a big butterfly beside a blue bottle", "a blue bicycle and a big boy beside it", "bees buzzing around bananas"). Each one could make an entire book and then choose his or her best drawings to contribute to a joint book.

Focus on the eye.

Notice shapes. Use colours to emphasize different parts of a letter. Look for the balls, sticks and birds (small arcs as in the small r and the j).

Focus on the ear.

Sing the names of the letters. Make the sounds of each and think what animal they are like, or what machine, or what emotion. Make the sounds loudly and softly. Repeat sounds, alternate two sounds. Play with them.

Focus on the hand.

Write the letters large, on the chalkboard, in the dirt, on your companion's back. Use fingerpaint or mud. Make letters out of clay. Make grafitti letters on a wall. Make textured letters and trace them without looking. Make letters out of dough. Draw letters with the left and right hands at the same time. Draw a letter while looking at your paper in a mirror. Trace over big letters that have already ben drawn. Use colour.

Focus on the body position.

Arrange the bodies of several learners in the shape of letters (body sculptures). Write letters with your hips or legs.

*Specific activities.*

Eighteen sets of activities for any letter are spelled out on activity sheets developed at SABANA. Each of these activities produces a little learning kit for the Learning Resource Center or for the learner to take home.
(For older learners who do not yet know the letters and sounds, see the module "Reading in Real Life". It explains a technique which can be used with any material relevant to the learner.)

*You can apply all these different styles of learning to any learning task.*

## The Pattern of Each Unit

Each of the prototype units has from four to six activities. An activity consists of three parts, in a pattern which allows teacher and learner know what to expect. The learner is central. The teacher sets up the situation and then steps back and coaches the learners from the sidelines.

B. The Three Parts of Each Activity

1. A stimulus which is presented to the pupil. During this section the teacher directs the learners to focus their attention on some single aspect of the activity or presentation.

2. An activation in which the learner does something related to the stimulus At some time during this section, the teacher communicates to each learner the importance of this activity. It may be by a smile, an expression of wonder or congratulations, or a statement of how this will help the learners do something else that is important to them.

3. An application which leads the learners to use the concept or skill in another setting. Here the teacher's role is to lead the learner to see how skills are generalized or transferred, how they can extend beyond the immediate situation.

(To the teacher)

HOW TO TEACH THESE UNITS: Learn by doing!
Like all learners whether children or adults, teachers learn by doing. In the process of doing these six prototype units the teachers will gradually learn:

1. to use methods that respond to various learning styles
2. to help learners acquire the skill of reading
3. to establish a regular, effective pattern for their day's activities
4. to use questions and comments that help the learners become sucessful and independent learners

The first unit demonstrates these four teaching skills in detail. At the end of it, there are questions to lead you to reflect on the experiences and to create plans for more learning activities.

FOUR STEPS OF PREPARATION

1. Pay close attention to the overall objective for the unit, and think about how it helps one to read.
2. Read the directions for all the activitites in the unit, imagining your learners doing them. Think about the time, the space, the materials.
3. Gather the materials needed for the whole unit.
4. Try out each activity in the unit with other teachers, or with two or three pupils. Later they can be your helpers.

NOW YOU ARE READY. As you teach, focus your own attention on three things:

(i) The learners.

What happens when they focus their attention as you ask in each activity?
What do they enjoy?
What is too difficult?
Who needs extra help or easier activities?
Who needs more challenge?
Who could help someone else?

If you are from the same neighborhood, you already know a lot about what they need. By paying attention to them in these activities you can learn still more about them and about how they learn. This knowledge will help you make your teaching more useful and interesting to them.

(ii) The message.

Be sure that you are sending the message you want to send to the learners. A message might be that you are interested in the activity, or that the learner is an important person in your eyes, or that you are impressed by every effort the learner makes. They pick up signals from you even when you don't know that you are sending them. When you let them know they are important, they gain confidence. This may be the most important way you can help them become independent learners.

(iii) The spin-off.

Look for ways the activity you are doing can enrich other aspects of the learner's life. The more you observe and comment on these connections, the more the learners are likely to do so themselves. What if all your pupils became teachers of their brothers and sisters? What if you and they together could create rhymes and poems and story books about their everyday lives? How important they would feel and how interesting learning would be!

