

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Service d'accompagnement, de formation,
d'insertion et de réhabilitation de l'enfant



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2011, the dedicated team of SAFIRE welcomed me as a manager, a newly created position. After 5 years of existence as a registered Non Governmental Organisation with extensive fieldwork and untiring effort, 2011 marked a turning point in SAFIRE's organisational structure and operations, namely with the acquisition of Headquarter in Moka and a new vision.

Indeed SAFIRE witnessed a pivotal year since its inception, with the opening of a new site of intervention in the south of the island: Riambel thus supporting 27 children in street situation, the development of new communication tools: a new website, a facebook page and an awareness campaign around the international day of the child. 2011 has also been synonymous with professionalisation through an intensive 10-days training and capacity building by a Moroccan NGO, Bayti and financial independence with a fundraising diner in May and the participation to a christmas fair where artcrafts made by the children have been sold. Finally, during this year SAFIRE has developed and Monitoring and evaluation system serve not only to monitor progress and report back to our funders but also to gather information so as to strengthen our advocacy for the betterment of the situation of street children in mauritius.

However the situation remains stark. As our study carried out in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association, depicts, 6780 children are considered as children in street situation, even though we can notice the positive impact of our work in the regions we operate in, SAFIRE only supports around 200 children in street situation, which is far from enough. In this sense, the objective of SAFIRE for the coming year is to reinforce the organisation structure, to implement an ecological farm serving a pedagogical purpose and an advocacy axis towards an effective implementation of the Convention of the Right of the Child locally.

We inferred that such an important number of street children on an island as mauritius is a result of systemic dysfunctions in the way Mauritian

authorities cater for vulnerable groups, the right to education and the delivery of proper social services. 2011 was the year where SAFIRE blew the whistle of the situation of Street Children. This year shall be the year of the one where SAFIRE make the proper authorities accountable for their role as gatekeeper of the Convention of the Right of the Child.

However, such initiatives will not be possible without the indefectible support of the Board of Directors which fulfil their mission with great passion and commitment, the dedication and hard work of SAFIRE's Staff and the dire need for our organisation to work in collaboration with other local NGO's sensitive to our goal and vision. We shall also seek the help and support of international partners having tremendous experience in this battle. Lastly, we shall not forget along the way the continuous support of our funders as well as our donators who ensures the sustainability of SAFIRE's mission, objectives and actions.

Ismahan FERHAT
Manager

INTRODUCING THE ASSOCIATION

SAFIRE - *Service d'Accompagnement, de Formation, d'Intégration et de Réhabilitation de l'Enfant* (Association for the Support, Education, Integration and Rehabilitation of the Child) - is an NGO whose mission is address the issue of children in street situation in Mauritius. SAFIRE was established in 2006 to continue the work undertaken by the Ministry of Social Security between 2002 and 2006. Our goal is to rehabilitate street children and integrate them into society. Since 2006, we have extended our activities to eight regions of the island (Baie du Tombeau, Camp Levieux, Port Louis, Triolet, Bel Air/Caroline, Beau Vallon, Bambous and Riambel), supporting 178 street children. Thanks to the efforts and devotion of our 15 educators and staff, 20 children supported by SAFIRE have left their former street lives, gained stable jobs and are completely integrated into society.

SAFIRE'S BENEFICIARIES		
<i>In 2011, SAFIRE worked with 178 children across 8 regions of the island</i>		
<i>Gender</i>		
Girls	60	(33.7%)
Boys	118	(66.3%)
<i>Education & Training</i>		
In School	93	(52.2%)
Out of School	73	(41%)
In Professional Training	13	(7%)
<i>Key Issues Encountered</i>		
Juvenile Delinquency	21	(11.7%)

VALUES

SAFIRE helps street children by supporting, educating and rehabilitating them towards their mainstream (re)integration into society. Our vocation as an NGO is to identify street children living in difficult conditions, give them support and teach them social behaviour with programmes specially adapted to their needs. We also need to raise public awareness of the plight of street children.

MISSION

SAFIRE's mission is based on two main principles. Our first is to initiate specialist education centred on the personality of the child, re-integration into society, the teaching of social responsibility, good behaviour and good citizenship and an introduction to cultural activities. Secondly, SAFIRE believes in a broader remit, where our educators and staff go into the heart of the families and communities where these children live.