## OVERALL PLAN OF UNIT I: THE ANIMAL RHYMES

This unit is explained in more detail than later ones, particularly the three parts of each activity: the focus, activation and application.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: TO BECOME CONSCIOUS OF THE RHYMES AND RHYTHMS OF YOUR LANGUAGE

ACTIVITIES: (with cognitive and experiential objective for each)

1. Matching pictures and poems
   To recognize and repeat some rhymes in a poem presented to them
   To take pleasure in the repetitive sounds of rhyming words

2. Playing around with rhymes
   To recognize and repeat some rhymes in language about their daily life
   To experience the fun of making up their own rhymes

3. Imagining and drawing
   To reinforce the recognition of the rhymes in the first poem, associating them with rhythm or music and visual images
   To relate the pleasures of imagination and expression to the activity of learning to read

4. Rhymes and motion
   To reinforce the learning of rhymes
   To use the whole body in learning and sharing a poem

5. Make a picture and a song
   To create songs and pictures, reinforcing rhyming skill
   To build confidence individual creative ability

6. Present a choral reading
   To pull together the activities of the unit into a celebrative finale, reinforcing the mastery of rhymes
   To set standards for and gain confidence from performance for others
   To become aware of the different things you can do with your voice and a group ofvoices

This material is to be filled in by the teachers for the whole unit at once

Preparation

Become familiar with the rhymes.
Think about how they are related to the values of the learners and their families.
(Do they agree with them? Are these valuse realistic for them? What conflicts are there between values? What other values are perhaps more important to them?)
Practice the guided visualization.
Decide what music to use or who will beat the drum and what you will use as a drum.

Activities

Introduction to the unit.

Focus: We're going to imagine animals this week, animals talking, for the next few days. You are going to be training year ears. That will help you learn to read better.

So, wake up your ears. Unfold them, like this. (Unfold each ear, gently.)

Unit I ANIMAL RHYMES

Activity 1 Match pictures and poems

Stimulus

*(Each activity has 3 parts. The first, the stimulus, is something that is presented to the learner or asked of the learner. Someone else initiates it.)*

Talking about our own experience:
Ask children what animals they have ever seen. Ask questions that require everyone to participate. For example

"What animal have you ever touched?
"What animal have you ever held?
"...petted, ridden, fed?
"...would you like to touch?
etc.

Making Sounds:

Divide the group into groups of 6. Each group makes the sound of a particular animal, first one by one, then all the animals together. At the end of this unit, see the game, "Human Zoo" for a longer version of this exercise. It can be played at this time, as well as at other times to reinforce these skills.

Listening to poems:

FOCUS: Listen now to the poems about animals so that afterwards you can choose the picture to go with each poem and so you can tell what each animal said.

Teacher reads the six animal poems (or plays tape).

Activation

*(Activation is the second part of each activity. In this section the learners are in action, taking the initiative, doing something with the information or demonstration that was put before them during the first section.)*

Children talk in their groups about what each animal said and choose the picture that goes with each animal. Each child holds one picture and says what that animal said.--still in the group of 6.
Then they regroup. All horses together, all cows, etc.

In each group they do the following 3 activities when the teacher gives the signal (whistle or bell). The teacher will give or draw from the group a few examples of each activity before turning it over to the groups.

a. make the sound of the animal
b. act out the animal (all fours, fly, etc)
c. say what the animal said in the poem
in your own rhyme or in the poems' words;

This next part is most directly related to the objective of the activity so here you need a lot of very simple examples of rhymes, like "Cock a doodle doo, I love you." or "Moo-Moo-Moo, I love you" or "Bow Wow Wow; Come here now" --something like that in Tagalog.

Then they each leave their groups and walk around the room as their animal, making the sound. Five different times they meet in pairs and say their rhymes to each other. Blow a whistle or ring a bell when it is time to move on to the next person.

IMPORTANCE: Well done! If you can hear rhymes, you can learn to read.

And your imagination helps you think creatively.

APPLICATION:
*(Application is the third part of each activity. In this section the learners apply the skill or insight they have worked with to something else).*

EXTENSION:
*(Extension is the teacher's part in the application. The teacher raises the question or points beyond the immediate situation. The learner makes the application. The application and the going beyond are two sides of the same coin, and occur as the last part of the activity, usually, although the teacher or learner may bring them up at any stage.)*

*ASK:*

Where do people use rhymes? (at home, at work, at school, radio, jokes, insults, poems)
WHY?

DO:

Make a birthday card for those in the group whose birthday comes this month using a rhyme.

Make up or remember some more rhymes.

Write the words that rhyme on the board or on a big piece of paper.

Unit I ANIMAL RHYMES

Activity 2 Playing Around with Rhymes

STIMULUS:

Riddle swap. Teacher says "Who can guess my riddle?" and gives a riddle. Draw forth examples of others from the children. Have your favorites handy to contribute if they don't think of any. After five or six are recited, ask "What words rhymed in those?" As they say them, write the rhyming words on the board or on a paper on the wall where it can be seen by everybody.

ACTIVATION

Rhyme-Making

SAY:

"There were rhymes in those riddles and yesterday we heard animal rhymes. Now we will make our own Smokey Mountain rhymes. FOCUS: See how many different rhymes you can make as you work with others.

"What are some words that you think of when you think of Smokey Mountain?"

DO:

List five words they say on one side of the board, each with a simple picture you or one of them draw quickly. "What is a word that rhymes with each?" Put these beside the first list.

examples: - pako (nail)
sako (sack)- aso (dog)
bulasi (scavenged battery etc.)- sukli (change)

"Make five groups and see how many rhyming pairs you can make. Put each rhyming pair on 2 cards, one word on one and one on the other. You have ten minutes. Draw the word too if you can. Ask for help writing if you need it. Before you start, how many different pairs do you think we can get all together? How many will your group get?"

AFFIRM:

"You can help each other a lot on this. You may give the rest of your team a good idea, so speak up.

*(When any group seems to be slowing down, coach them freely.)*

"How about names of people who live here (Kuya Alvin, Mahal namin)? "How about things you do everyday, how about things around the house?
"How about words that people outside might not know? (saplot-clothes, balot-feces wrapped in newspaper)?

"How about places you'd like to go?"

After 10 minutes get everyone's attention and let them share their rhymes. DO:
Everybody gather in a big circle and put the cards one at a time on the floor in the middle of the circle where all can see. Each group gets to put down the three pairs that are proudest of. Group them so that only duplicates overlap and put related words together. Go round and round until all words are down. When you finish there will be several clusters.
Name each cluster, for example scavengering terms (tools, types, methods, incidents or accidents), things around the house (food, furniture, our bodies), things we do everyday, personalities, our dreams of places we'd like to go..

*(This is a good process for helping the learners to generalize. To emphasize it make a rhyme with the cluster title.)* Something like these, in Tagalog of course:

"These are tools that aren't used in schools."
"These people are our friends, they give us lots of grins."
"This is what we get to eat. A lot of rice and a little meat."

APPLICATION:
"What can we do with these rhymes?
"What rhymes do people use in advertizing and campaigning? Why?

EXTEND:
"What kind of campaign would we like to have or what would we like to advertise with a rhyme?"

UNIT I ANIMAL RHYMES

Activity 2: Imagining and Drawing

Note to teacher:
This session is much quieter than the first one. It will play on the affective aspect of learning. The learners will associate music and imagination with rhyming.

STIMULUS:

Pass around pictures of animals used the day before and ask who remembers what they said.

Ask the learners, say them, write some of the rhyming words on the board.

Do not talk about them or teach them, just let them be there, big and clear.

FOCUS:

Say:

"Today we're just going to listen to the poems again. Just relax and close your eyes. You'll see some pictures in your imagination.

(Teacher reads the poems with great animation. Play music or get someone to beat a rhythm on a can or box in the background.

ACTIVATION:

"Draw what you imagine as the music (or drumbeat) continues."

After the drawing is finished, the learners form groups of three to talk about the pictures.

(Meaning): Here are the rules of the talk:

1.. Each one show the others his or her picture.

2. The two observers say what they see (They may not say whether they like it or think it is good, only what they imagine in it)

3. Then the artist tells what she or he wanted to express.

APPLICATION:

(Going Beyond)

"Look outside or look at the sky or the ceiling or some shadows or a doodle. Can you imagine an animal in it? Who will tell the others what you see?"

Unit I ANIMAL RHYMES

Activity 3 Memorize and Recite a Poem

STIMULUS

(Focus) "Watch to see what movements the performers make."

Performances by the kids who acted and sounded like the animals in

Activity 1. After each group of animals perform, read the corresponding poem.