OVERVIEW OF THE STREET CHILDREN PHENOMENON IN MAURITIUS

Until the publication of the 2011 Study on Street Children in Mauritius, much of our knowledge on “street children” was anecdotal. The study, conducted by SAFIRE, in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association brought to light key information on the local situation: notably the approximate number of children in street situations and the key characteristics of the phenomenon in Mauritius. There are thus approximately 6, 780 children living in street situations and they correspond to one or more of the following criteria:

Criteria 1: Child above 15 years old, not going to school and not working

Criteria 2: Child below 16 years old and is working for economic reasons even if going to school

Criteria 3: Attending school but chronically absent from school for unjustified reasons (ex. for more than 10 days per school semester)

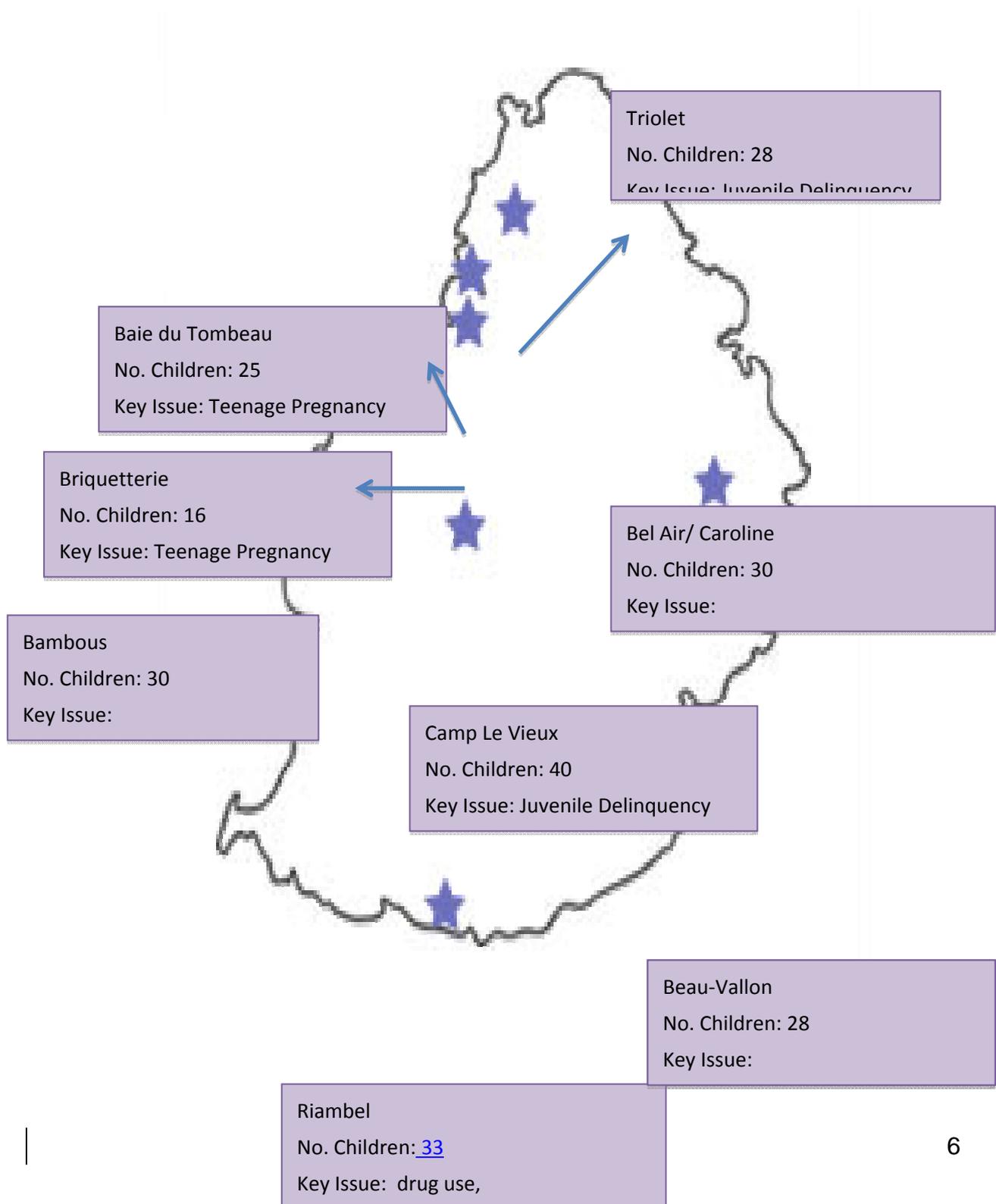
Criteria 4: Both parents absent in the lives of the child (dead, physical separation expatriation for economic reasons etc.)

Based on the findings of this seminal study, it appears that the problem of street children in Mauritius can best be described as one of “children on the streets” and/or “street working children”: most children have a home that serves as a permanent base. They are driven onto the streets by multiple factors, key among which are the poor parental presence in the lives of the children, and the poor socio-economic situation of their families. This is further compounded by a situation where the traditional family unit consisting of father, mother and children, is being displaced by mono-parental child upbringing. As a result of the lack of adult guidance, these children become confronted with a number of risks when roaming the streets freely: drug misuse, unwanted teenage pregnancies, STDs, child labour, delinquency and school failure.

In Mauritius, there are very few NGOs that are specifically dedicated to working with the population of children in street situations. SAFIRE is one of few and so far is only able to support just under 200 children. Given the immensity of the problem, it is absolutely crucial that all NGOs dedicated to the phenomenon collaborate more effectively, and that the government step up to enhance its institutional capacity to address the problem. Furthermore, SAFIRE posits that a more comprehensive and holistic approach to child welfare is needed in order to effectively address the issue of children in street situation.

SAFIRE'S CORE ACTION: FIELD INTERVENTIONS

SAFIRE intervenes in 8 regions, where 2 street educators are dedicated to providing support to those children most at risk of being in street situation. On average, we work with 25 beneficiaries per region. In addition to the one-on-one support and follow up of each child's progress, educators work with resource persons to organize regular (usually on a weekly basis) activities for the beneficiaries. It is important to note that these activities often welcome other children from the community, even if they are not being taken in charge by SAFIRE's educators.



HIGHLIGHTS 2011

In 2011, SAFIRE sought to continue its on the ground activities through the intervention of street educators whilst consolidating its structure and enhancing its capacity to encourage and facilitate the reintegration of children in street situation.

Teambuilding

At the beginning of the year, all of SAFIRE's staff met for a residential retreat to work on team spirit, strategic orientation and the organization's objectives for the year and beyond. It was also a rare opportunity for everyone to meet in a relaxed environment and exchange thoughts, ideas and frustrations!

Fundraising Dinner: 28 May 2011

A gala dinner was organized in May 2011 with the objective of raising funds for the organization. Cultivating financial autonomy and reducing dependence on grants and CSR funds is one of the key objectives of good governance, which SAFIRE aims to pursue as it develops its organizational structure.



Over 260 people attended the dinner, which included a fashion show by a local designer and an auction sale. Furthermore, the movie "The Road to Hope", a 15 minute documentary on SAFIRE's success stories, was projected during the evening. The dinner raised Rs. 437, 400 (approx. \$15, 000) in total.

Training from Bayti

Bayti, a Moroccan non-profit which has been working to reintegrate street children in Morocco since 1995, conducted a 10-day workshop with SAFIRE's 15 staff from 2 to 12 October 2011. The workshop consisted of formal training through taught modules dispensed by BAYTI trainers - Yamna Taltit and Ahmed Tachfine – as well as practical interventions through night duty visits in SAFIRE's sites of intervention.





Bayti was chosen for its expertise and considerable experience working with high-risk youth, particularly those in street situations. It has developed strong rights based programs elaborated from the

Convention on the Rights of Children. Bayti contains a training unit with the objective of helping other organisations enhance their capacities.

SAFIRE reached out to BAYTI with the following objectives :

- ✓ To give SAFIRE's street educators a professional and expert outlook on strategies for identifying, listening and providing social assistance to children and their families
- ✓ To integrate the concepts of individual coaching and life plans in the process of supporting a child through social reconciliation.
- ✓ To equip educators with appropriate tools for the more effective delivery of support and services to children in street situation.
- ✓ To equip educators with mediation tools which can be deployed when confronted with addressing family conflicts.



In addition to the workshop, BAYTI developed a list of recommendations aimed at improving SAFIRE's effectiveness. These have been incorporated in the strategic planning for the year 2012.

Study on Street Children

In collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association (MFPWA), SAFIRE undertook a study on street children in Mauritius. The overarching objective of this study is to define and quantify the street children phenomenon in Mauritius in view of finding appropriate solutions to the related problems. The study was funded by the Global fund to fight aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Rogers.

The study estimated that there are approximately 6780 children in street situation in Mauritius, and furthermore that the phenomenon manifests itself such that it is the result of parental neglect and a breakdown of the family unit. While most street children in Mauritius have a home to return to at the end of the day, they are exposed to a number of risks and hazards – notably, drug misuse, unwanted teenage pregnancies, STDs, child labour, delinquency and school drop out – because of the lack of adult guidance that leads them to roam the streets freely.



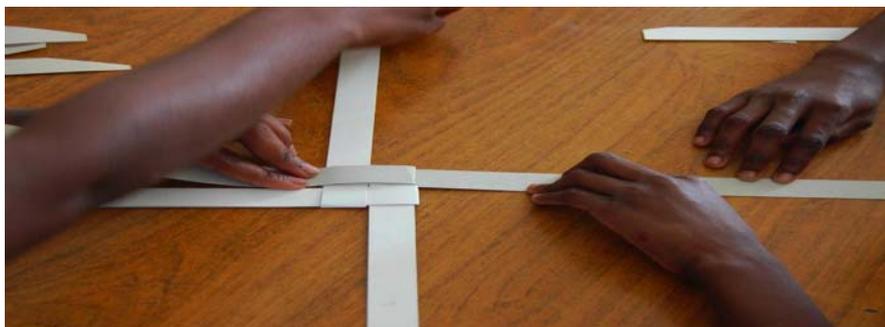
The study was officially launched on 8 January 2012 and is now freely available for download on SAFIRE’s website. In addition to its public launch, SAFIRE has undertaken to present the findings to the communities in which it intervenes. Furthermore, the study will serve as the basis for a dedicated advocacy campaign (2012-2013) for the conception of a rights based national strategic plan for child welfare.