ACTIVATION:

Prepare for a performance: Each group will practice its poem it all together three times, doing the appropriate body movement while reciting the words. Then practice one by one in the small group. Then all together as a performance for the larger group. Clap for each other. (Meaning = the clapping)

APPLICATION. (Going Beyond)

"When do you have a chance to do something for others to watch or hear, at school, at home? Teach your little sisters and brothers to say a poem all together.

UNIT 1 ANIMAL RHYMES
Activity 4 Compose a poem
and
Activity 5 Illustrate a poem

Note to teacher:
(This activity involves the children's imagination and gives a big value to their own expression. It whould make them feel happy about this poem.

STIMULUS:
(Focus)
"Let your imagination be in charge. Watch the picture on the inside of your eyelids."

Once more, read the poems about the animals to the class, this time quietly, with quieter music in the background.

Ask the children to work with a partner and to imagine another animal together. Guide their visualizing with the following directions:
"Everybody close your eyes. Choose an animal to think about. Imagine your animal as a little baby. Its mother is taking care of it. A bigger animal comes close but the mother protects it. The mother brings it some food. It eats a little, then plays with the food with its paw. Continue to imagine what it does next. One of you tell your partner what your animal does. Take turns telling and listening."

ACTIVATION:
"Draw a picture of your animal or make a poem about it. Do whichever you want to do first. As you work the teacher will come around to write down any words you need. You can work with your partner. Help each other and get help from others in the group if you want to, You can combine ideas and come up with something even better. Everybody's imagination works differently, just as everybody's fingerprint is different"

(Meaning: Drawing is fun, if you just draw what you see in your imagination.

Writing is fun too, if you just write about what you see or feel."

APPLICATION: (Going Beyond)
Who would like to see our drawings and poems?
How can we make them fun for someone else? What about making a book? Show the book from last November's group.

Unit 1 ANIMAL RHYMES

Activity 6 A Choral Reading

STIMULUS:

Announce: " We are going to give a show for _________ (Sabana 2, your mothers, Ate Zeny, whoever can be sure to be there for the chosen next day. [You decide which day, according to how well they have learned the rhymes already in the first 5 activities. This choral reading should not be long and drawn out, but it should be given enough time for them to feel confident of the performance). We want them to hear these rhymes. It will be a 10 minute show only."

Focus: "How shall we organize this show?"

"In this show we can recite parts of the poem all together and parts solo and parts by small groups. You may have other ideas too. How shall we do it?"

ACTIVATION:

Divide it up together so that there are several different combinations of voices. Then practice as if in choir practice.

Add motions. Try whispering, shouting, all girls, all boys, mixtures, solos.

Meaning: (Teacher shows this is important by his or her own enthusiasm

APPLICATION:

Set the scene for the performance by displaying the pictures and poems by the children. Three of four of them can welcome the audience and introduce the performance.

After it is over give the audience a chance to comment so that all the performers hear. After the audience is gone, ask questions to lead them to evaluate the performance:

Which parts went well?
What went wrong and why?
What could we do different next time?
What did the audience like best?

Going Beyond:

What other show would you like to do here in Sabana? What other show could you do somewhere else? At school? At church? At home?

AFTER EACH ACTIVITY:
PROCESSING THE LEARNING AND TEACHING EXPERIENCES
(5 MINUTES)

We want to produce independent learners and ever-improving teachers, so this reflection on the activity is equally important for teacher and learner. After each activity. take a few minutes to talk with the learners about what happened.

What did the learners enjoy most?
What do they feel satisfied about?
What are they uncomfortable about?
What are they looking forward to?

Then ask yourself the same four questions.

Then look at the objectives one by one and ask if they were achieved
for most of the learners _______
for around half of the learners _________
for less than half of the learners ______

GUIDE FOR TEACHERS DISCUSSION AFTER THE UNIT IS FINISHED

A One-hour Reflection

THE LEARNERS (20 MINUTES)
Which ones seem to be meeting the objectives of the activities?
Which ones can read and write?
What were they proud of, sucessful at?
Who needs help?
Who needs more challenge?
Who can give help?
What else did you learn about any of the kids that seemed particularly important?

THE TEACHERS (20 MINUTES)
What did you enjoy?
What worked very well? Why?
What didn't work well? Why not?
What would you like to do differently?
Try it out now (role play parts with other teachers)

A LOCAL RESOURCE BANK (20 MINUTES)
What riddles, poems or songs did the learners like?
What games did you play that will be good to repeat?
What products did you or the learners produce that can be shared? (books, routines, shirts)
What other units would you like to design or have designed for the near future?

Write all the above down and add them to the folder.

Sing one of the songs or play one of the games together as a grand finale for this unit.

A GUIDE FOR MORE WORK WITH UNIT I
A. EVALUATION OF THE LEARNERS' PROGRESS

1. Which pupils are conscious of rhymes and rhythms of their language? Which ones are not? Make two lists. Put a copy of this list in your SOUNDS TEACHING FOLDER. In the next section (B, below) we will look at ways to reinforce skills in this area.
2. Which pupils could write the words they wanted to? Were they the same ones who knew the rhymes and rhythms?
3. What products came out of this unit on the first try? (butterfly t shirt, book of pictures and animal poems) What is good about them? What needs to be improved? What is the next step toward improving them? Put one sample of each in the Learning Resource Center.

B. EXTENDING TEACHING METHODS

1. What are some speaking activities that would require just a bit more skill than those in this unit? Write them down and keep them in the SOUNDS TEACHING FOLDER.

2. What methods of helping pupils recognize sounds have you used in the past that could be added to this unit? Maybe games you have played or songs that would help?

Write down at least one example of each of the following that would particularly suitable for these learners:

riddles
songs of all kinds: folk, popular, ballads, religious, kundiman, valezuela
poems of all kinds: love, historical, religious (psalms, hymns, gospel songs)
famous speeches or stories

Add them to the SOUNDS TEACHING FOLDER.

3. How can you reinforce the teaching of the skill of recognizing rhymes and rhythms?
Cover a section of your walls with rhyming words. Refer to them often. Daily, when you check attendance, play some rhyming game. Ask five volunteers to think of a rhyme for someone else's name. Encourage creative jingles. Write them on the board or wall.

Remember that in all these activities and all these units, we are teaching the overall skill of reading. Be sure that every day every learner has time to practice this skill at his or her own level. Figure out ways to organize the time and space to make this possible. It can be very motivating for a stronger one to help a weaker one. Perhaps 5 minutes could be devoted to helping and 5 to being helped by the one

above. Everybody can teach something. Use work sheets and games to help the ones who cannot yet read and books and magazines to interest and challenge those who can. The teacher can give special attention at the top and bottom of the reading skills ladder.

DESIGNING MORE UNITS

1. Review the objective and activities of the Animal Unit

What was the objective?
List the activities.

listening, matching pictures and poems
imitating animals
paraphrasing
memorizing poems
making rhymes
visualizing
drawing pictures with crayons
composing poems
performing for each other
choral reading for an audience

2. OTHER UNITS

Decide on a theme for another unit to work on the same objective as this one: becoming conscious of the sounds and rhythms of your language. Several ideas are listed below. Start with the pictures or rhymes. Then use any of the activities above to accomplish the objective.

The tutors compose or help the kids to compose 6 four-line poems on a other themes relevant to Sabana. You can use an easy tune to help, like "Clementine".

Draw pictures to go with each verse.

Act out each step with motions.

Make a book out of the pictures and the poems.

Make a choral reading or show out of the combination of the poems--could be rap style. Try more than one style.

Examples:

Paper making

Design activities about the paper making project at Sabana. Take the steps of paper making and make up a verse about each step

Here are some more ideas, for illustration only.

Good food

Peanuts

Little and healthy and cheap
Buy and eat a heap

Eggplant

Purple and seedy and long
With them you won't go wrong

Or junk food

Safety on Smokey Mountain
Dangers of Night Scavenging
If you're out at night
When there's not much light
You might get a big fright
Out of a little fight
What to do when you get cut
Just a lit bit of glass
Could cause a bad infection
So man go like fast
To Manny for inspection
Buddy system
Jumping on trucks
The body
what lead does to the brain
malnutrition's causes
what to do about diorrhea
what to do about scabies
what sniffing glue does to yourtle fight
What to do when you get cut
Just a lit bit of glass
Could cause a bad infection
So man go like fast
To Manny for inspection
Buddy system
Jumping on trucks
The body
what lead does to the brain
malnutrition's causes
what to do about diorrhea
what to do about scabies
what sniffing glue does to your brain
the dangers of needles