Christmas Street Fair

SAFIRE participated in a Christmas Street Fair (“Marché de Noël”) organized by Fondation Nouveau Regard in December. As early as august, our street educators began to mobilize kids and parents to make Christmas balls and stars. These were then sold during the two-day fair.



The success of this project was not so much in the revenues acquired from selling the final products – we just about managed to break-even – but rather in the participatory nature of the preparations. The making of the Christmas ball and stars generated much enthusiasm in the two communities – Bambou and Triolet – where the project was implemented. The children (and parents!) have already started asking about this year’s Christmas street fair and what they’ll be doing!!



SAFIRE extends its programme to African Town, Riambel

In 2011, SAFIRE launched a new zone of intervention in African Town, Riambel. Pamela Aglae, a long time street educator of SAFIRE is in charge of this region, which she manages with Jonathan Virginie, a fresh young recruit of the SAFIRE team. Currently, 27 children are being followed in African Town. This coastal “cité” is fraught with societal issues not least of which is the problem of parental neglect with regards to children. Of the 27 children we work with, 11 are currently out of school, while issues of bodily hygiene and chronic absenteeism are unfortunately recurrent and apparently systemic. With two educators permanently working in African Town, SAFIRE aims to encourage the reintegration of these children through pedagogic and psychosocial support, whilst sensitizing parents and community members on the importance of providing adequate care and guidance for their children.

Camping Activity

Two thematic 3-day retreats were organized by the National Empowerment Foundation and SAFIRE to provide in-depth sensitization for the beneficiaries of two regions.

16 – 19 September: Sexual Education retreat for female beneficiaries of Baie-du Tombeau

Given the high rates of teenage pregnancy in this particular region, the aim of the retreat was to provide the female beneficiaries with basic sexual education as a means of preventing unwanted teenage pregnancies and the transmission of STDs. 13 girls, aged between 11 and 20 participated in the retreat.

20 November Child Rights Campaign

SAFIRE's action is ultimately grounded in the rights of children as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Thus, we decided that it was important, and certainly within our mandate to inform and educate the Mauritian public on the Convention. We celebrated Universal Children's day with a mass media campaign, which included billboards, print ads, radio public announcements and bus advertising.





CHALLENGES

If 2011 was a year full of achievements, it also necessarily met with a few roadblocks, which we are determined to tackle head on in the coming year. The main challenge remains at the organisational level, notably:

High turnover of the personnel and lack of sustained cohesion among staff members

The teambuilding session will once again be held in 2012, along with continuous efforts at engaging the staff as a team (celebration of birthdays, informal staff gatherings, revising job descriptions and organisational chart etc.)

Insufficient professionalism in the implementation of projects

The management is already working on an M&E mechanism and the field coordinator is in the process of designing child protection policy for SAFIRE

The lack of strategic orientation for the organisation

With the creation of an advocacy and communication unit, we hope to consolidate SAFIRE's values, mission and vision; and furthermore increase our visibility and transparency vis-à-vis our partners, stakeholders and the Mauritian public at large.

LOOKING AHEAD: SAFIRE IN 2012

In 2012, SAFIRE will continue to strengthen its organizational structure with the introduction of a dedicated advocacy and communication strategy, all the while continuing to consolidate its on the ground work. With more than five years of experience in the field, we are increasingly convinced that advocating for a more conducive policy and institutional environment is absolutely vital to on the ground progress.

Strategic Objectives for 2012

Promote and implement a holistic and rights based approach to child welfare

- Develop an advocacy unit within SAFIRE
- Implement a dedicated and coherent communication and media strategy
- Design a protocol of action – based children’s rights and well-being - for services delivered by SAFIRE.

Facilitate the mainstream (re)integration of children in street situations

- Encourage education and discourage drop-outs
- Provide career guidance and facilitate placement
- Promote access to health services and initiate prevention measures

Facilitate family reconciliation

- Facilitate community development initiatives
- Provide parent education and strengthen parenting skills
- Provide psycho-social support for parents
- Provide family counselling services

Professionalize SAFIRE’s organisational structures and processes

- Develop a set of guidelines for internal procedures
- Create a child protection policy
- Integrate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into SAFIRE’s project cycles
- Conduct an evaluation of the organization and design a 5 year strategic plan
- Increase local and international networking activities.
- Work towards greater financial independence
- Provide the personnel with capacity building workshops and training
- Create a volunteer database

